

## **Chapter 1: Introduction and Stakeholder Input**

### **1.1 Study Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this study is to create a redevelopment plan and implementation strategy for the Anton Drive Planning Area. The plan will help the City and property owners respond to and leverage changing conditions in the area, especially the pending Verona Road reconstruction project. Beginning in the fall of 2016, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) will begin work on improvements to Verona Road in the City of Fitchburg, including two new grade-separated interchanges at McKee Road and Williamsburg Way. The project also features several important changes to local streets, including the extension of Fitchrona Road to Anton Drive, through the Wingra Stone property. These changes will reduce the visibility of some Anton Drive parcels and change access routes to and from the planning area.

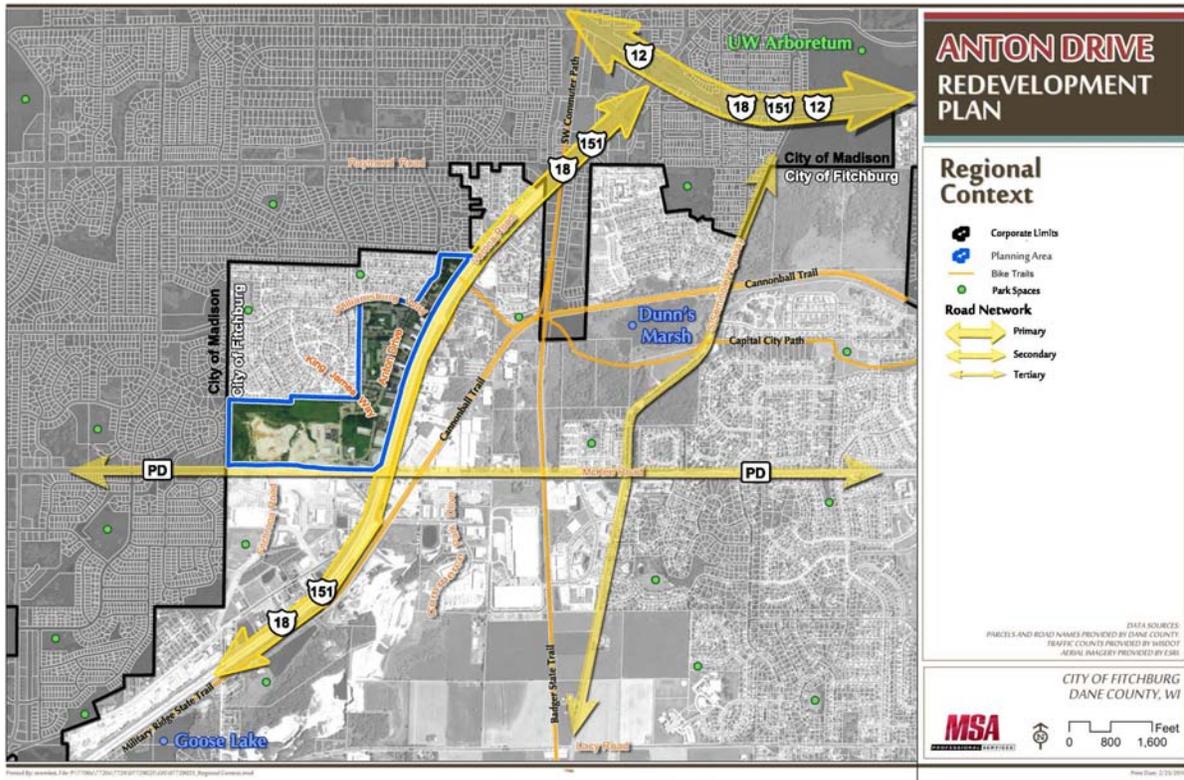
The objectives of this study include:

- Identify development and redevelopment opportunities in the planning area, including planning for any sites where a change in use is likely or desirable
- Identify market opportunities and trends likely to influence redevelopment decisions and outcomes
- Identify any infrastructure improvements (water, wastewater, stormwater, etc.) needed to accommodate new development
- Project future traffic patterns and volumes to identify any traffic-related constraints on new uses in the planning area
- Enhance bike, pedestrian, and transit accessibility throughout the planning area
- Identify opportunities to support and improve the Jamestown Neighborhood
- Establish a plan for new development, including uses, intensity of use, and urban design guidance, within the constraints of public infrastructure systems
- Create an action plan for things the City can do to implement the plan

### **1.2 Planning Area**

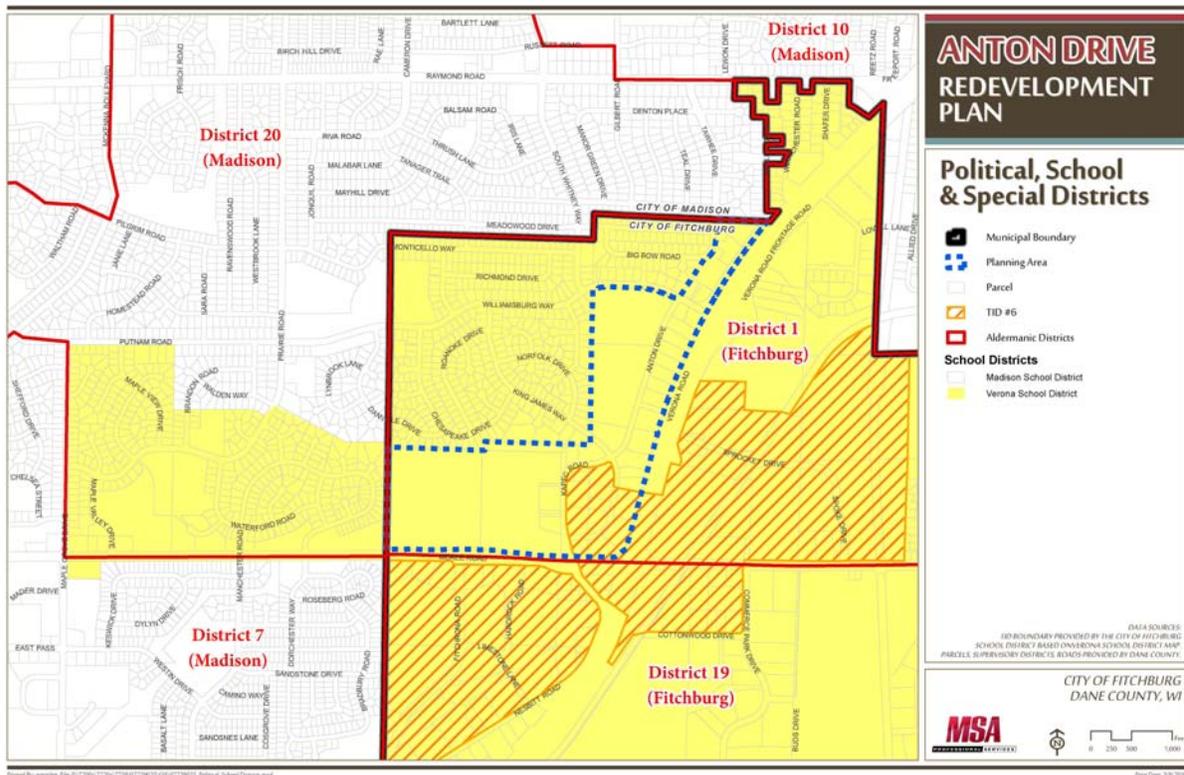
Geographic Area. The Anton Drive Planning Area is approximately 152 acres, which includes 61 acres under ownership of Wingra Stone Company. As shown in the Regional Context Map (on the next page), the study area is bounded by:

- US-151/18 (Verona Road) to the east,
- Fitchburg city limits and Maple-Prairie Neighborhood (in the City of Madison) to the west,
- Jamestown and Western Hills Neighborhoods to the north, and
- McKee Road (CTH PD) to the south.



Study Area Overview. This area is a major gateway into the City of Fitchburg from the south – US 18/151 transitions into the urban development character of the City of Fitchburg and the Madison Metro area at McKee Road. This area serves as a major highway commercial district for the City. Current uses are a mix of office, retail, service, storage and residential uses; buildings were constructed from the 1950’s (Wingra Stone) to the early 2000’s. There is no direct access to the highway from any parcel; however, there are three roads that currently connect to US 18/151 that provides easy access to the regional highway system (i.e. Williamsburg Way, Carriage Street and McKee Road). There are significant pedestrian/bike facilities *near* the study area, including the Capital City Path, Badger State Trail, Military Ridge State Trail, SW Commuter Path and Cannonball Trail, though no dedicated bike facilities within the study area beyond the Capitol City Trail connection to Williamsburg Way at Verona Road.

The study area is in the western portion of Aldermanic District 1. The entire study area is within the Verona Area School District, as is a portion of the adjoining neighborhood to the west of the Wingra Stone site in the City of Madison (see the Political, School and Special Districts Map on the next page). A portion of the planning area is part of Tax Incremental District (TID) #6, including the undeveloped lots on Kapec Dr. and King James Way.



### 1.3 Planning Process Summary

This plan was developed over a 12-month period beginning in January 2016. The process included the following meetings and presentations.

*[descriptions to be added later]*

- Stakeholder Interviews
- Steering Committee Meetings
- Public Meetings
- City Committee Reviews

### 1.4 Stakeholder Feedback Summary

#### STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

MSA Project Manager Jason Valerius and City of Fitchburg Director of Economic Development Mike Zimmerman conducted 20 interviews with property and business owners during the month of February, 2016. The interview process included representatives of 13 of the 31 businesses in the study area, plus representatives of the Willow Run Condominiums and New Fountains Apartments.

This is an abbreviated summary of the interview findings. See the appendix for the complete summary.

## FINDINGS

Employment. Among those businesses we spoke to, average employment is roughly ten (10) people, and the estimated average number of full-time equivalents is five (5), reflecting the fact that these are mostly service and retail businesses and roughly two-thirds of the employees in the area are part-time.

Activity and Traffic. Most businesses reported only a handful of deliveries per day or week, though Mounds Pet Food Warehouse can have 8-10 semi-truck deliveries on busy weekdays. Some sites do not have space for trucks to turn around, requiring semis to block traffic while backing into the site. The greatest generator of truck traffic in the study area is the Wingra Redi-Mix plant, which can generate 300 truck trips per day at peak production.

The greatest source of customer trips is the PDQs, which can generate about 500-1,000 trips per day. Other uses generate less - the furniture stores, for example, are bringing in 20-100 trips per day. Operating hours in the area are typically within the hours of 8 AM to 9 PM, though Wingra Redi-Mix sometimes operates 24 hours per day to supply highway construction projects.

Parking. Few businesses have or anticipate a parking problem, except Madison Swim Academy, where they use on-street parking during peak periods but will lose that when Kapec Drive is reconfigured in 2017. Parking is all accommodated with surface lots, however the new building at the corner of McKee Road and Verona Road will have underground parking, funded through Tax Incremental Financing (TIF), to enable a three-story building on that small site.

Alternative Modes of Transportation. Most employees and customers of businesses in the area arrive by personal vehicle, though neighborhood residents use the Metro bus system.

Carriage Street. The adjoining businesses want Carriage Street to be maintained in its current form when it is cut off from Verona Road. Some sort of change to Anton Drive to improve safety turning out of Carriage Street would be appreciated.

Impact of the Verona Road Improvement Project. All businesses anticipate some challenges to maintain customer traffic during construction, though most expect those challenges to be modest and manageable. At least one business that expects to discontinue its retail functions, and another that may be affected by the noise of construction occurring very close to its building.

The closure of carriage Street is not anticipated by business owners to have a significant impact on success in the corridor. Businesses in one-story buildings on King James Way expect to have severe visibility constraints and several believe that change will reduce their revenue and competitiveness. Though most businesses are not concerned about the change in access at Kapec Drive and McKee Road, PDQ may consider relocating once it loses a convenient route back to the highway at McKee.

Undeveloped parcels. There are currently five ready-to-build parcels between Kapec Road and King James Way; owners are open to any sale or development opportunity that allows a reasonable return on their investment. Wingra

Stone expects to continue operating their concrete plant, but their lands to the north and west of the extended Fitchrona Road are expected to be available for development within five years.

Redevelopment Plans. Most of the existing businesses and property owners plan to continue operating in their current buildings without significant changes or additions. Exceptions to this are the planned development of 3-story office buildings near the intersection of Verona Road and McKee Road, and interest in redevelopment by the owners of the commercial strip building on Williamsburg Way.

Preferences for Other New Uses. Everyone wants more commercial uses, especially retail and service businesses. Residents and office space owners want more consumer-oriented uses; current retail and service businesses owners would be happy with just about any new uses that bring more consumers into the area.

Signage. Most business owners were already aware that the city adopted new, flexible sign regulations for the Verona Road corridor, and Mike Zimmerman directed everyone likely to need a new sign in some way to contact Susan Badtke at the City Planning Department.

Crime, Vandalism and Public Safety. We heard very few concerns about crime or safety. The Fitchburg Police are very present, and even nuisance issues like vandalism are rare. Apartment dwellers experienced a notable uptick in break-ins and thefts in the last quarter of 2015. We heard concerns about the behavior of customers frequenting the Williamsburg Way PDQ, including loitering near the store and litter problems along the route between PDQ and the Jamestown neighborhood.

Utilities. Based on these interviews, public and private utility infrastructure in the planning area is in excellent condition.