# Southeast Area Plan FAQ December 4, 2024

Q: What is planning and why does it matter?

A: Planning is a process focused on the development, design, and future use of land. Plans help asses expected population growth and determine how cities can accommodate future needs such as housing, jobs and transportation. Plans help determine how to best fit these needs to fit together like a puzzle. Planning is one of our most effective tools for limiting sprawl, slowing the loss of farmland, managing growth, slowing the increase in traffic, navigating change, and making tough decisions facing Madison. Without planning, Madison would grow in an undirected and haphazard way with many conflicting and incompatible activities and uses.
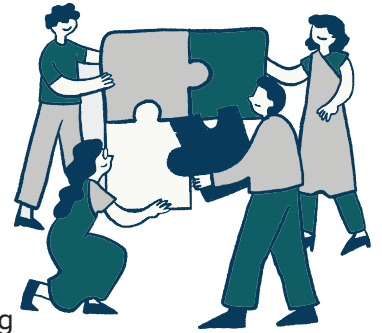
Q: What is the Comprehensive Plan?

A: The City's Comprehensive Plan covers many topics, as required by the State (section 66.1001). The Plan was shaped by an extensive community engagement effort called Imagine Madison, which included over 15,000 interactions with community members, creating a collective vision for a future Madison. The Plan seeks opportunities to address long-term issues, but focuses on action steps to guide the City's near-term efforts.

Q: What is the City's New Planning Framework?

A: In 2022, the Common Council approved a shift to a new planning framework with 12 Area Plans to simplify Madison's planning and make it more equitable. Overall, the City's prior approach to planning resulted in a variety of smaller area plans that were important to their neighborhoods. However, there were issues and challenges with this approach including the following:

- 70 adopted plans for different areas of the city.
- Plans that varied greatly in terms of when they were adopted (some date back to the 1980s), the size of the geographic area covered, the topics included and the level of detail.
- Recommendations in many of the adopted plans no longer reflect current City policies and priorities.
- Some areas of the city lacking a plan.
- Some areas of the city with overlapping plans - having different plan recommendations for the same geography can lead to confusion for all stakeholders.

The 12 Area Plans will be established over the next decade. After that, Area Plans will be updated every decade to reflect a changing city and keep Area Plan recommendations in sync with City initiatives.

Q: What do Area Plans cover?

A: Area Plans focus on guiding changes the physical aspects of our community, such as development initiated by the private sector and infrastructure improvements typically carried out by the public sector. Area Plan recommendations are structured around the Comprehensive Plan's seven elements.

Q: When will Area Plan recommendations be implemented/happen?

A: As with other City plans, the Southeast Area Plan is a long-term plan. The Plan will guide changes that occur incrementally over decades.

Q: How does an Area Plan relate to the Comprehensive Plan?

A: The Comprehensive Plan covers many topics and covers the entire City. The Area Plans apply the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations to the specific geography and include a greater level of detail than the citywide Comprehensive Plan.

The portion of the Comprehensive Plan's Generalized Future Land Use (GFLU) Map that overlaps the Southeast Area will be updated through the Southeast Area Plan process.

Q: How are Area Plans used?

A: Area Plans are used to guide the types and locations of new development, identify locations for investment in public infrastructure (ranging from parks and schools to sewers and paths), and help prioritize what policies, programs, and investments the community wants to pursue with limited resources.

Q: When did the Southeast Area Plan begin and how will the City engage the public?

A: In October 2024 the City Council passed **a resolution** directing City staff to undertake the Southeast Area Plan. The City will begin working with the public in a variety of ways, such as:

- Establishing a project email list, social media posts, library displays, flyers, and yard signs with links to project materials and public meeting announcements.
- Project website with planning process information, background materials, and draft plan materials for review and commenting.

Planning Process and Public Engagement

Phase Zero	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three	Phase Four
Data Gathering & Review	**Issues & Opportunities**	**Develop Recommendations**	**Draft Plan Review**	**Adoption & Implementation**
• Plan Authorization • Pop-up engagements (Parks Alive, resource fairs, etc) • Small group meetings (PTOs, Neighborhood Associations, etc.) • Online interactive commenting map • Background data gathering • Regular email notifications and website updates (applies to all phases)	• Multiagency Open House • Community survey (part 1) • Public Meetings (in-person/virtual) • Focus Group meetings • Review by Board, Commissions & Committees • Small group meetings (PTOs, Neighborhood Associations, etc.) • Check-in with adjacent municipalities & school districts	• Business Walk • Art Workshop • Public Meetings (in-person/virtual) • Boards, Commissions & Committees Check-in • Focus Group meetings • Small group meetings (PTOs, Neighborhood Associations, etc.)	• Public Meetings (in-person/virtual) • Focus Group meetings • Boards, Commissions & Committees Check-in • Public feedback on Draft Plan • Check-in with adjacent municipalities & school districts • Small group meetings (PTOs, Neighborhood Associations, etc.)	• Boards, Commissions & Committees Plan review & adoption • Implementation of Plan recommendations
JUN - NOV	**DEC - MAR**	**APR - SEP**	**OCT - MAR**	**APR**

- The City will hire a Public Engagement Specialist to focus on reaching residents and other stakeholders who are typically underrepresented in City processes.
- The City's Office of Business Resources will conduct surveys and connect with businesses in the planning area.
- Staff will meet with Neighborhood Associations, Parent Teacher Organizations and other Community groups to discuss ideas, concerns, issues and eventually draft plan recommendations.

Q: How can I stay up to date on the Southeast Area Plan process?

A: The project website includes:

- Information on the Southeast Area Plan process, including links to previous meeting recordings, presentation materials, and public review materials.
- A project email list sign-up to receive updates.
- A list of any scheduled upcoming public engagement events and City Board, Committee, and Commission meetings.

Feedback and comments can be provided at meetings or by commenting on the planning materials directly via the project website.

Q: What is the schedule for other Area Plan processes?

A: A map of area plan boundaries and a list of estimated upcoming area plan timeframes is available here. Those interested in upcoming area plan processes may sign up now to receive project emails for future projects. Email updates will be sent when a project kicks off.

Q: What is a Community Action Strategy (CAS)?

A: The City receives federal funding through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program to support community development initiatives primarily benefiting areas with low- to moderate-income residents. The eligible areas are defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Southeast Area Plan will include additional outreach to the Hiestand Neighborhood, an eligible Community Action Strategy (CAS) in the Planning Area.

While the rest of the Southeast Area Plan focuses on guiding land use and policy changes, CAS recommendations focus on topics such as: neighborhood capacity building, strengthening partnerships and relationships between City government and community, and small-scale physical improvements, such as art installations and traffic calming.

The City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Committee funds will implement eligible projects in the CAS area. Potential project ideas will be developed in partnership with residents and stakeholders in the Hiestand Neighborhood CAS area.

Land Use

Q: What's planned land use, what's zoning, and what's the difference?

A: Future land use maps generally show where different types of residential, commercial, employment, mixed-use, institutional, industrial, and parks and open space are recommended.

Zoning is a more specific tool that implements the plans if and when a property owner decides to build something new. It is an ordinance that regulates use, building form, and building location in specific detail. When a change in zoning is requested by a property owner it is reviewed for consistency with the City's Comprehensive Plan, including the Generalized Future Land Use Map.

For more on the difference between land use and zoning, please see this summary.

Q: Does the City propose development projects?

A: Generally, no, with occasional exceptions, such as when City-owned housing is being developed by the Community Development Authority (CDA) on CDA or City-owned land. Development on private property is proposed by property owners, potential property purchasers, and developers. City staff are often invited to meet with owners, developers, alders, and neighbors to discuss the consistency of a proposed development project with the recommendations in City plans and City regulations (such as the Zoning Ordinance).

Q: Do City staff approve development proposals?

A: Some developments are allowed as permitted uses under zoning and only require staff review to ensure the project meets City ordinances and regulations. Projects that require rezoning or conditional use approval must go through review by various City Boards, Committees, Commissions, and sometimes the City Council. City staff help facilitate the review of development of those proposals according to the process established in the Zoning code:

1. Property owners or developers typically contact the City with any questions about the zoning requirements for a property, any other development requirements, any plan recommendations that might apply to a property, and any review and approval steps needed to develop a property.

2. If City review and approval is needed, City staff setup pre-application discussions with owners, developers, alders, neighborhood groups, and the public to review project ideas in relation to adopted City plans and policies. If required, the City will direct developers to apply for rezoning, conditional use, demolition, and/or land division review.

3. Multiple City agencies (sometimes as many as fifteen agencies), including Planning, Zoning, City Engineering, Traffic Engineering, Parks, Forestry, and Fire, review development proposals for compliance with City ordinances and consistency with adopted plans and policies.

4. In most cases, developers will need to present a project to some, or all, of the following City Boards, Committees, and Commissions for final review and approval: Landmarks Commission, Urban Design Commission, Plan Commission, Common Council, or others. The public may comment on a proposal during these City Board, Committee, and Commission meetings.

Q: What is proactive rezoning?

A: Proactive rezoning is when the City, rather than a property owner or developer, proposes to rezone land so that it is consistent with plan recommendations. When the City proposes to proactively rezone areas during a planning process, it informs property owners about the recommendation and whether it could affect them. If proactive rezoning recommendations are approved as part of an adopted plan, the City would proceed with the rezoning process after plan adoption. The rezoning process includes sending notices to all directly affected property owners and those nearby, informing them of the process and City Board, Committee, and Commission review and approval meetings where public comment will be considered. The Common Council makes the final decision on whether or not to approve any rezoning.

Q: Why does the City look at proactive rezoning?

A: Proactive rezoning can help ensure implementation of future land use recommendations in adopted plans and prevent development inconsistent with planned uses. The City started reviewing proactive rezoning as part of the planning process when an Amazon distribution center was proposed for a vacant warehouse along Milwaukee Street shortly after the Milwaukee Street Special Area Plan was adopted in 2018. The plan's land use map called for residential and mixed-use development, but because the zoning for the former warehouse remained industrial, the Amazon project had to be approved as a permitted use. Due to that issue, proactive rezoning was pursued after the adoption of the Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan in 2020 to ensure consistency between planned land use and zoning. Additional proactive rezonings were implemented after the Odana Area Plan and the Greater East Towne Area Plan were adopted.

Q: Why does the future land use map need to change at all?

**A:** Madison continues to grow and change. Adjustments to how the city grows and changes are made in response to policy adopted by elected officials on behalf of those they represent and in response to residents and the needs of the growing city. While the city does continue to grow out with new subdivisions on the edge of Madison, it is also growing up in the downtown, campus, and along many corridors throughout the city. The City's Comprehensive Plan calls for facilitating compact growth to reduce the development of farmland, with one associated action being to "accommodate a majority of growth through infill and redevelopment." While the Comprehensive Plan covers the entire city, it did not review planned land use at the finer-grained level of detail and engagement that is possible in an Area Plan process. The enhanced level of review can lead to adjustments in planned land use to further the overall goals, strategies, and actions of the Comprehensive Plan. With Madison adding about 3,800 new residents a year, it is important to continue to provide a variety of living options in various parts of the city through new development and redevelopment.

Transportation

Q: Will the Southeast Area Plan process considering the City's <u>Complete Green Streets</u> Guide and its prioritization of pedestrians, buses, and bicyclists?

A: Yes, the City's Complete Green Streets Guide, adopted by Common Council in January 2023, will guide plan recommendations. This includes prioritizing pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders on most streets, according to the Guide's transportation priorities ("modal hierarchy").

Modal Hierarchy
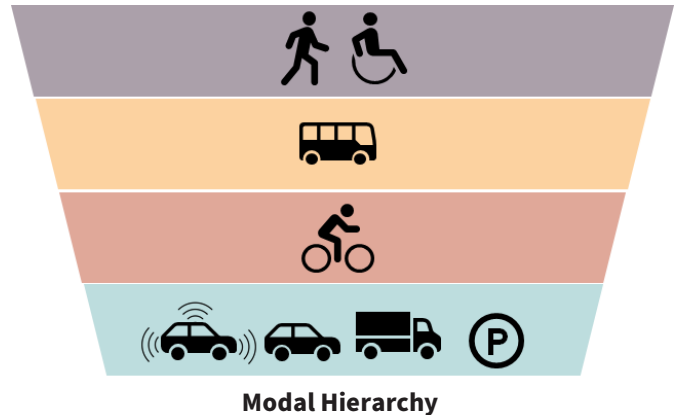
Q: Why do Area Plans sometimes show planned streets? Don't new street connections conflict with other City efforts like Vision Zero and Safe Streets Madison?

A: New street connections create additional route options to more locations for all users. Gaps in an otherwise connected street network reduces traffic on dead end streets at the expense of other adjoining streets, which must take on more traffic than they otherwise would. On a larger scale, funneling traffic to a limited number of streets and intersections decreases safety for all users, who must contend with intersections that become more daunting to cross. Further, planned streets being designed according to guidelines in the Complete Green Streets Guide can be built to safely and equitably accommodate all users. Existing streets can also be retrofitted to calm traffic.

Q: When will new sidewalks and/or planned streets be constructed and who pays for the construction?

A: The City has recently updated its <u>Policy for the Assessment of Street Improvements</u> in October 2022 – please review the Policy for assessment details. This policy states that new infill sidewalks installed separate from a street reconstruction project shall be assessed 100%, **but will be eligible for up to** 100**% grant reimbursement of these costs**. Sidewalk removed and replaced as part of the Sidewalk Replacement Program shall not be assessed. Any new additional sidewalk requested for replacement **by property owner** shall be paid 100%.

Q: How is the Southeast Area Plan related to the studies the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is working on for Highway 51 (South Stoughton Road)?

A: The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is studying Highway 51 (Stoughton Road) from Highway 30 south to Voges Road in McFarland for potential changes intended to improve safety, mobility, and reduce traffic congestion. The most important intersections within the Southeast Area are Milwaukee Street, Cottage Grove Road, Buckeye Road, Pflaum Road, and South Broadway and the 12/18 Beltline Highway. All intersection designs being evaluated are on <u>WisDOT's project webpage</u>.

Neighborhoods and Housing

Q: Is there really a housing crisis?

A: It's estimated that there is a national shortage of four to seven million homes, and the average rent nationwide has risen 30% since 2017. Locally, Madison has seen strong population growth, household creation, and in-migration, but the creation of new housing has not kept pace, leading to an imbalance of supply and demand that affects both housing availability and housing affordability. Median gross rent in Madison has increased approximately 40% in the last decade. More than half of renters are rent burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs. A healthy rental vacancy rate that creates a balance between rental property owners and renters is typically cited as between 5% and 7%, but the rental vacancy rate in Madison is currently below 4% and has not been above 5% in well over a decade. Similarly, the homeowner vacancy rate is approximately 0.5%, much lower than the "healthy" rate of 2%. Slow owner-occupied housing construction and low available inventory contributes to tight markets that increase sales prices. The average assessed value of a single-family home in Madison has increased by approximately 90% in the past decade and more than 20% of households that own their own residences are cost burdened. See the 2023 Housing Snapshot for more information.

Q: Does Madison really need this much housing and change? Can't we slow down?

A: Over 2,000 new housing units are needed every year just to keep up with household growth. However, this would do nothing to address the backlog or any of the indicators of the housing crisis identified above. It would just keep pace from this point forward. Hundreds of additional housing units need to be built every year just to begin to slow housing cost increases. The past two decades have indicated that slow housing production does not slow population growth, household creation, or in-migration. During the 13-year period between 2006 and 2019 (after which housing production began increasing), approximately 19,000 housing units were built in Madison, while the number of households increased over by 24,000. Slow housing growth and consistent population growth places the burden of the tight housing market on the city's lowest income households, who cannot compete with higher earners who could otherwise afford newly constructed housing but end up paying higher rents for established, naturally occurring affordable housing.

Q: Does the zoning already in place allow the housing we need?

A: While this may seem like a straightforward calculation, it's not really possible to determine the answer because so many apartment or condominium developments depend on conditional use review. For example, the Traditional Residential-Varied 2 (TR-V2) zoning district allows up to 12 dwellings without a conditional use review, but up to 60 dwellings if a conditional use permit is granted by the Plan Commission subject to the zoning ordinance's standards for conditional use approval. The type of development that can be allowed also depends on adjoining property use, lot dimensions, and other factors. Outside of zoning ordinance considerations, a landowner must also choose to develop or redevelop, and many landowners that may have the capacity to develop more units under the zoning code do not wish to change their properties.

Q: What is missing middle housing?

A: "Missing middle housing" refers to a range of housing types scaled between single-family detached houses and larger apartment buildings. Housing types that are considered as part of the missing middle include duplexes, triplexes, four-units, rowhouses, live-work buildings, accessory dwelling units (ADU), clustered small homes like bungalow courts, and some small apartment buildings. The scale of missing middle

housing is compatible with most existing single-family residential areas. Missing middle housing types can also be accommodated in Medium Residential areas and in Low Residential areas.

Missing Middle Housing

Q: How does the City develop its population projection?

A: The City is projecting Madison will add approximately 115,000 new residents between 2020 and 2050. The projection is based on two components: growth trends established by the 2000-2020 Decennial Census and a modified population projection prepared by the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission. For more details see this summary.

Q: How does the City coordinate with the school districts?

A: City staff regularly meets with Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) staff and their consultants to review estimated housing development and population assumptions to help the school district anticipate and plan for potential enrollment changes. Additionally, a school district representative from MMSD has a designated seat on the City's Plan Commission, enabling MMSD to be informed about and participate in discussions about all City plans and proposed developments considered by the Plan Commission. City staff also meets with other school districts for areas within Madison that are not a part of MMSD boundaries.

Economy and Opportunity

Q: What is a TID? What does it mean to be included in the TID boundary?

A: Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is an economic development and governmental finance tool that the City uses to provide funds to construct public infrastructure, promote development opportunities, and expand future tax base. The City seeks to use TIF to enhance the built environment in concert with adopted plans and to strengthen the City's economic foundation in an equitable manner. TIF assistance in Madison is only used when proposed development would not occur "but for" City assistance. A Tax Incremental District (TID) is a contiguous area identified for development using Tax Incremental Financing. Madison identifies projects in a TID plan to encourage and facilitate the desired development. As property values rise, usually due to development, the City can use the property tax paid on that development to pay for the projects. Owners of property in a TID pay the same rate of taxes that owners outside the TID pay. Being within a TID does not freeze or increase property taxes. It simply allows the City to dedicate money from increased property tax collections due to higher property values towards projects that benefit the TID. Public parkland is sometimes contained within the boundary of a TID to maintain a contiguous boundary with developable properties, but its presence within the boundary does not indicate it is intended for development. Similarly, other properties within a TID may simply be included to maintain a contiguous boundary, even when the TID plan or City plans do not plan for redevelopment of those properties.

Culture and Character

Q: What is an Urban Design District (UDD)? What impacts do Urban Design Districts have on development and building design?

A: Urban Design Districts ensure development contributes to creating a high quality, well-designed built environment within certain areas of the city. There are currently eight Urban Design Districts that are generally located along the city's major transportation corridors or gateways into the city.

The Southeast area Plan includes Urban Design District #1. Map Link Each Urban Design District is unique and establishes requirements and guidelines for new development, buildings, remodeling, or additions to existing buildings, some being more prescriptive than others. While the guidelines and requirements are different in each district, generally they address building design (building height, setbacks, and stepbacks), design and quality of exterior materials and architectural detailing, lighting, signage, the design of private open space, landscaping, and screening.

Green and Resilient

Q: Can the City require that new housing and other development include solar panels and heat pumps?

A: The Wisconsin State Building Code prevents the City from requiring that new development include solar panels and heat pumps.

Q: What is the City doing to preserve trees? How does the Planning Division coordinate with other agencies like the Streets Division and its Urban Forestry Section?

A: The City highly values its urban tree canopy and works to maintain and enhance it in multiple ways across various City agencies. The City's 2020 Urban Forestry Task Force Report lays out goals and recommendations to achieve a diverse, resilient, and thriving urban canopy. The Report recommends tree preservation and planting guidelines primarily in circumstances where the City has control, such as with private development subject to City review, along streets, on the grounds of public facilities, and in parks and greenways. The Report helps inform the work of City agencies like the Streets Division's Urban Forestry Section, which is responsible for tree planting, pruning, and maintenance along City streets. It also informs City Engineering's tree management in stormwater facilities.

The Planning Division uses the Urban Forestry Task Force Report and other adopted plans and policies and coordinates with City agencies like Engineering and Urban Forestry to make recommendations through its Area Plans to enhance the tree canopy along streets and on other public land, and in some cases through coordination with private property owners to create publicly accessible wooded areas that link to public greenspaces.

For more on the Southeast Area Plan, including upcoming meetings, commenting/feedback opportunities, and project manager contact information, please visit the project website.