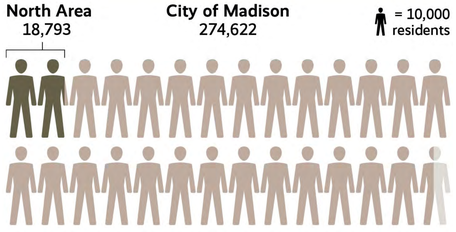
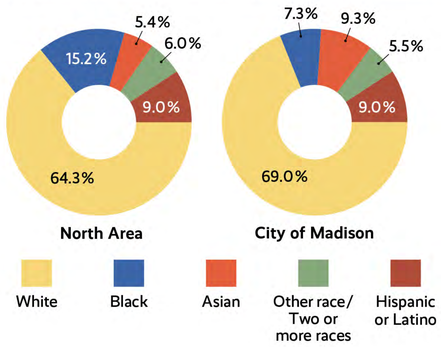
North Area Demographic Data

The North Area is approximately 5,600 acres (8.8 square miles). According to the 2020 Census, there are approximately 18,000 residents in the North Area, of which 36 percent are people of color. The North Area has a higher percentage of residents who identify as Black and Hispanic/Latinx compared to Madison as a whole. The North Area includes approximately 8,600 housing units and approximately 9,600 jobs.

Population



Racial and ethnic composition



Age

	North Area	City of Madison
Under 25	27.1%	35.0%
25 to 44	28.2%	32.6%
45 to 59	18.4%	14.3%
60 to 69	13.7%	9.4%
70+	12.7%	8.7%

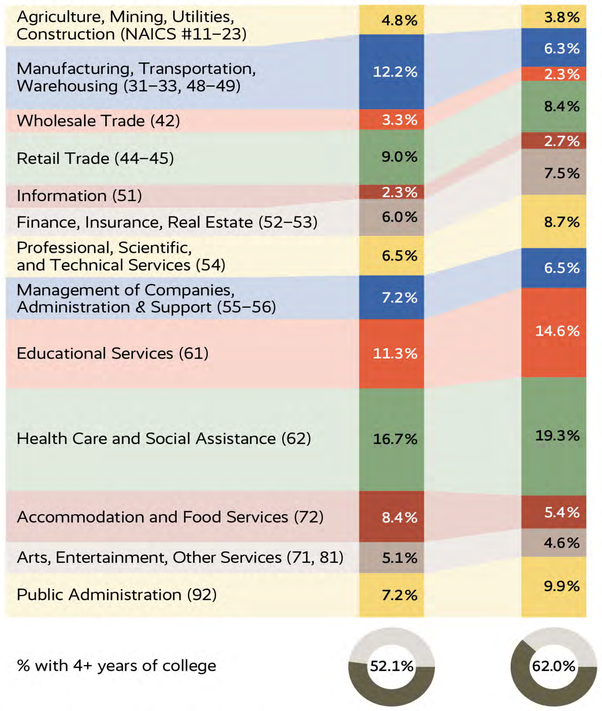
Source: Decennial Census 2020 Block Data

Income and Household Economics

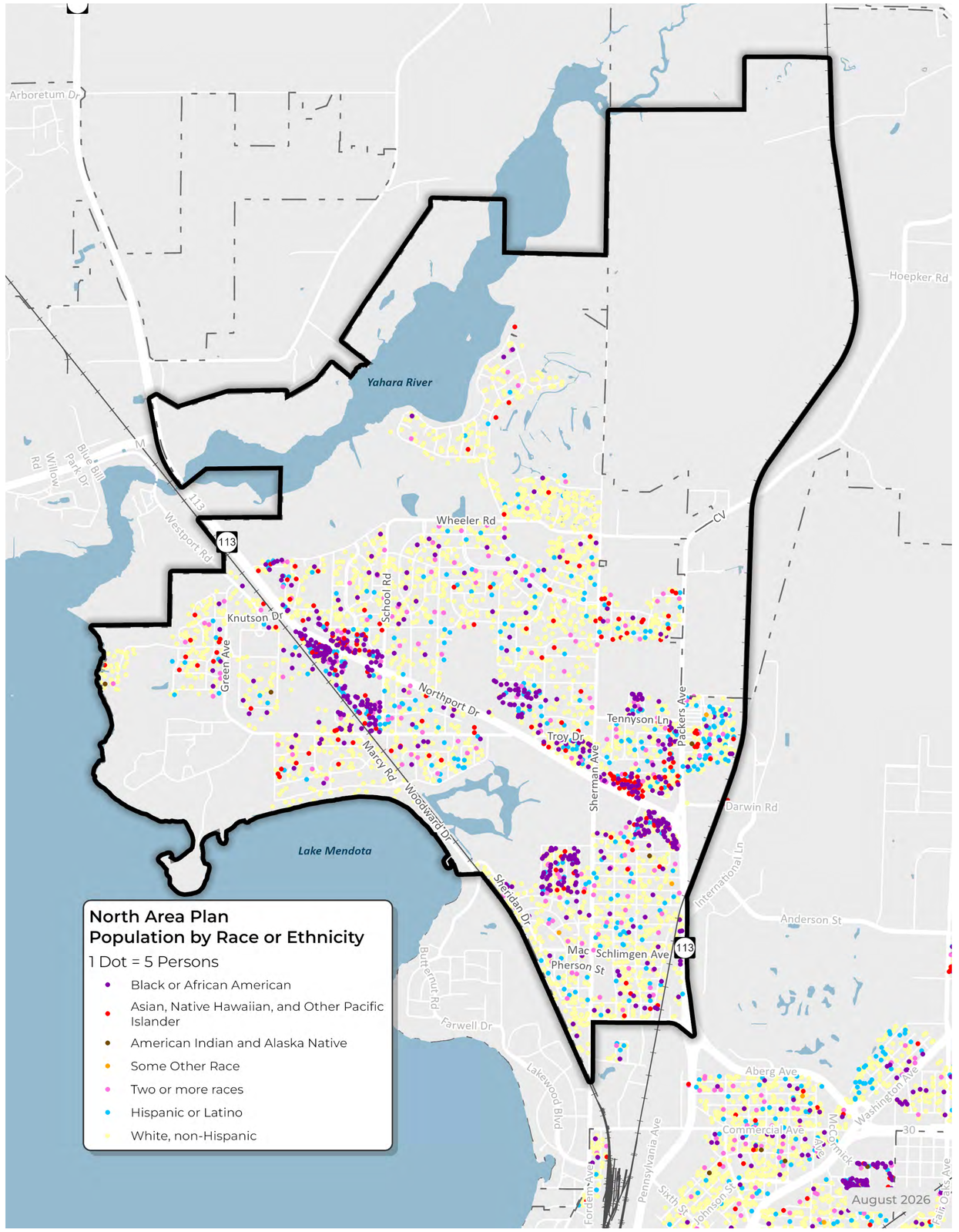
	North Area	City of Madison
Median Income	$73,320	$76,983
Poverty rate (families)	9.4%	6.6%
Unemployment	3.0%	2.7%
Homeownership (tenure)	64.4%	44.5%
Households without motor vehicle	10.2%	12.0%

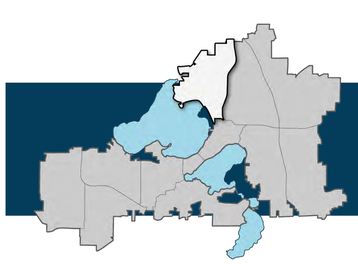
Source: ACS 5 year Estimate (2021)

Jobs within area, by major sector



Sources: Census On the Map 2021 data
Decennial Census 2020 Block Data
ACS 5 year Estimate (2021)

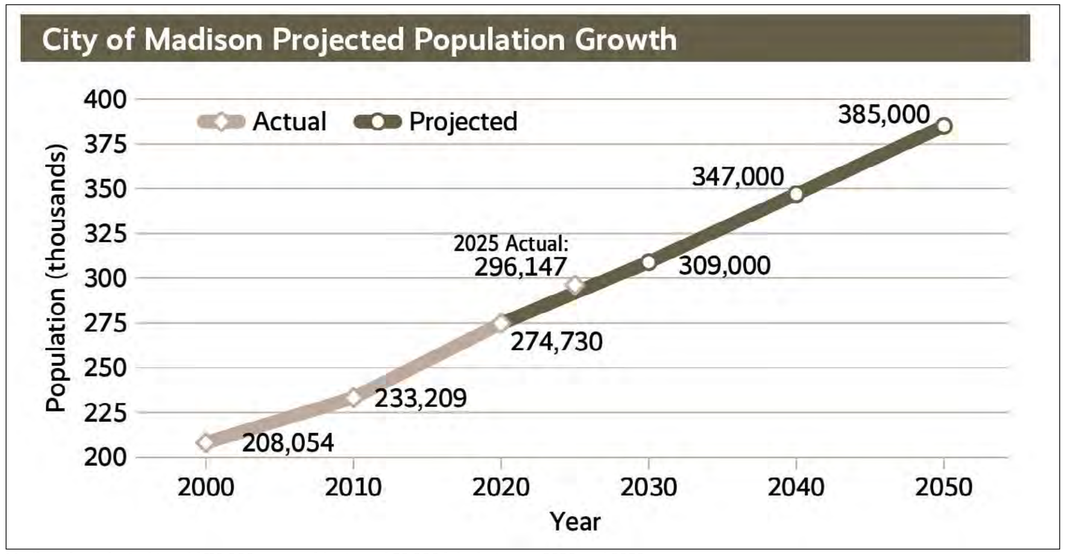




North Area Plan: Background

Why Plan?

Anticipating Madison's future needs and planning for the uses of our limited space is critical. Plans consider many factors, such as projected growth, housing, transportation, the economy, the environment, and cultural resources.

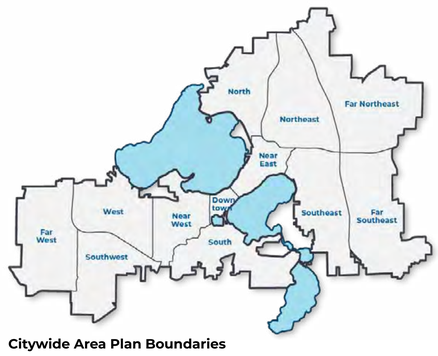


Madison is projected to add 110,000 new residents and 50,000 jobs between 2020 and 2050.

What are Area Plans?

An Area Plan is a long-term vision to guide changes in the physical aspects of our community, such as development initiated by the private sector and infrastructure improvements typically carried out by the public sector. Plan recommendations are guided by adopted City policies and feedback from the community.

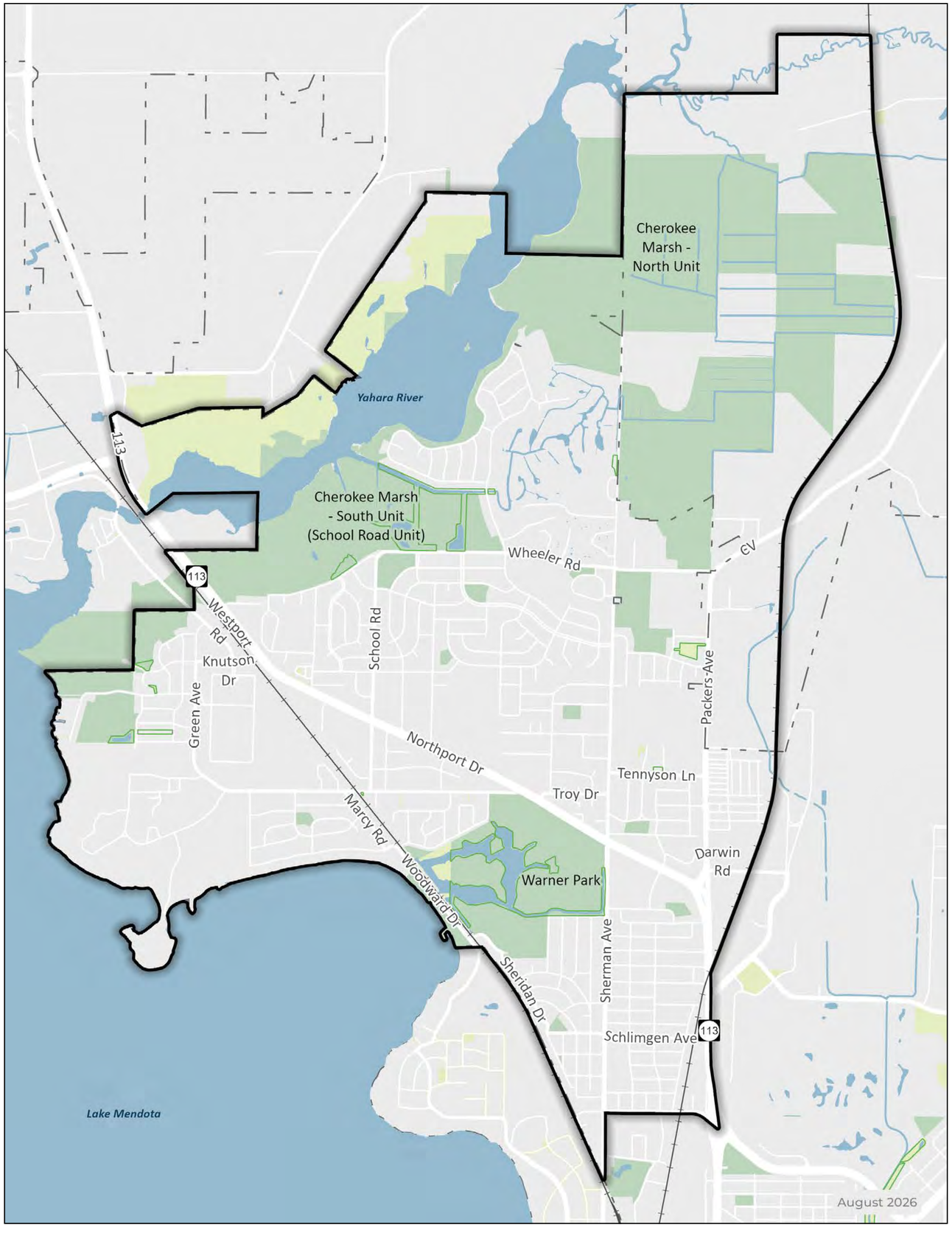
Over the next decade, twelve Area Plans will be created and updated every ten years to address changing issues and needs. The North Area Plan is just beginning. It covers approximately 5,600 acres and 18,000 residents. Everyone who lives, works, and plays in the area or travels through it is encouraged to participate in the planning process.

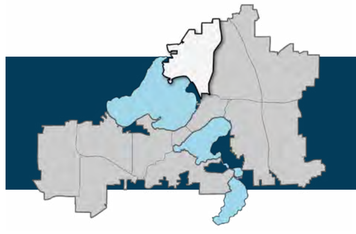


Citywide Area Plan Boundaries



Anticipated Timeline





North Area Plan: Why Plan, What are Area Plans?

Area Plans

New Planning Framework

In 2022, the Common Council approved a new planning framework that divided the city into 12 areas to make our processes more simple, predictable, and equitable. Twelve area plans will be developed over the next 10 years. The area plans will be updated every 10 years to reflect a changing city and keep area plan recommendations updated and in sync with City initiatives.

This approach has five primary benefits:

- Clear Plan Recommendations
- Full City Coverage
- Frequent Plan Updates
- Consistent Plan Topics, Higher-Level Recommendations
- Enhanced Coordination on City Initiatives

What Topics do Area Plans Cover?

Area Plans focus on guiding changes to the many aspects of our community.

Recommendations are structured around the Comprehensive Plan's seven elements:

- Land Use and Transportation
- Neighborhoods and Housing
- Economy and Opportunity
- Culture and Character
- Green and Resilient
- Effective Government
- Health and Safety



How are Area Plans Used?

- Area Plans focus on guiding changes to the many aspects of our community.
- Guide the types and locations of new development and identify locations for investment in public infrastructure. These include things like:
  - Parks, sewers, and bike paths

Archiving Previously Adopted Plans

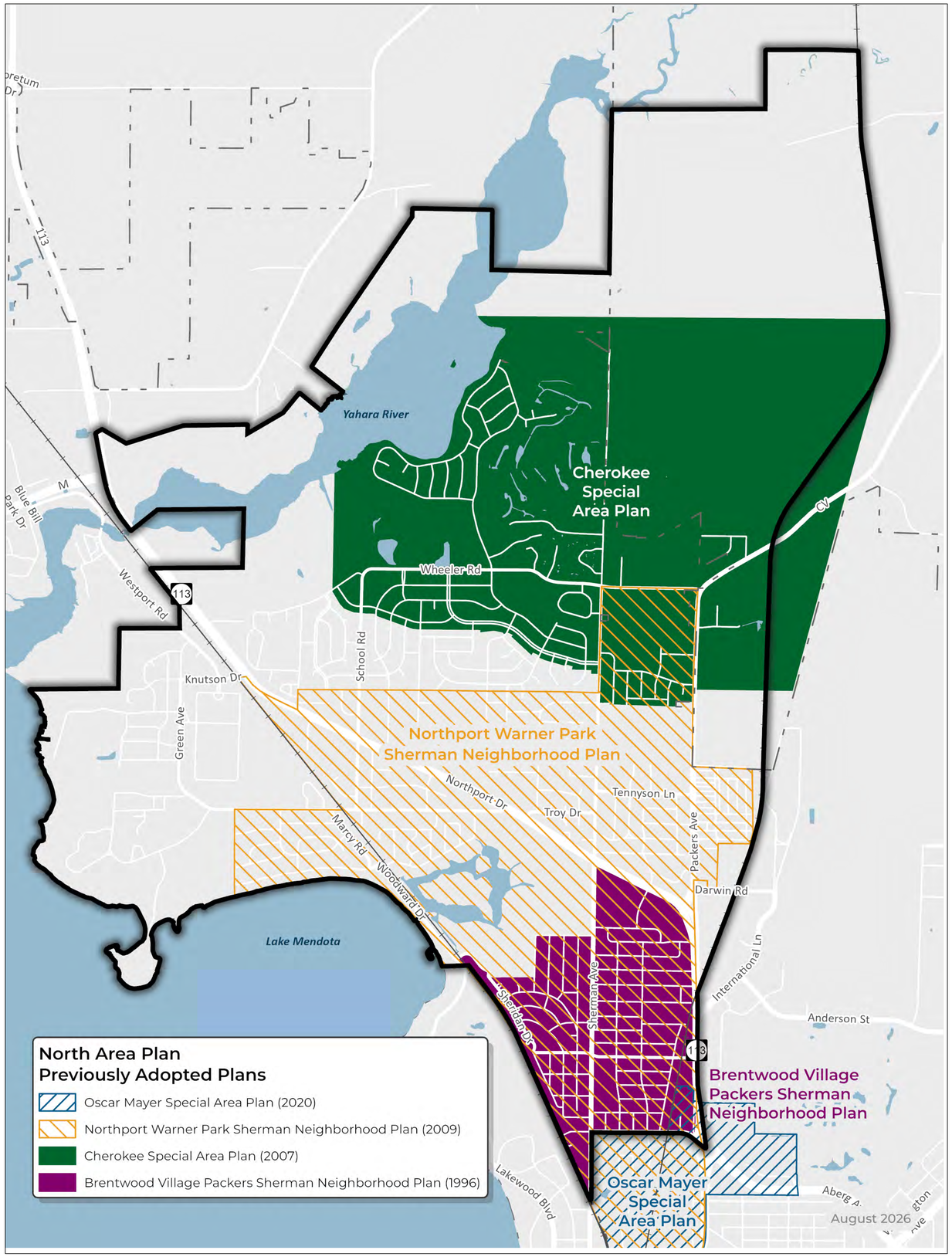
Overlapping plans can create confusion. This process will include reviewing adopted underlying plans and determining which recommendations are relevant and should be incorporated in the new Area Plan.

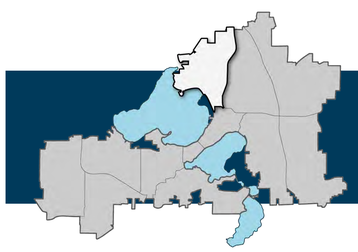
The Common Council adopted four plans to guide decision-making in portions of the North Area since 1996. See the map to the right. These plans have been important to their neighborhoods for many years:

- Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan (2020)
- Northport Warner Park Sherman Neighborhood Plan (2009)
- Cherokee Special Area Plan (2007)
- Brentwood Village Packers Sherman Neighborhood Plan (1996)

When reviewing the previously adopted plans, the focus is on physical or regulatory changes such as land use, zoning, building height, transportation, parks and open space, public utilities, and stormwater infrastructure. Recommendations that simply repeat existing Citywide policies, have already been implemented, are inconsistent with current City policy, or were to be implemented by non-City entities will not be incorporated in the North Area Plan.

When the Common Council adopts the North Area Plan, the underlying plans will be archived and will no longer guide development review, future City projects, policies, budgets, or work plans. Going forward, the North Area Plan will guide decisions.





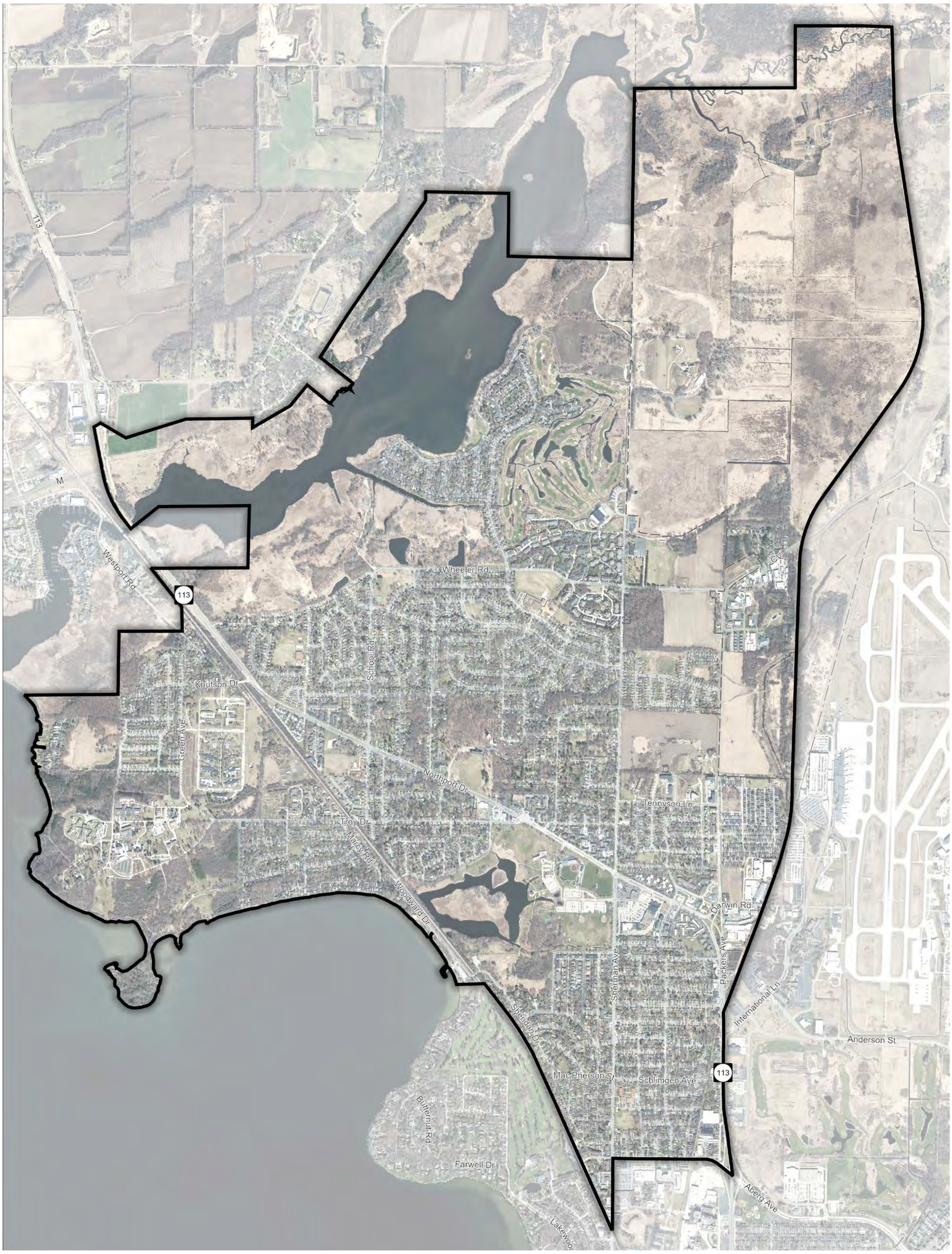
North Area Plan: Background

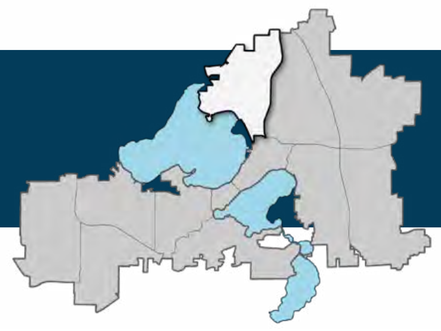
Using the following three categories, place a sticker on the map and write your corresponding comment on the sheet.

Things I Love

Needs Attention

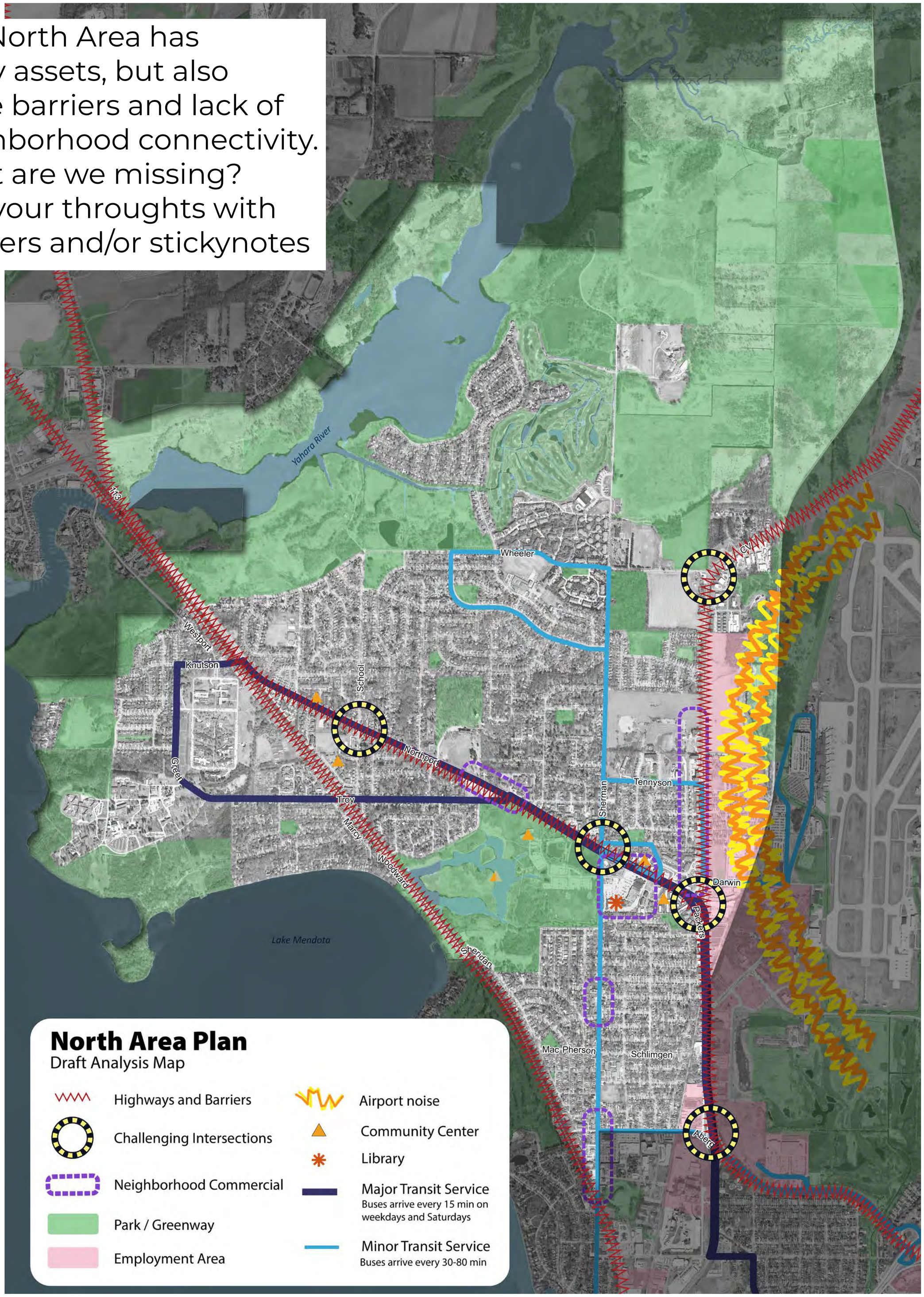
My Idea

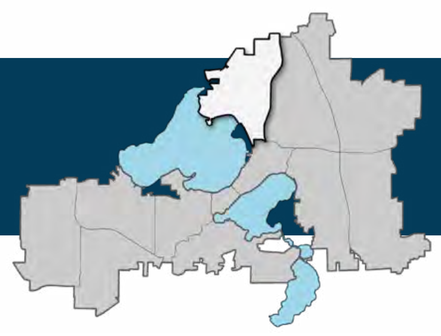




North Area Plan

The North Area has many assets, but also some barriers and lack of neighborhood connectivity. What are we missing? Add your throughts with markers and/or stickynotes





North Area Plan

Issues, Opportunities, and Priorities

Transportation

Pedestrian and Bicycle
- Need more low stress bike facilities.
- Need for north/south bike connections.
- Multiple intersections along Northport Drive, Sherman Avenue, and Packers Avenue are unsafe for pedestrians and bicyclist.
- Need safer bike facilities along Sherman Avenue.

Sidewalks
- Sidewalk network in the Brentwood Neighborhood is missing. Pedestrians walk on the street, including kids.
- Need sidewalks along Wheeler Road.

Traffic Control / Speeding
- Northport Drive, Packers Avenue, and Sherman are problem corridors for speeding.
- Wheeler Road needs better speed controls and enforcement between Sherman Avenue and Commanche Way. Will be more foot traffic for new Gompers Elementary School entrance on Wheeler Road.
- Forster Drive and Woodward Drive need traffic calming measures.

Parking
- Parking lots on the west side of Warner Park should be reduced and returned to natural state.
- Parking lot at the Northside Town Center is difficult to navigate. More parking than needed.
- Too much street parking available, use that space for bike facilities and green space.

Transit
- Access to transit is more difficult after network redesign.
- Travel times to downtown and UW campus have increased.

Safety
- Many northside streets would benefit by adding more street lights

Housing

Affordable Housing
- Too much affordable housing has been built on the northside.
- The affordable housing projects that have been built are too larger (building form) and isolated from other parts of the neighborhood and from amenities.

Types and Location
- Build all types of housing on the northside with a variety of price points, not just large apartment buildings.

Green and Resilient

- Playground and park shelter at Northland Manor are in need of an update.
- Need a mountain bike skills park on the northside.
- Add a splash pad to Warner Park.
- Add shade canopies to playgrounds.
- Need a bicycle pump track.
- Need to protect and enhance the natural areas in Warner Park and the northside.
- Tennis courts at Warner Park need improvement/fixing.

Economy and Opportunity

- Need more jobs on the northside.
- Need to build local food capacity, food innovation corridor.
- Food access is a big concern.



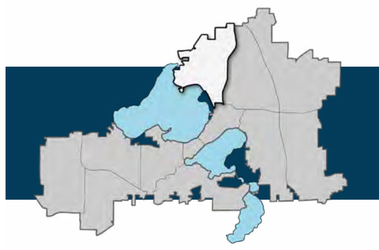












What We've Heard So Far

Land Use and Zoning – What's the Difference?

Land Use

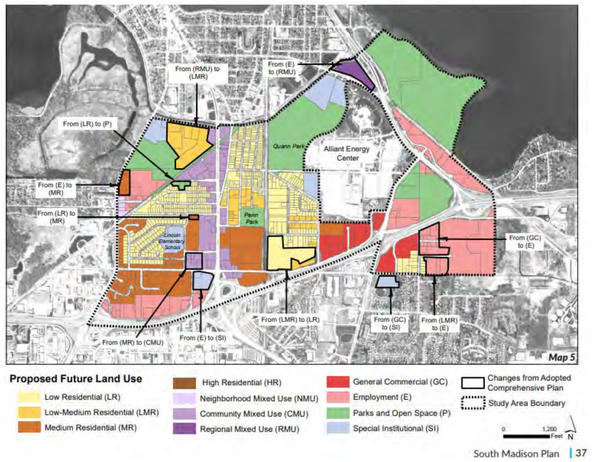
- All land in Madison is assigned a recommended land use to guide sustainable growth and community development.
- Land use planning helps provide a big picture vision for the future, and make cities work better for people.
- The City of Madison works collaboratively to determine the types of land uses desired, considering community input, environmental impact, and infrastructure needs.



Example illustration of land use planning

Generalized Future Land Use (GFLU) Map

- The Generalized Future Land Use (GFLU) Map is a key part of the City's Comprehensive Plan and Area Plans. State Comprehensive Planning law requires that we have a GFLU Map to guide growth and development.
- It sets expectations for how we want to grow as a community over time.
- Land Use Categories:
  - Broad categories such as residential, mixed-use, commercial, or industrial.
- Example: Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMU)
  - Mix of residential, retail, restaurant, service and civic uses that serve nearby residents
  - 2 to 4 stories
- The GFLU Map also recommends development intensities, such as how tall buildings should be. This is used to guide future development.
- It does not always reflect current land use. Instead, it shows the desired type of future development across the city. This helps to guide policy over the long term.



GFLU Map from South Madison Plan

Residential Future Land Use Categories

Residential Building Form	Low Residential (LR)	Low-Medium Residential (LMR)	Medium Residential 1 (MR1)	Medium Residential 2 (MR2)	High Residential (HR)
Single-Family Detached Building					
Civic/Institutional Building					
Two-Family, Two-Unit					
Two-Family – Twin					
Three-Unit Building					
Single-Family Attached					
Small Multifamily Building	*				
Large Multifamily Building		**			
Courtyard Multifamily Building		**			
Podium Building					
Number of Stories	1-2^	1-3	2-4	2-5	4-12~
General Density Range (DU/acre)	≤15	7-30	20-70	20-90	70+

Appropriate in select conditions at up to 30 DU/ac and three stories, generally along arterial streets or where these types of buildings are already present or planned within an adopted sub-area plan as part of a pattern of mixed residential development.

**Appropriate in select conditions at up to 70 DU/ac and four stories. Factors to be considered include relationships between proposed buildings and their surroundings, natural features, lot and block characteristics, and access to urban services, transit, arterial streets, parks, and amenities. This clause does not apply to the Southwest or Southeast Areas.*

~Or taller, if specified by an approved sub-area plan or PD zoning.

^Dormers or partial third floors are permitted.

Residential Categories from the Comprehensive Plan GFLU Map

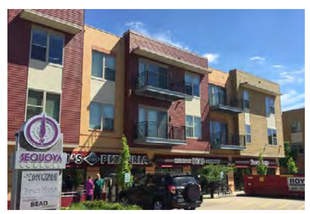
Land Use Category Examples



Low Residential (LR)



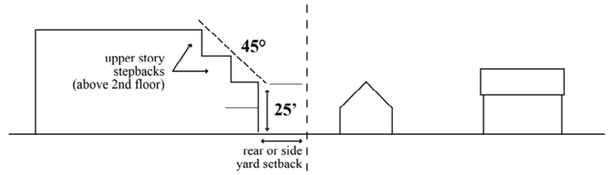
Low-Medium Residential (LMR)



Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMU)

Zoning

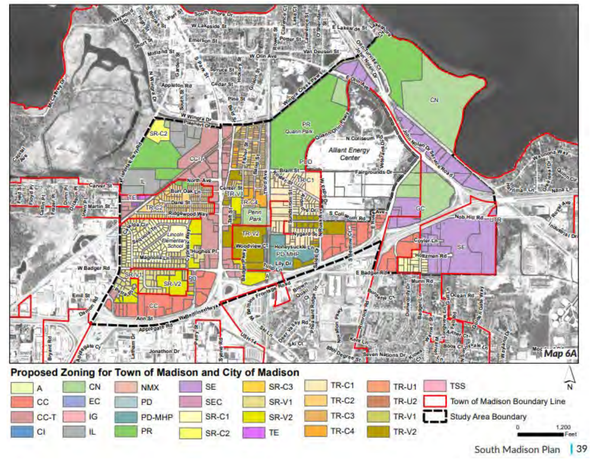
- Zoning is adopted as one of Madison's ordinances.
- Zoning regulates how property may be used and developed.
- It groups the city into different districts (or "zones"). Each zoning district has its own rules for allowed uses and other development requirements.



Example showing setbacks and upper story stepbacks from the Zoning Code

Zoning Map and Zoning Text

- The Zoning Ordinance includes the Zoning Map and the Zoning Text.
- Zoning Map: Assigns a zoning district to each property.
- Zoning Text: Regulates how a property can be used and developed, including:
  a. Specific uses
  b. Physical characteristics of buildings (like height and distance from the street)
  c. Site design (like parking and landscaping)
- Zoning is one of the primary tools the City uses to regulate development.
- All changes to a property or the use of a property must be consistent with the zoning code's requirements.



Zoning Map from South Madison Plan

How Zoning interacts with the GFLU Map

- State law requires that when land is changed from one zoning district to another, the zoning district must be consistent with GFLU Map.
- Example:
  - A developer requests to change the zoning for a property to the Industrial – General Zoning District, but the property is recommended for Neighborhood Mixed-Use on the GFLU Map. That rezoning would not be approved because an industrial zoning district is not consistent with Neighborhood Mixed-Use.

What's the difference between the GFLU Map and Zoning?

GFLU Map

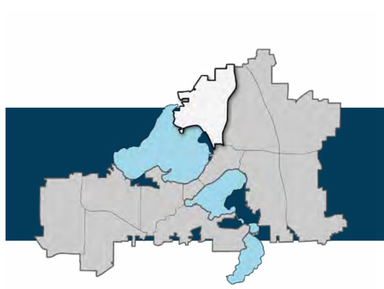
- Community's long-term vision for future development.
- Adopted Plans and the GFLU Map are a guide.
- Tells us what the zoning and development pattern could be in the future.

Link to the online GFLU Map

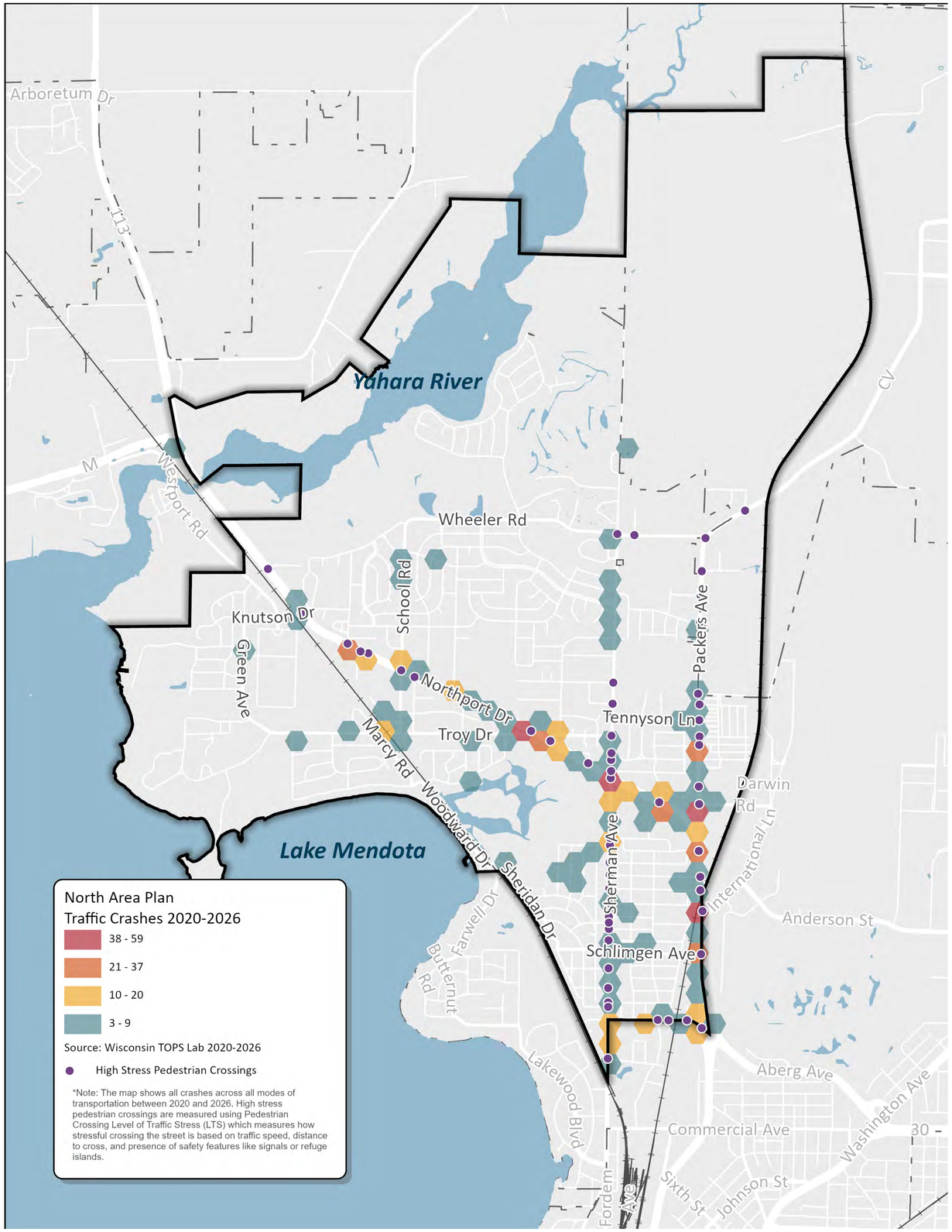
Zoning

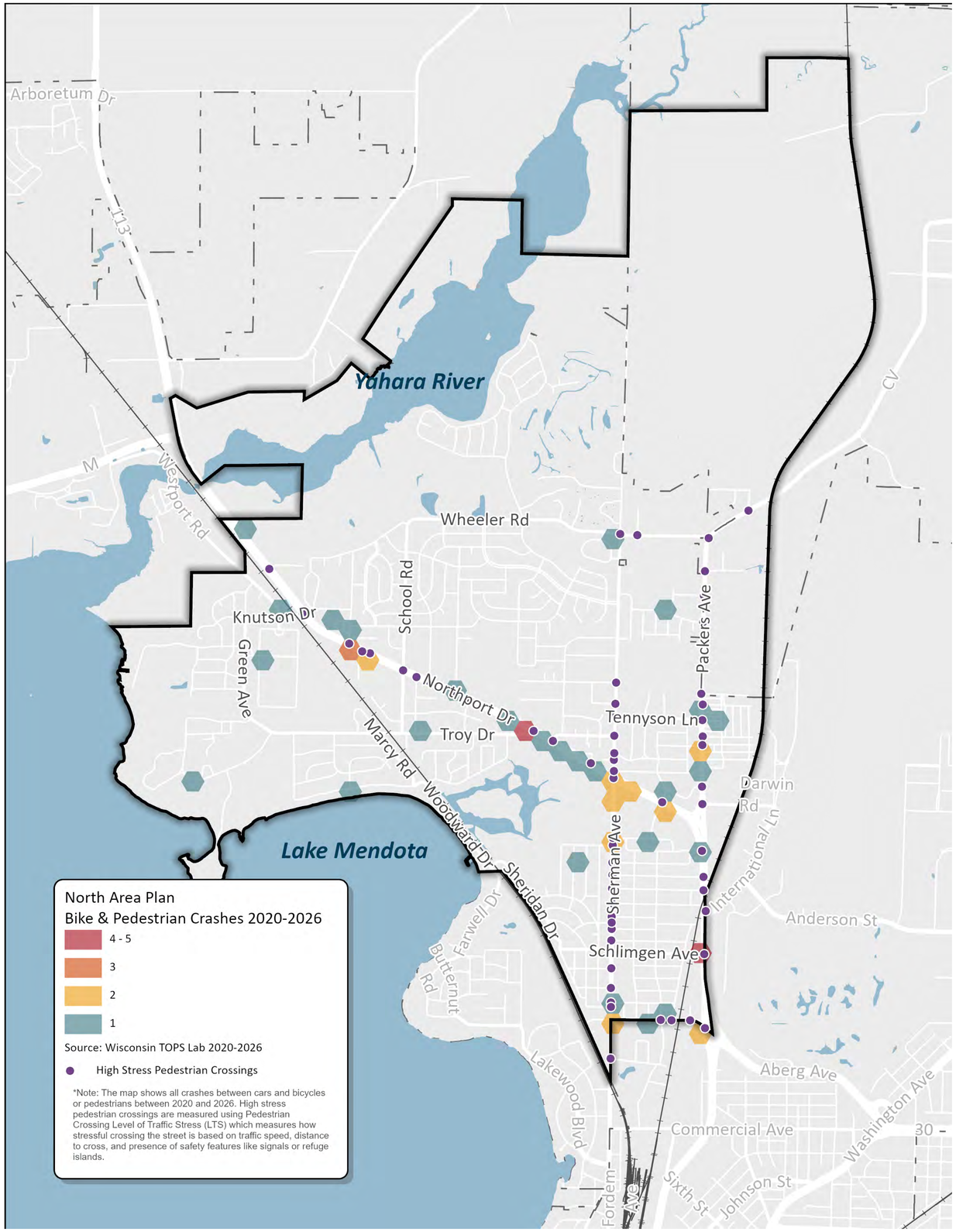
- Specific rules for what can be developed on a site.
- Zoning is the law.
- Establishes what a property can legally be used for today.

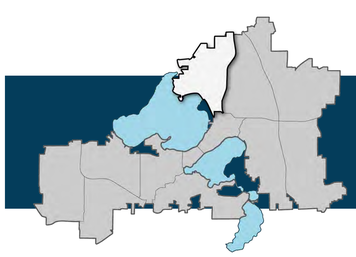
Link to the online Zoning Map



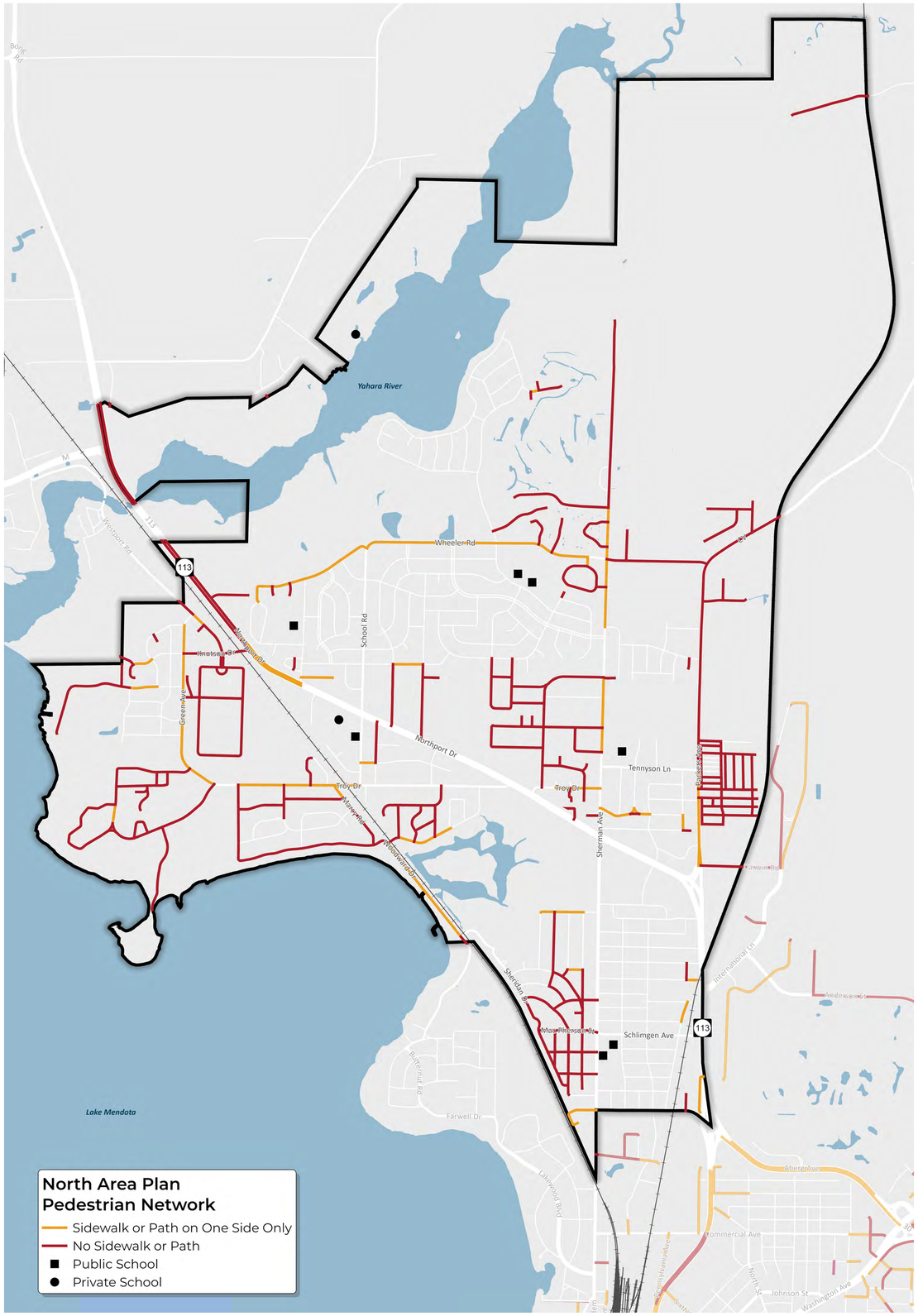
Land Use and Zoning

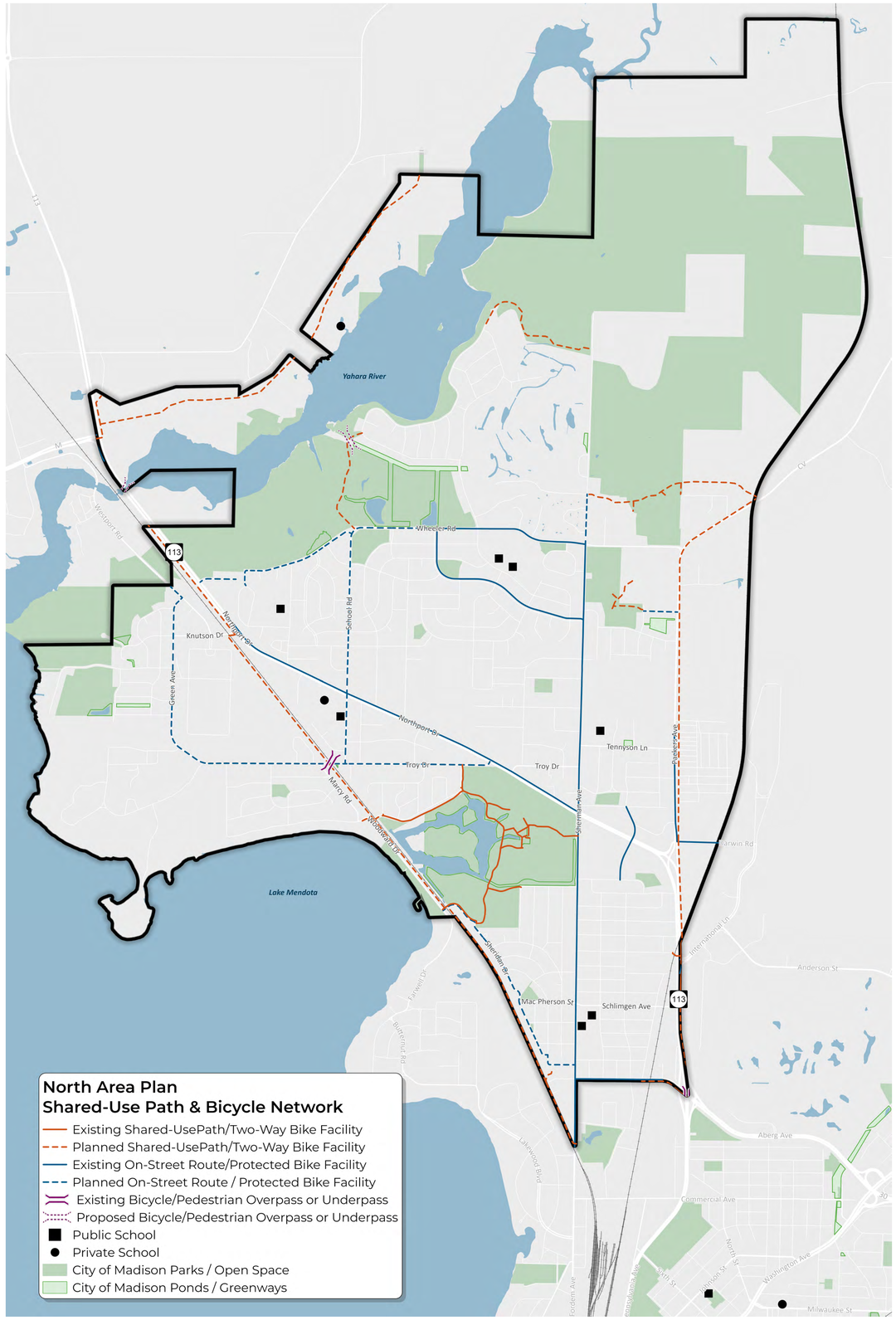


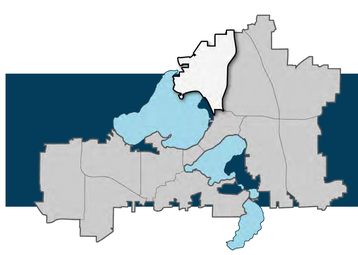




Transportation: Crashes







Transportation: Pedestrian & Bicycle Networks

NORTH-SOUTH BRT

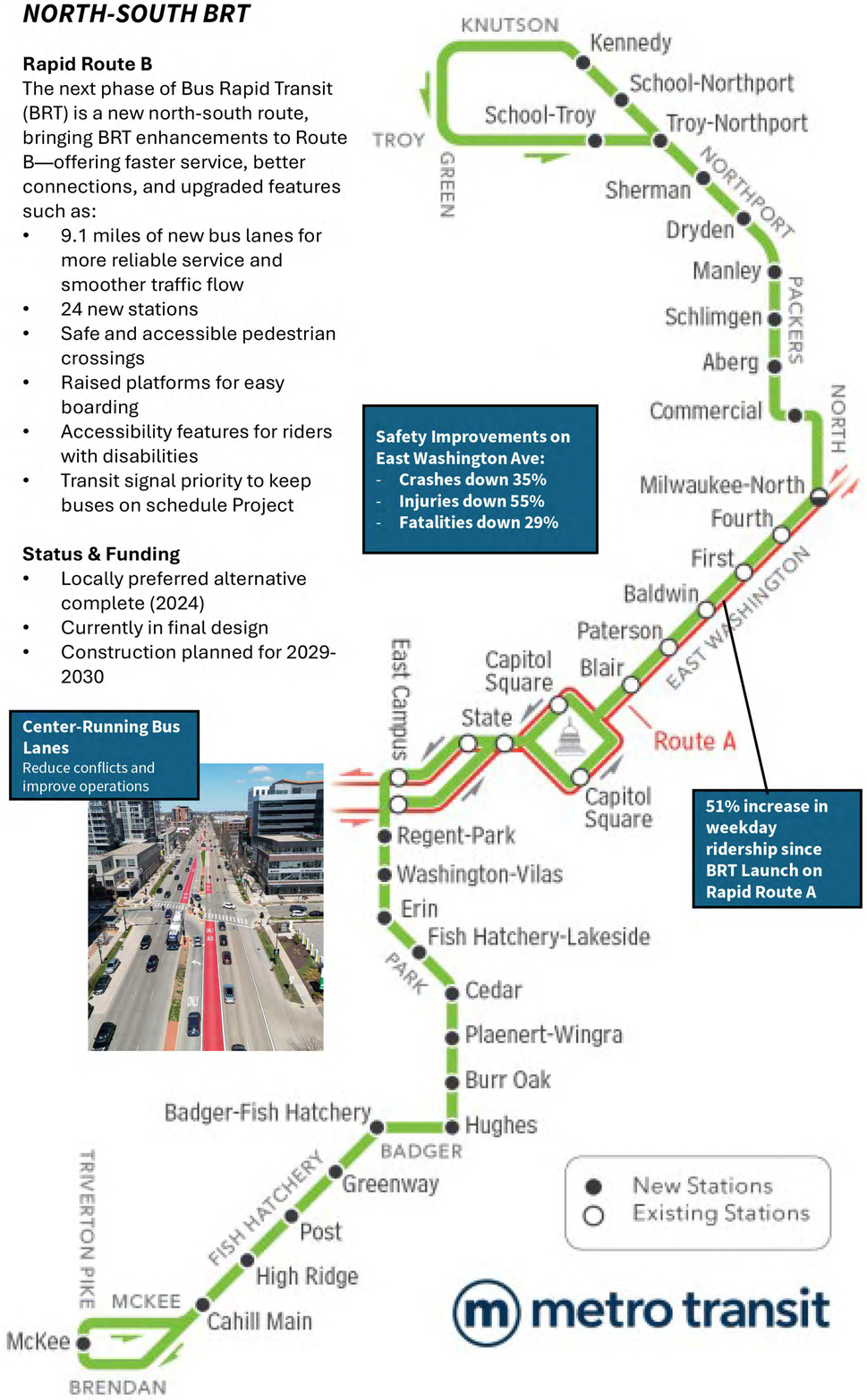
Rapid Route B

The next phase of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is a new north-south route, bringing BRT enhancements to Route B—offering faster service, better connections, and upgraded features such as:

- 9.1 miles of new bus lanes for more reliable service and smoother traffic flow
- 24 new stations
- Safe and accessible pedestrian crossings
- Raised platforms for easy boarding
- Accessibility features for riders with disabilities
- Transit signal priority to keep buses on schedule Project

Status & Funding

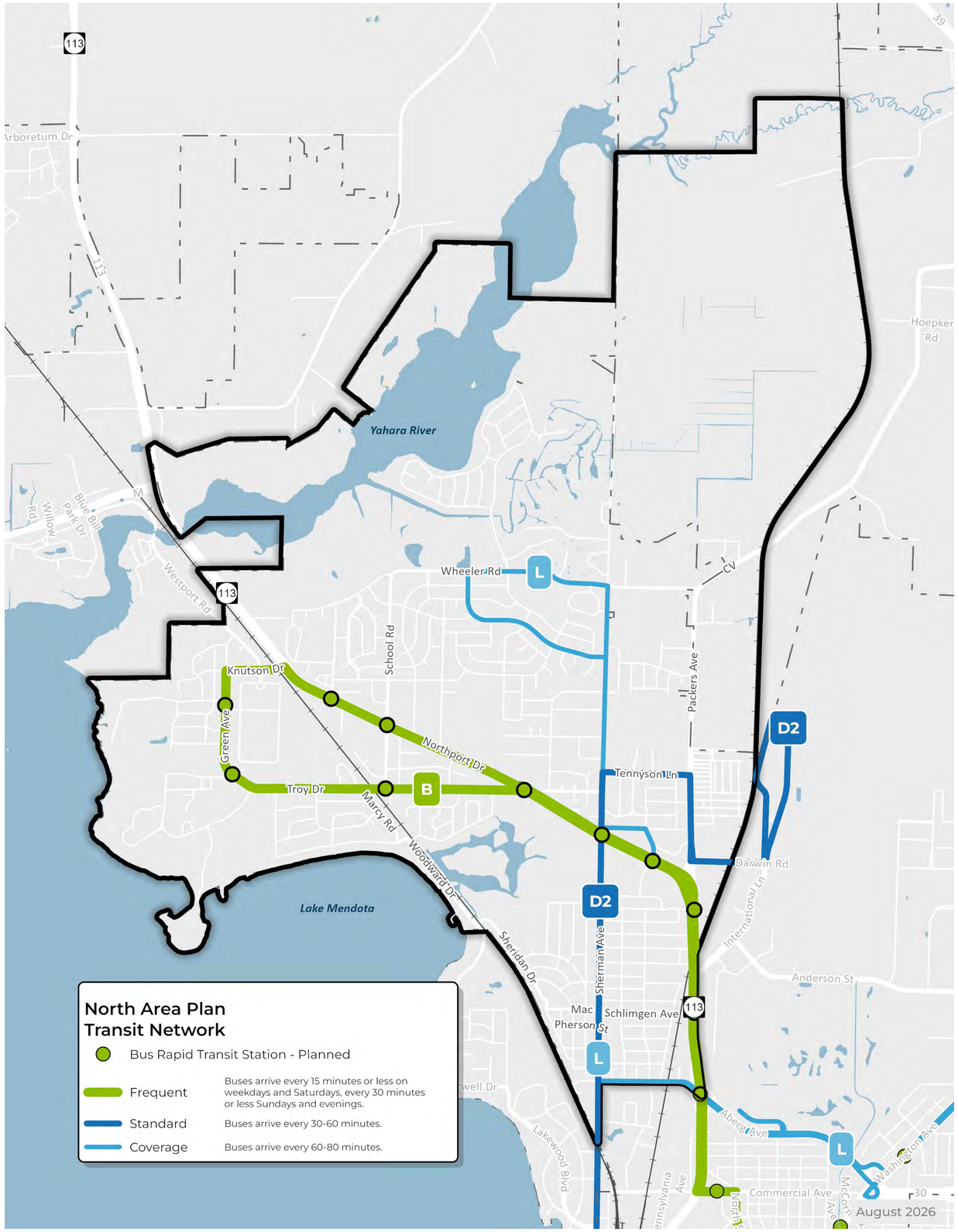
- Locally preferred alternative complete (2024)
- Currently in final design
- Construction planned for 2029-2030

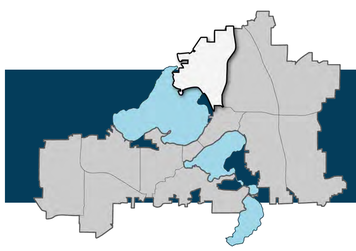


Safety Improvements on East Washington Ave:
- **Crashes down 35%**
- **Injuries down 55%**
- **Fatalities down 29%**

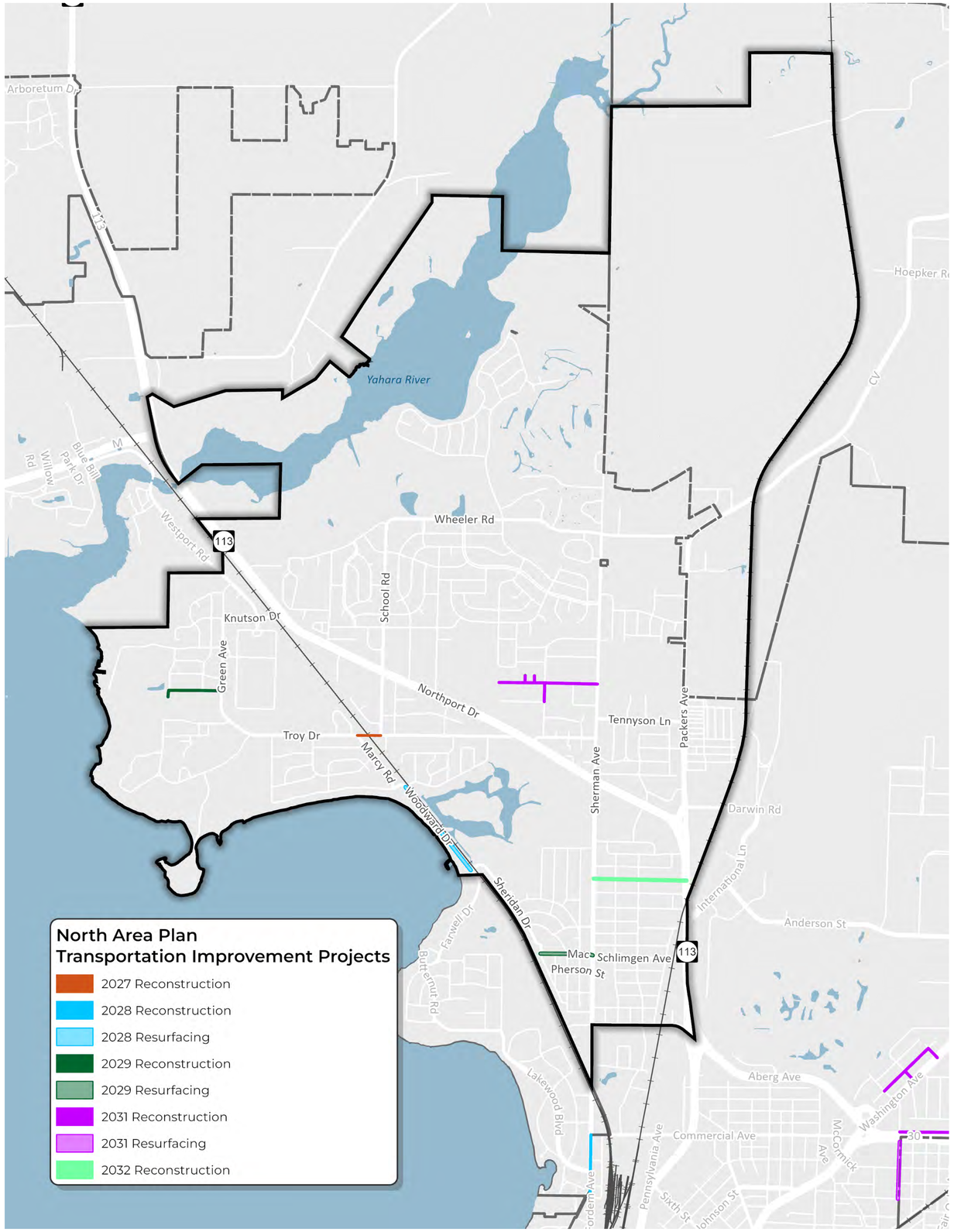
51% increase in weekday ridership since BRT Launch on Rapid Route A

Center-Running Bus Lanes
Reduce conflicts and improve operations



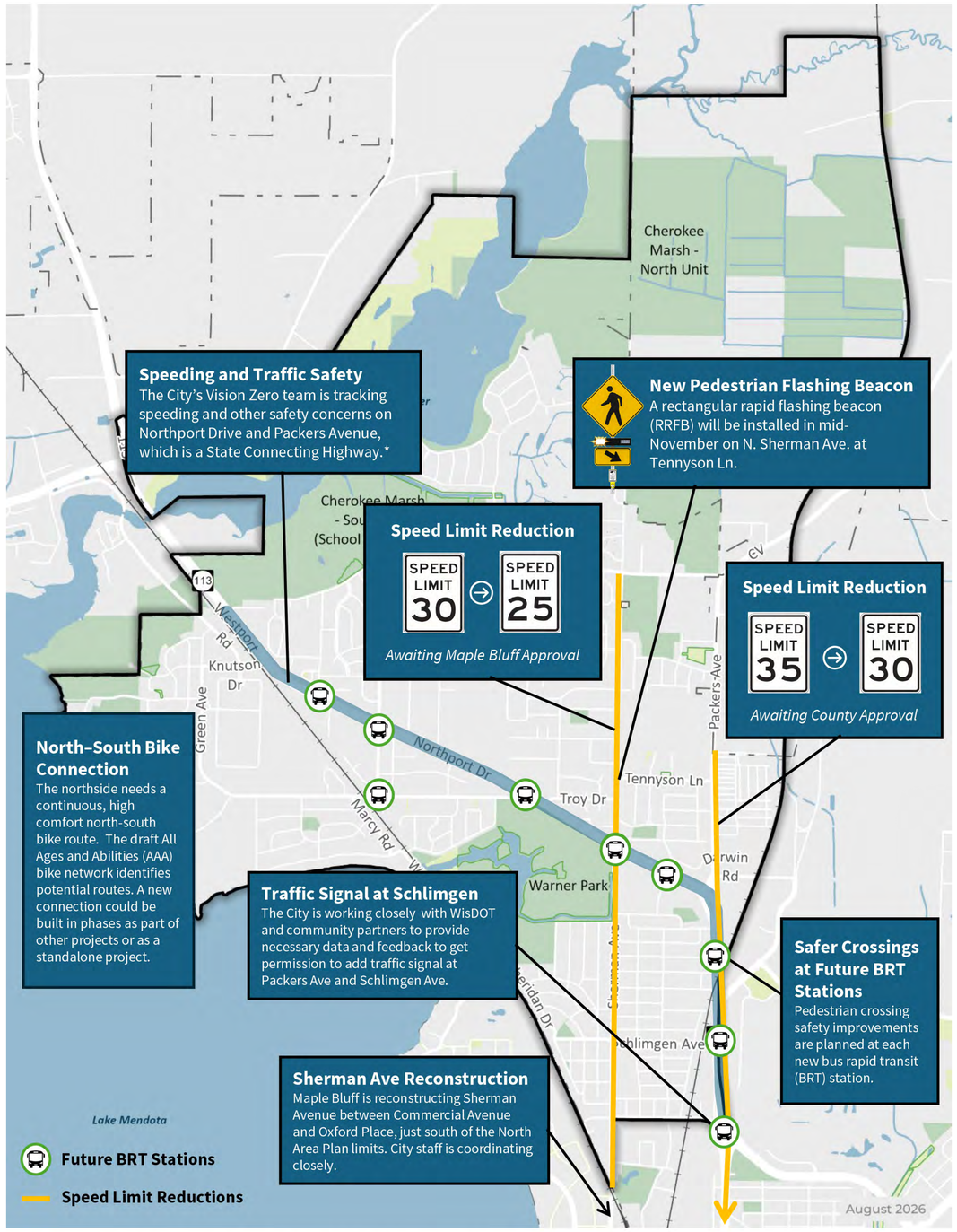


Transportation: Transit

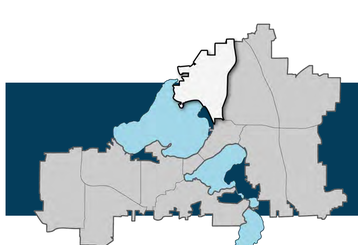


ON-GOING TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES

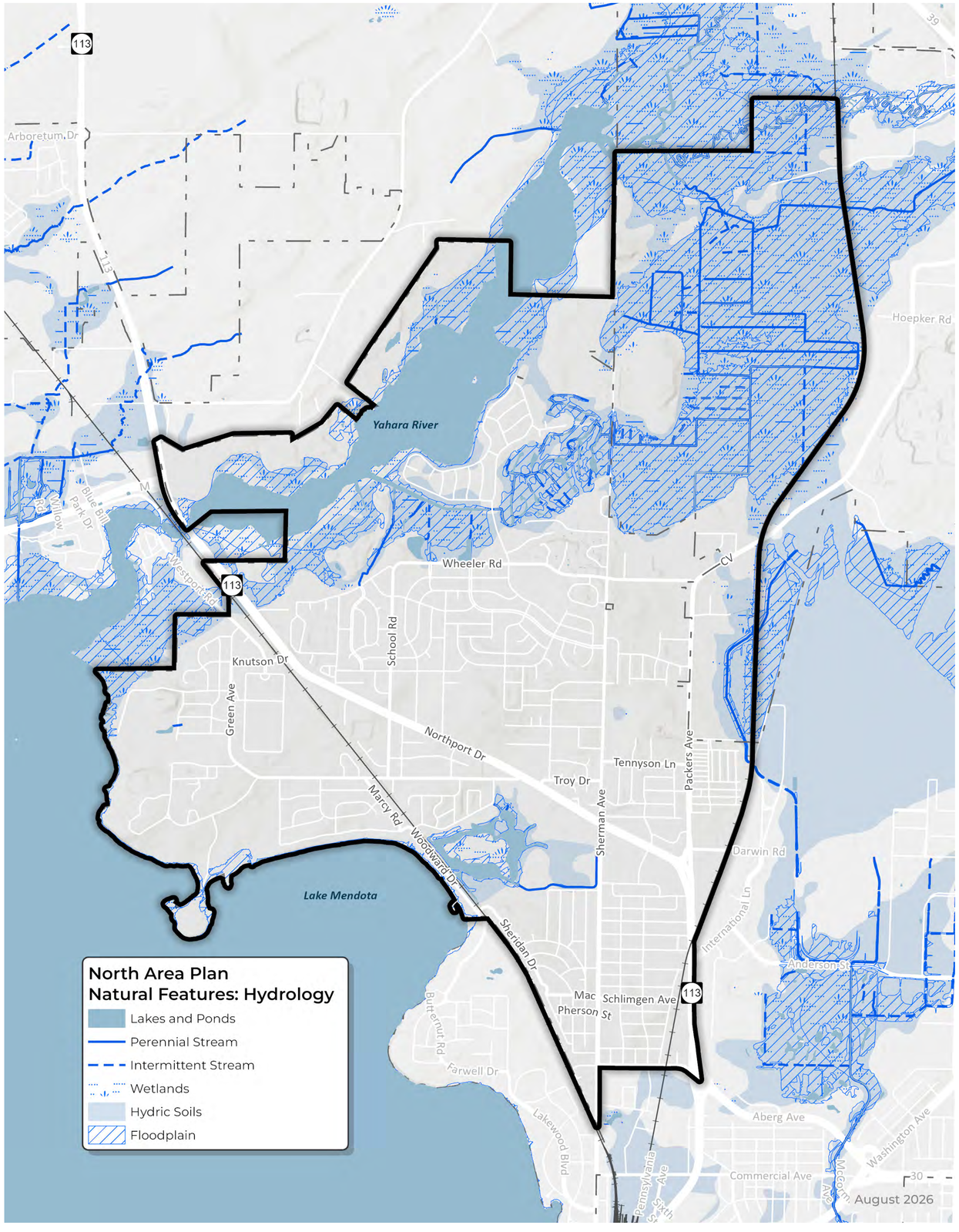
Not currently included in the TIP

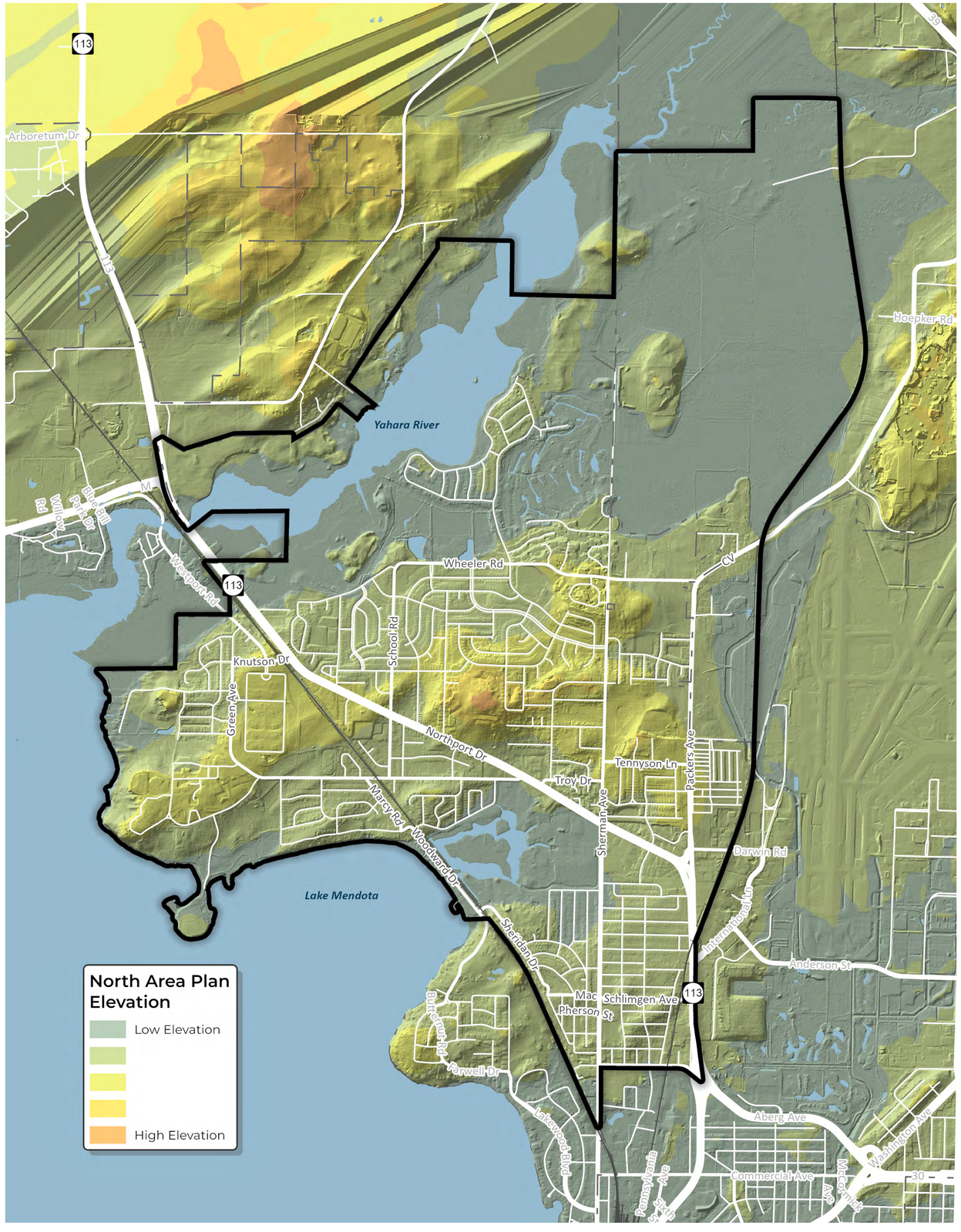


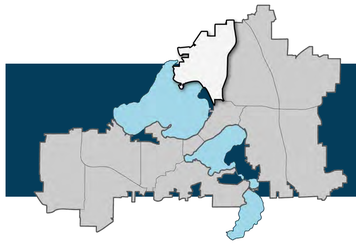
* Connecting Highways are local streets and roads that carry state highway travel through cities and villages. Connecting Highway Aids (CHA) help local governments maintain these streets and roads at state trunk highway (STH) system standards. This requires the City to coordinate closely with WisDOT on any improvements, including changes to signals, lane reductions, and any infrastructure changes.



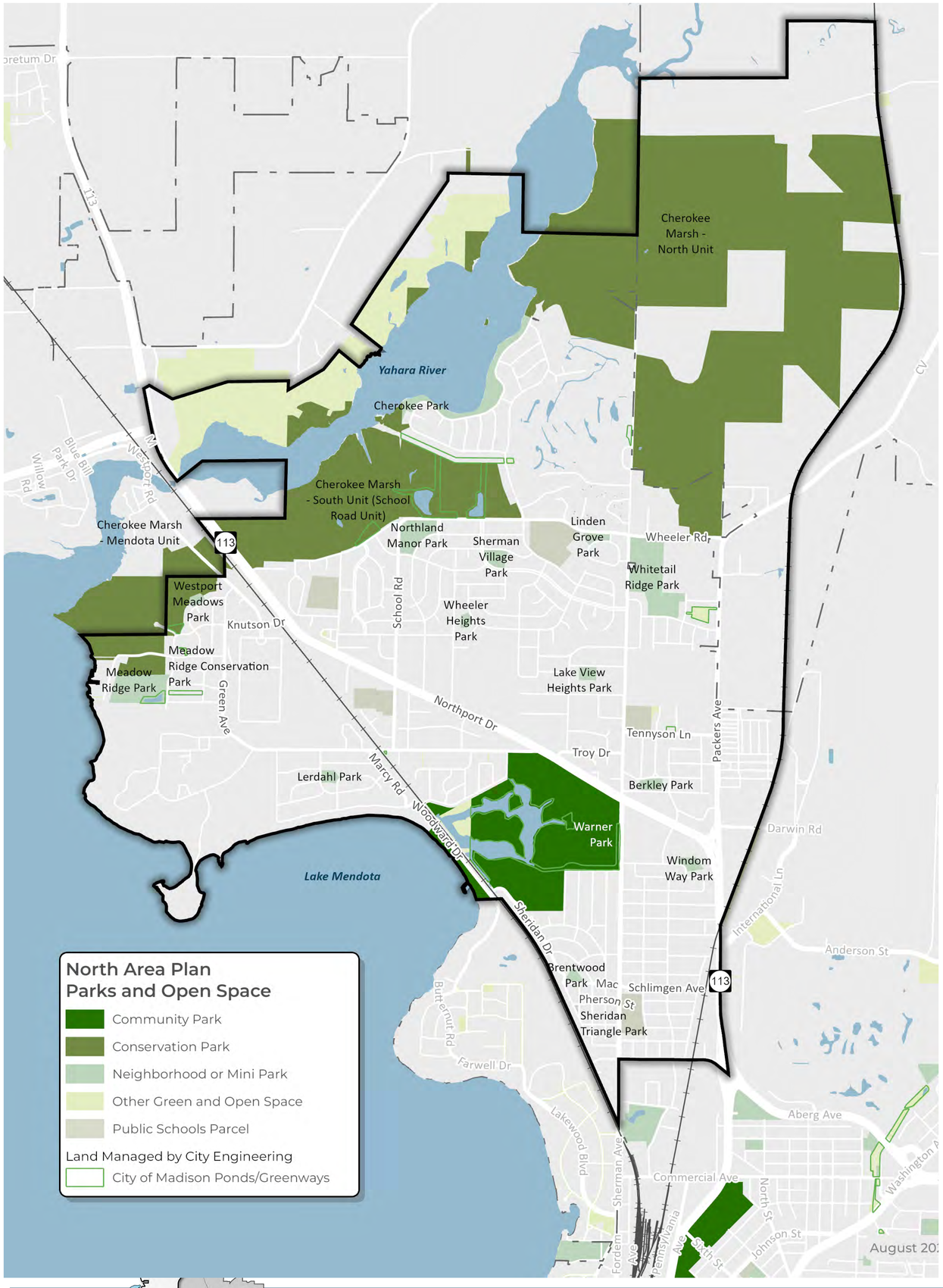
Transportation: Improvements

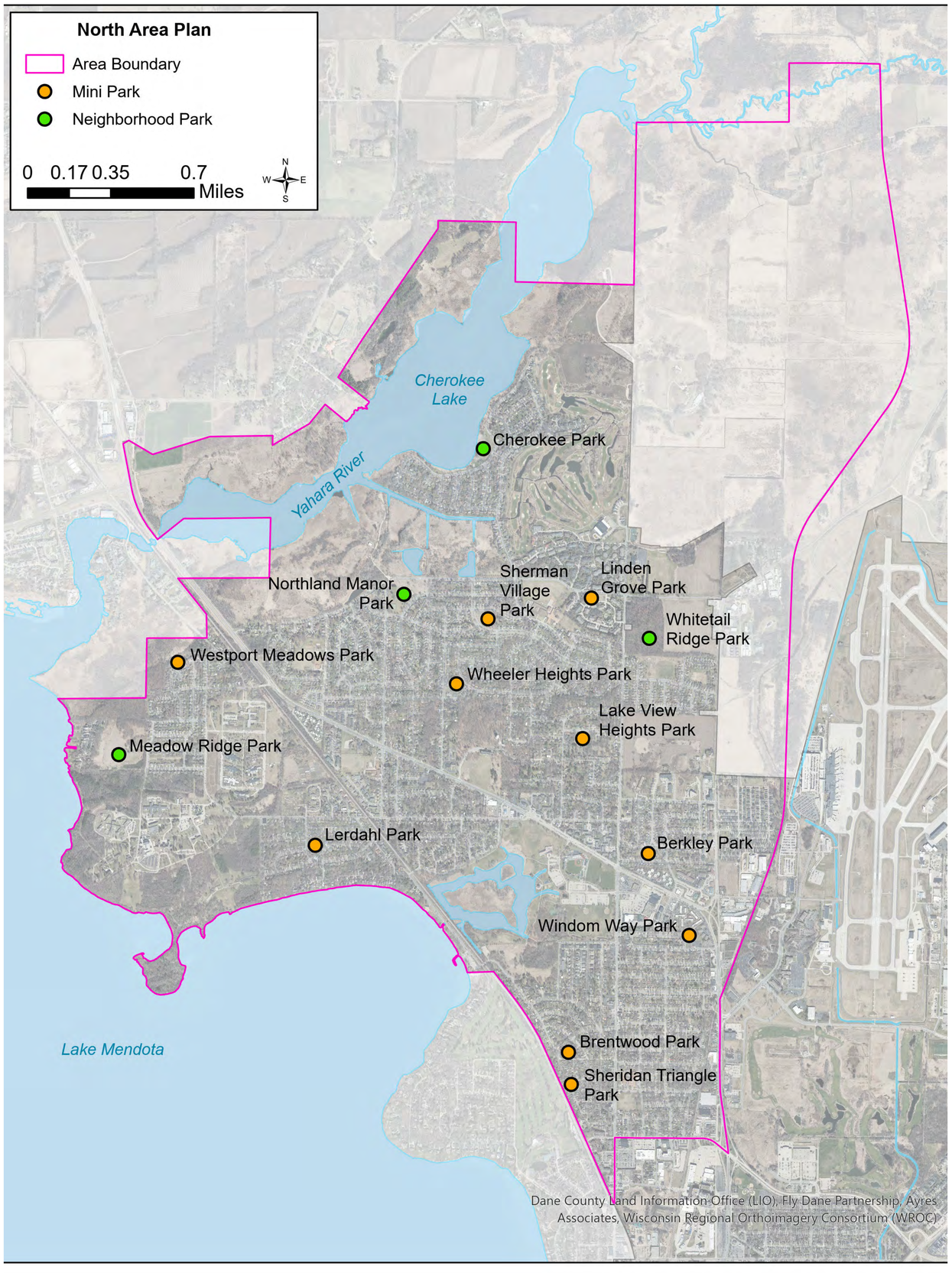


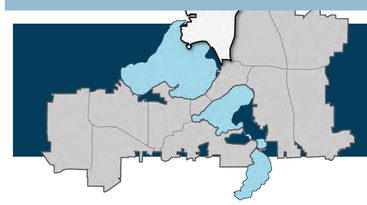




Green & Resilient: Hydrology & Elevation







Green & Resilient: Parks

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North Area Plan

Watershed Studies and Conceptual Solutions

Location
City of Madison

Legend

- Planning Area Plan Boundaries
- Watershed Study Boundary
- Area Outside City of Madison
- Existing Stormwater Pipe
- Ponds and Greenways

1% Annual Chance Storm Max Flood Depths (ft)

- .5-1
- 1-2
- 2-3
- 3-4
- 4-5
- 5+

Proposed Pipes

- New Pipe
- New Box
- Parallel Box
- Parallel Pipe
- Removal Pipe
- Removal Box
- Special Pipe
- Special Box
- Upsize Box
- Upsize Pipe

Proposed Regional Solutions

- Berm
- Channel
- Floodwall
- Other
- Pond

N

Warner/Cherokee

Starkweather Creek

I-94 (WB)

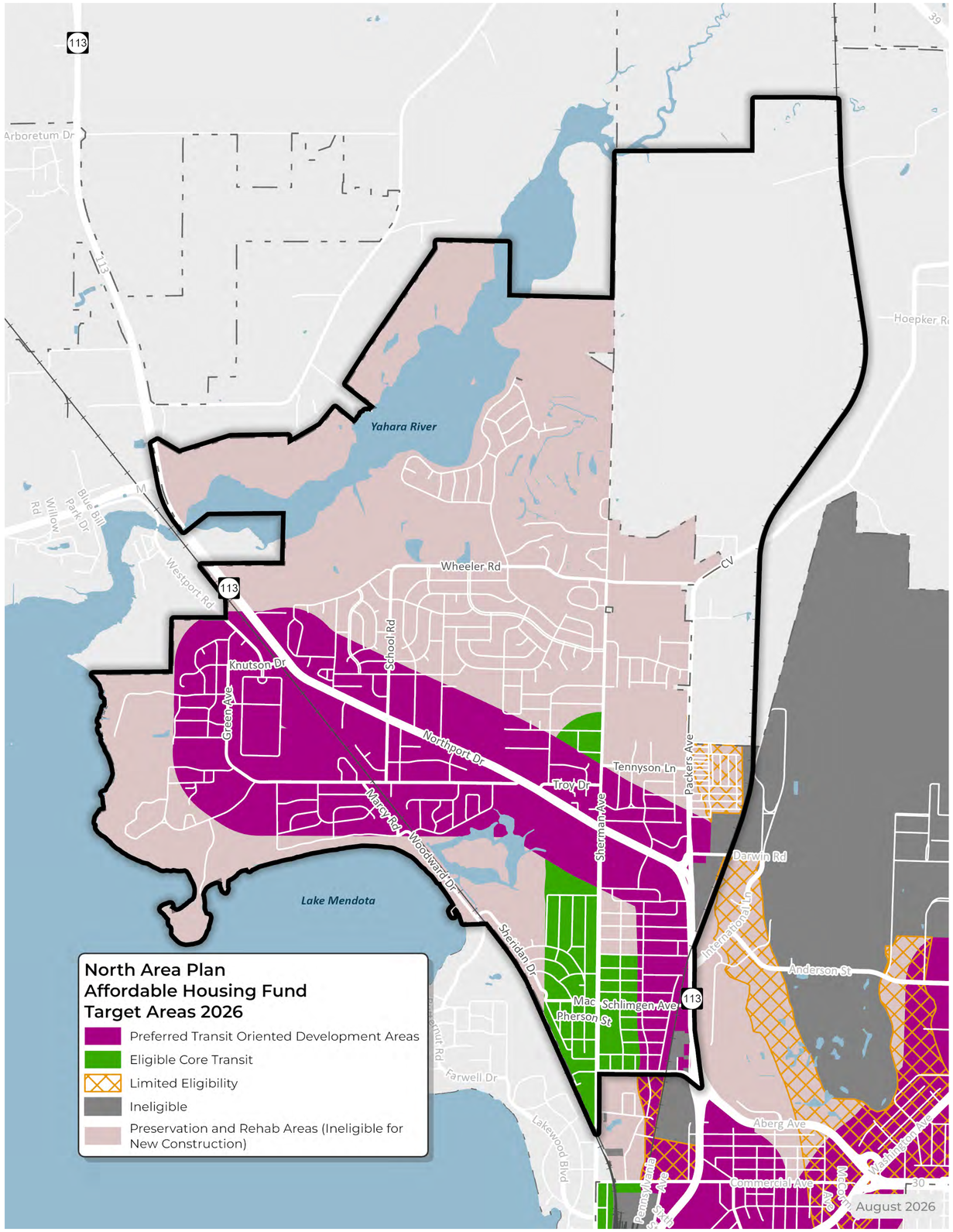
I-94 (EB)

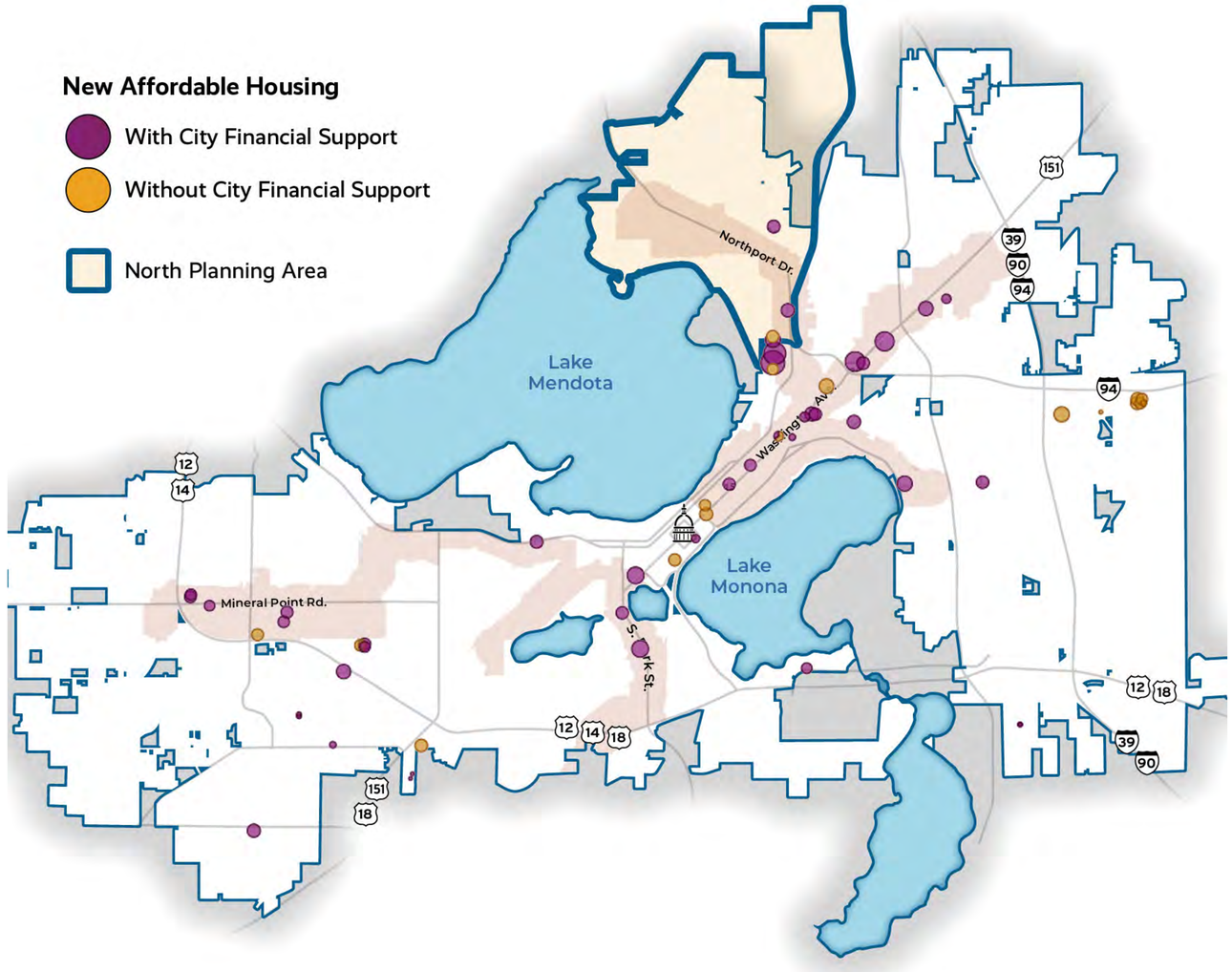
Date: 10/26/2026 User Name: enjo

DISCLAIMER: THIS MAP EXISTS TO HELP YOU QUICKLY GET INFORMATION ABOUT GENERAL FLOOD RISKS. THIS MAP DOESN'T IDENTIFY ALL AREAS THAT MAY FLOOD OR PREDICT FUTURE FLOODING. DO NOT USE THIS MAP TO MAKE OFFICIAL FLOOD RISK DETERMINATIONS FOR INSURANCE, LENDING, OR OTHER PURPOSES. THIS IS NOT AN OFFICIAL FEMA FEDERAL FLOOD INSURANCE RATEMAP OR THE STATE OR LOCAL EQUIVALENT. THE CITY OF MADISON ASSUMES NO LIABILITY FOR ANY ERRORS, OMISSIONS, OR INACCURACIES. THE CITY ALSO ASSUMES NO LIABILITY FOR ANY DECISIONS OR ACTIONS A USER MIGHT TAKE BASED ON THIS MAP.

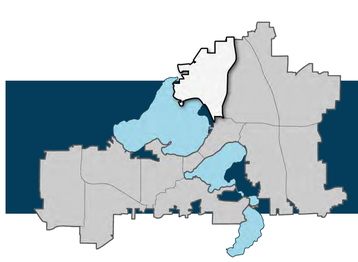
CITY OF MADISON ENGINEERING

0 1000 2000 Feet





New Affordable Housing Built 2015-2025



Housing: City Assisted Housing

Community Action Strategy Areas

The North Area Plan includes areas where more than 50% of households live with low- to moderate-incomes. These areas are known as Community Action Strategy (CAS) areas, and are shown on the map to the right. The CAS areas qualify for planning support and funding from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

During area plans, the City puts a special engagement focus on CAS areas. This includes hiring Community Partners to work with residents and other stakeholders to gather feedback about future growth and development. The North Area Plan will include a Community Action Strategy with protential projects and other recommendations specific to the CAS areas.



Hiestand Park Paint and Backpack CAS Event



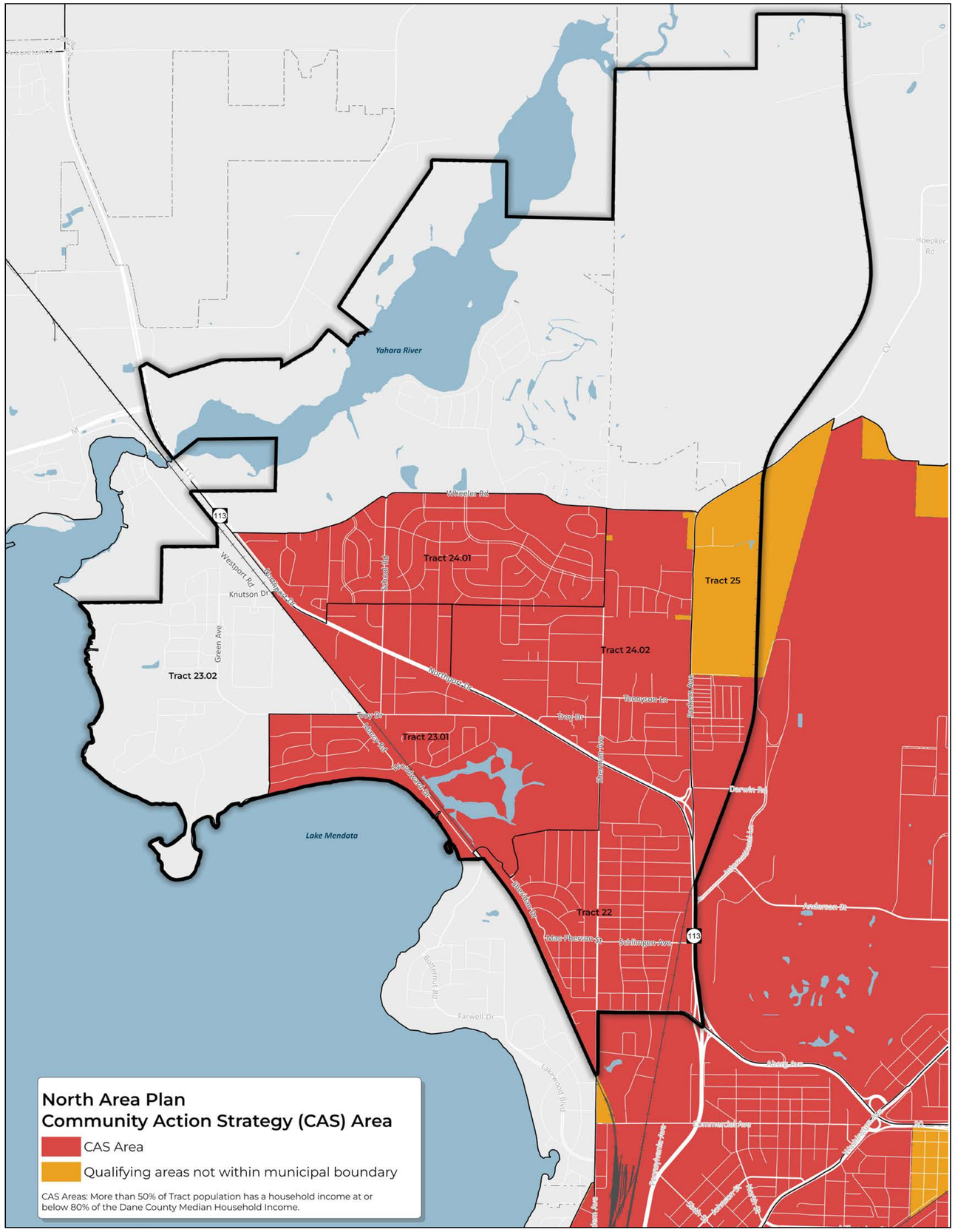
Honeysuckle Park Paint and Backpack CAS Event

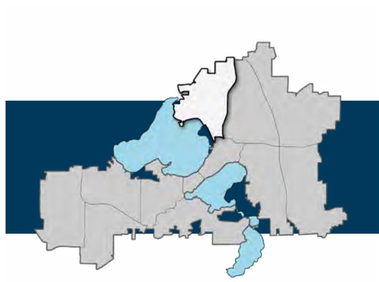


Peoples' Pronouns Sculpture in Emerson East Park

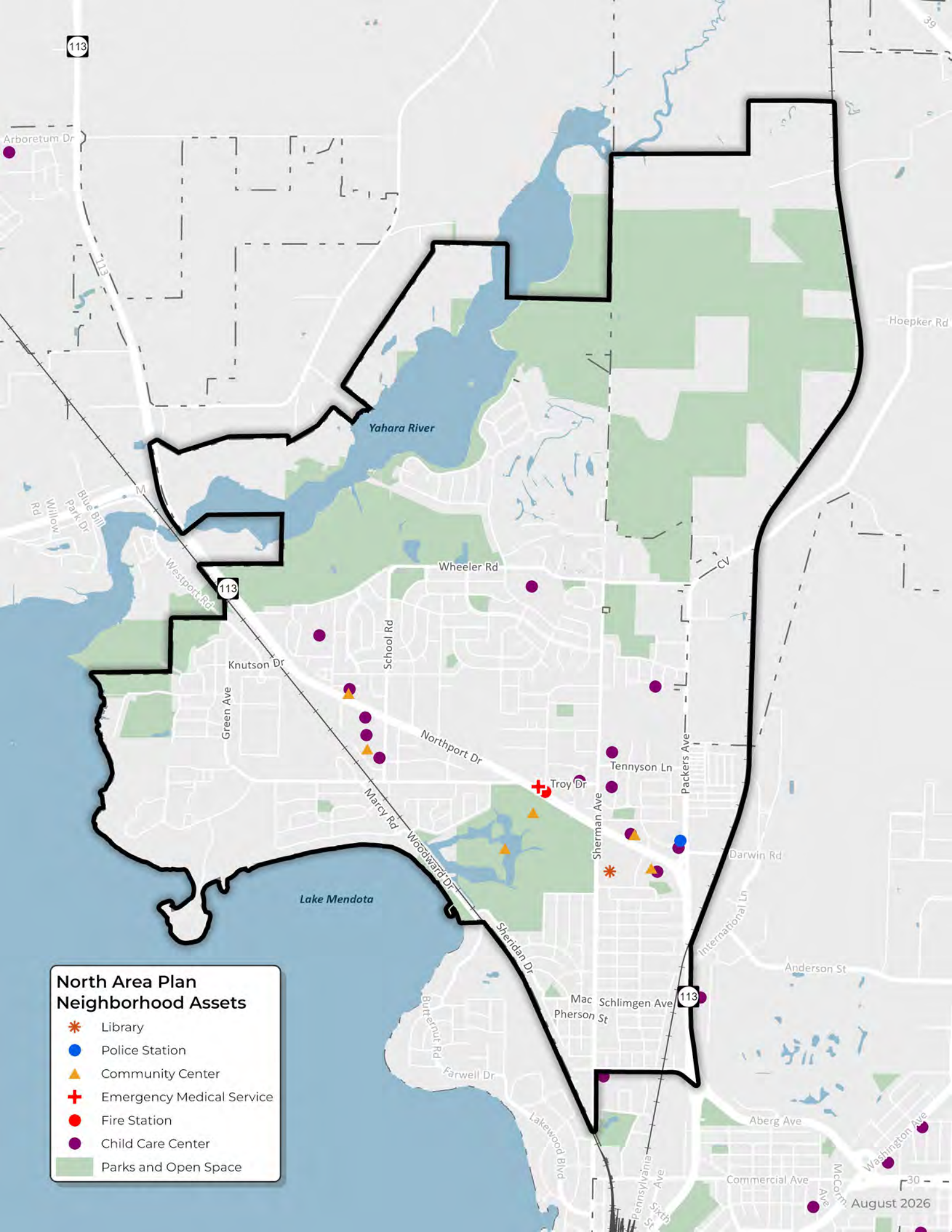


Hawthorne School Playground Gazebo





North Area Plan: Community Action Strategy Areas


North Area Plan
Neighborhood Assets
Library
Police Station
Community Center
Emergency Medical Service
Fire Station
Child Care Center
Parks and Open Space
Yahara River
Lake Mendota
Arboretum Dr
Hoepker Rd
Wheeler Rd
Westport Rd
Knutson Dr
School Rd
Green Ave
Northport Dr
Tennyson Ln
Troy Dr
Packers Ave
Sherman Ave
Marcy Rd
Woodward Dr
Sheridan Dr
Darwin Rd
International Ln
Anderson St
Schlimgen Ave
Pherson St
Butternut Rd
Farwell Dr
Lakewood Blvd
Aberg Ave
Commercial Ave
Washington Ave
Pennsylvania Ave
Sixth St
McCorm Ave
Blue Bill Park Dr
Willow Rd
113
39
30
August 2026