



# UA UNIVERSITY AVENUE CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

## Report for Public Workshop #2 May 29, 2013

On May 29, 2013, the City of Green Bay held the second of six planned community workshops designed to shape the future of University Avenue. This meeting was devoted to fostering meaningful community participation based on four key subject areas of transportation, land use, business market, and quality of life. Approximately 60 community members attended the event, demonstrating a level of public interest the subject area had not seen before.

The event was held at Nicolet Elementary School which included a presentation by City staff from the Planning and Economic Development Departments. Staff informed the residents of Green Bay this project was selected by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) to receive grant funding. Staff explained that the U.S. EPA funding will allow for the facilitation of significant public participation and the creation of area-wide redevelopment strategies based around brownfield sites (commonly referred to as contaminated sites).

After the brief presentation, participants broke into pre-assigned groups to complete table exercises administered around the four subject areas listed above. Each station was staffed by a facilitator from the project team, so that participants had the option of writing their own responses or having their thoughts recorded for them.

Each station asked basic questions about the survey areas. The majority of respondents affirmed that they either live in the planning area or near the planning area. Out of approximately 55 people who responded to the surveys, 16 said that they owned a business in the area, were employed in the area, or were developers/landlords in the planning area. Thus the overwhelming majority of the participants confirmed that they live in Green Bay with their residences in or adjacent to the subject area. In fact, over 80% of these participants have lived in and/or done business in the corridor for more than 10 years.

### **Open House Feedback**

The process and results from each open house station are summarized below.

#### Transportation

Input at this station identified perceptions of the transportation conditions within the University Avenue Corridor. The exercise consisted of group mapping to identify transportation related concerns which were conveyed on the maps themselves. A summary of the concerns revealed the transportation infrastructure current needs were as follows:

- Dangerous speeds at the east end of the corridor;
- Bad truck route – very narrow and no pedestrian buffer from the curb;
- Missing direct and signed non-motorized connection to East River Trail, Fox River Trail, Bay Beach, Wildlife Sanctuary, and Baird Creek;
- Confusing intersections near the I-43 interchange and Elizabeth Street crossings;
- Need more multimodal options in the corridor and not just adjacent areas;
- Waste and smell from trucks delivering goods to the processing plant(s) that are located on the corridor;
- Lack of bus shelters.

To address these concerns, participants overwhelmingly supported increasing pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Some example elements to address the non-motorized concerns include adding bicycle connections to the parks and trail systems, VA clinic, grocery stores, UWGB, and other destinations. Participants also stated transportation improvements for motorized vehicles were also needed. Several groups specifically recommended the placement of a roundabout(s) at the east end of the corridor to slow the traffic to a safe speed when approaching the corridor.

*Land Use*

This station combined a survey and several mapping exercises. The survey sought feedback on what types of land uses people wanted to see if there is to be redevelopment in the corridor, what types of land uses are too prevalent, and what types of uses should increase along the corridor. The top three types of land uses respondents wanted to see more of were retail/commercial, public space/parks, and institutional (such as schools, medical services, government, etc.).

To further analyze the question, the chart below summarizes responses to the question of whether there are too many or too few specific land uses along the corridor.

Category	Too Little	Just Right	Too Much
Industrial	9%	57%	34%
Retail/ Commercial	88%	10%	2%
Single Family Residential	15%	59%	26%
Multi-Family Residential	16%	51%	33%
Institutional	33%	62%	4%
Parks and Open Space	80%	20%	0%

Respondents generally felt that the current amount of industrial, single-family residential, multi-family residential, and institutional uses were appropriate for the corridor. The overwhelming majority of people found that current retail/commercial and parks and open space uses drastically underserve the immediate population. There was no majority saying there is too much of a specific land use. Retail/commercial businesses were the most-cited desires as participants expressed the need for additional restaurants and shops in the immediate area as they do not want to travel to the west side and Ashwaubenon for everyday dining and shopping.

The station also asked people to rank three aesthetic improvements they would like to see. Five choices were given, and a ranking of 1 (most desired) to 3 was requested (responses that included more than one of the same number were not counted in this summary). Highest-priority items were landscaping and building-related design/improvements. Lowest-priority items were signage enhancements and parking area improvements.

Participants were also asked to rank ten specific building design elements. People were asked to rank each element by order of importance to gather more details on what people would like to see in future development along the corridor. Lower numbers were the more important elements. Averages were derived from the rankings, and each element is shown below:

1. Building setback/parking design (3.74)
2. Landscaping (3.76)
3. Pedestrian orientation and amenities (3.87)
4. Building façade (3.97)

5. Appropriate signage (5.41)
6. Building materials (5.42)
7. Building density (5.54)
8. Building mass and height (5.60)
9. Parking lot design (6.18)
10. Window size, shape, number, etc. (6.77)

Additional comment/suggestions included the following:

- University Ave should have a specialty shop look like Door County.
- Pedestrian friendly corridor
- Need overlay zoning encompassing the above
- No need for Martha's Vineyard uniformity. Free flow design is best. Let it suit the need of the businesses; not vice-versa.
- The design has to be people friendly and aesthetic to attract people to the area.
- Make corridor cohesive
- Parking at Hardware Hank too busy and too dangerous sometimes--too many businesses for area
- Cut grass more often, corner of University Av. and St Anthony Dr.
- Stay to one specific type of architecture for new buildings.
- Remember that University is a mix of businesses and homeowners and the needs of the single family is very important.

In addition to these elements, staff specifically asked where patrons would prefer to see parking in relation to buildings. An equal amount of patrons prefer to see parking in the front (35%) and rear (37%) of a building. This could be a fundamental question for the future design of the entire corridor as three top-rated design elements responses were building setback/parking design, landscaping, and pedestrian orientation and amenities. Each one of these items directly relates to building placement within a parcel. The look, feel, and style of the building were lower on the priority rankings.

#### Business Environment

This station asked a series of questions regarding people's shopping and commuting habits. About 75% of participants visit the corridor more than five times per month for shopping or services, and most of those trips occur during the weekday. Only 3 of the 48 people answering the surveys said that it takes them more than 15 minutes to travel to the corridor from their houses. Once people get to the corridor, most of them are there for shopping or services (61%), with lesser amounts commuting through (19%) or working in the corridor (14%). Given the number of survey respondents who live close to (or in) the corridor and the number of trips they take per month to visit corridor businesses, it is not surprising that most people do their weekly errands close to their homes.

However, in spite of the number of times per month that most people visit University Avenue businesses, most (over two-thirds) go to East Town Mall (35%) and Bay Park Square Mall (31%) for their specialty shopping needs. Responses were evenly split between University Avenue and East Town Mall area for most-frequented retail area, suggesting that more people travel to University Avenue for necessities as opposed to specialty goods.

Feedback on the corridor's strengths and weaknesses were varied. Major strengths that were listed included:

- Central location;
- Grocery store (University Avenue Market);

- Several specific stores/businesses (gas stations, Walgreens, CVS, mechanics)

The weaknesses were more building and use specific, with the top three responses being lack of variety in shopping, empty buildings, lack of variety in restaurants, and a general lack of assorted retail in the immediate area. Other responses also included:

- Need more business types;
- Beautification needed;
- Transportation improvements;
- Sidewalk safety with traffic and flooding;
- Traffic light timing

Finally, participants were asked what type of businesses they would prefer to see within the corridor.

Participants listed the most desired additional retail for the area as restaurants. Many people cited having to travel further from their home to enjoy a night out. This was followed by the desire for University Avenue to encompass more clothing stores and specialty shops. A few people requested “inexpensive hardware stores”, “another grocery store”, and one person simply requested “a big box store”.

*Quality of Life*

The Quality-of-Life station consisted of two main exercises: filling out a survey that asked people to rank various quality-of-life factors on a scale (“not a concern”, “concern”, “major concern”) and placing dots on a map to indicate amenities and nuisances.

Sixteen quality-of-life issues were rated by survey respondents. Results from each question are summarized in the table below (with the highest number highlighted for each category):

Description	Not a Concern	Concern	Major Concern
Deteriorating Condition of Properties	2	16	30
Need for additional community gathering areas	15	21	10
Gaps in current retail options and retail mix	3	24	23
Problems with drainage/stormwater management	17	20	9
Unaffordable housing	33	10	3
Traffic Congestion or conflicts	9	24	17
Inadequate or poorly placed parking	17	21	10
Barriers to bicycle, pedestrian, and bus options, access, and convenience	13	21	14
Bicycle and pedestrian safety	7	26	15
Areas where adjacent land uses are not compatible	7	21	13
Amount of personal crime (theft, assault)	6	17	25
Amount of property crime (vandalism, trespassing)	9	17	20
Need for clearance of blight, assembly, and sale of development sites	1	23	17
Need for improved visual aesthetics, appearance, beautification	1	23	22
Need for additional vegetation/green cover along public right-of-way and in private property	7	24	16
Need for private investment in site and building improvements	4	20	18

Generally speaking, the “blight” and “safety” categories received the most “major concerns”. The majority of the table shows the need for blight clearance, need for aesthetics improvements/beautification, need for additional landscaping, and need for additional private investment in sites and buildings, etc. (all had significant amounts of concern). On the other end of the spectrum, lack of affordable housing appears to be the least of the concerns for the corridor. The crime concerns are particularly interesting as they were not rated very highly during the Business Environment weaknesses response stated above as it only garnered two related responses.

**Conclusions**

While all of the comments and opinions received help to tell the story of the current state along University Avenue and the surrounding neighborhoods, they also show the community interest in filling gaps where much is desired. In reviewing the whole of the responses, several themes stand out as strong, and a few conclusions can be drawn regarding the necessary steps as the University Avenue Corridor Brownfield Redevelopment planning process moves forward.

#### Strongest Themes

The results of this workshop help to clarify and set direction for the next steps in the planning process. Several predominant themes rose to the forefront by appearing under several exercises. **Transportation improvements** were one such category. Participants documented safety concerns for both site-specific and corridor-wide pedestrian/bicycle safety. In addition, several documented the concerns for vehicular safety with the higher speeds and larger truck traffic throughout the corridor. **Building and site reuse** was another reoccurring theme throughout the event. The open-ended question at each station often cited concerns that vacant structures/parcels and un-maintained properties in neglect lead to the negative perception of an unsafe and unappealing area. Participants cited reusing the vacant lots and buildings that currently exist before entering into open areas to the east. **Landscaping and Parks** were expressed as a need within the corridor as a way to increase quality of life, visual aesthetics, and green cover. Considering there is a lack of parks directly along the corridor, more convenient access to the Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary and Baird Creek Preserve may serve as resolve. **Crime and Security** was largely commented on especially in terms of crime control within higher concentrated residential areas. The final major take away communicated at the public open house is **increasing the business mix**. Not one land use was listed as "too much" for the corridor, but several were listed as too little. Retail and commercial were the primary areas of concern. Participants often cited a lack of specialty/clothing shopping and the lack of restaurants as reasons for visiting other shopping destinations throughout the region.

These and other notable patterns emerge to demonstrate a need to further explore certain areas. The next stages in the planning process will take this information and dig deeper to find additional information before returning to the public process with new ideas and concepts.