

From hot dogs to housing, first developments on former Oscar Mayer plant

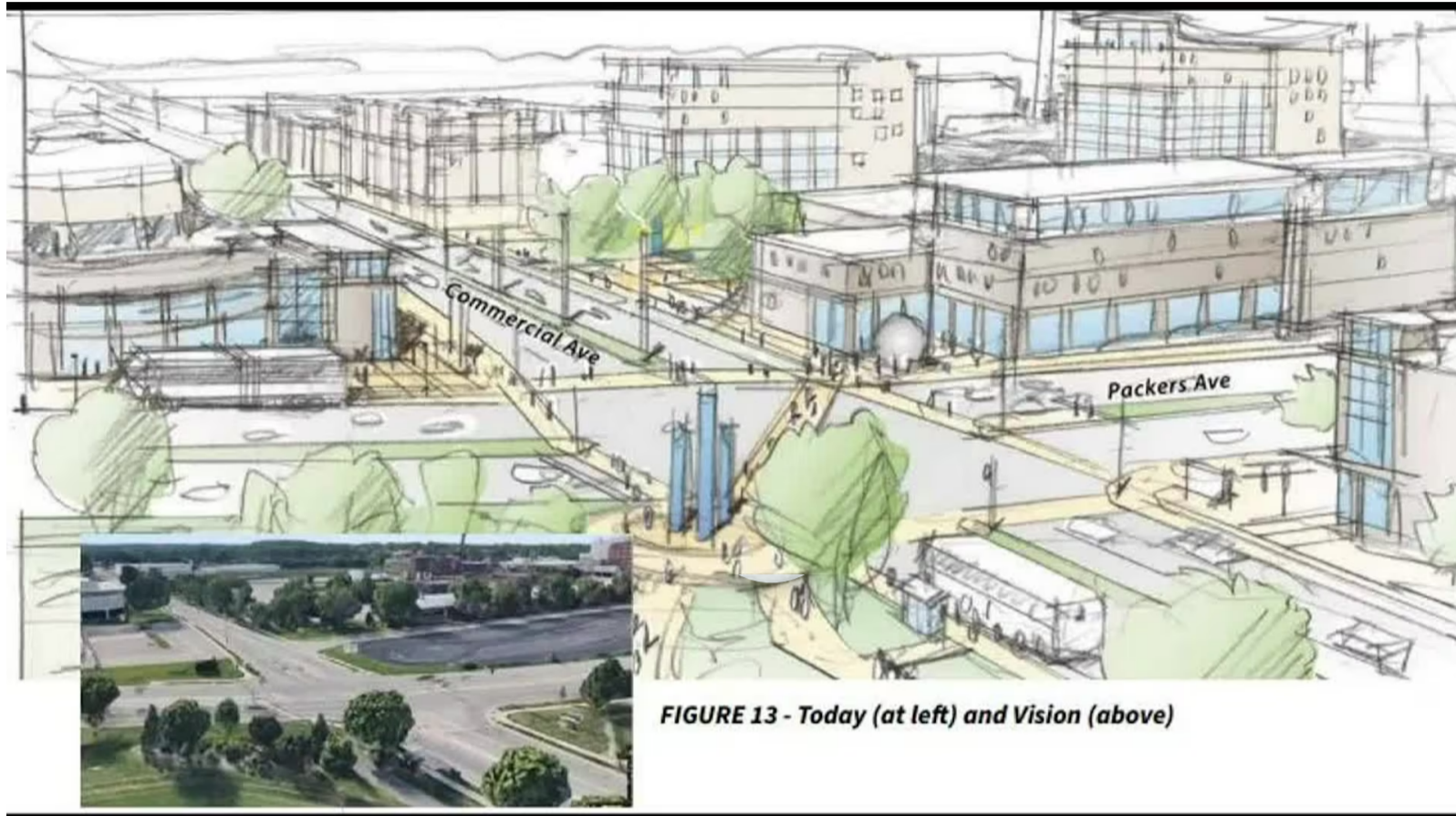


FIGURE 13 - Today (at left) and Vision (above)

After operating on Madison's north side for almost 100 years, the Oscar Mayer plant closed its doors for good in 2017.

By [Maria Lisignoli](#)

Published: Jan. 5, 2023 at 9:04 PM EST

MADISON, Wis. (WMTV) - After operating on Madison's north side for almost 100 years, the Oscar Mayer plant closed its doors for good in 2017. Now, for one of the first times since its closure, developers are breaking ground on the Oscar Mayer campus to create affordable housing.

Located on the former parking lot and green space of the Oscar Mayer plant at 2007 Roth Ave., [Lincoln Avenue Capital](#) Regional Project Partner Kevin McDonell is constructing two new affordable housing developments. The price of rent is based on household size and income; McDonell said incomes will range between \$40,000 to \$100,000 per year. One building is a 250-unit senior development called The Victoria at Huxley Yards which will include a senior community center.

"The city of Madison, really the closest Senior Center is downtown. And we know a lot of the seniors don't all live downtown, so it'll be a great option for seniors to come, they have community activities and get together," McDonell said.

"And within that development, actually there's a group called an Employment and Training Association that works out of the Dane County Job Center. They're planning to utilize some of our classroom space to do some job trainings for residents, and for the community as a whole," McDonell said.

"We help people develop career pathways in training opportunities that they might be interested in to help them obtain employment that is in demand that has decent wage and opportunities for advancement," [Employment and Training Association](#) Executive Director Jon Danforth said.

The resource for residents will be just down the hall. Danforth said he expects the new classroom to look much like the one inside Dane County Job Center.

"It's gonna be a great opportunity for us to expand our ability to serve people. Like if they're working already. They're underemployed. They want to get involved in training, but they just can't do it because of their work schedule," Danforth said. These developments break ground in the late spring of 2023 and will be the largest investment so far in the [Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan](#) which repurposes about 425 acres of the former Oscar Mayer plant and surrounding area. At its peak in the 1970s, the Oscar Mayer plant on Madison's north side employed about 4,000 workers.

"A major job site within the city of Madison," City of Madison Planning Division Director Heather Stouder said. "All the neighborhoods surrounding it sort of grew up around it. It was a really great example of, you know, a walkable, walkable place to get to work for literally 1000s of people."

However, since closing in 2017, the plant has sat mostly empty. Stouder said this special area plan will breathe new life into the once vibrant industrial area. "I think this near north side location is fantastic because of its proximity to transit, again, employment, other amenities that people need in their daily lives. It's extremely accessible to get downtown quickly," Stouder said.

Stouder called these new developments a jumping point for future investors to turn other parts of the former production plant and corporate offices into a hub for housing and employment.

"From a city staff perspective, we really want for this near north side, to evolve into something that has opportunities for everyone, you know, regardless of their income, their job status," Stouder said.

"We're really hopeful that our development can play a key role in that plan... promote future investment to the Oscar Mayer area," McDonell said.