

January 25, 2010

*Dear Plan Commission and Planning and Development Department,*

*As some of you know, Capitol Neighborhoods Inc (CNI) formed an ad-hoc committee in the Fall of 2007 to address the Downtown Plan being developed by the city of Madison.*

*Taking the charge seriously from the beginning, our group met several times over the last two and a half years, and had members present at all of the Planning Department's public meetings. The group and its members also met with Bill Fruhling on various occasions, and Bill and Archie were even kind enough to host one of our meetings at the Downtown Plan Public Office on W. Mifflin St.*

*In the Fall of 2008, CNI submitted two documents to Planning and Development via Bill Fruhling. The first submission was the group's recommendations addressing the Seven Issue Areas defined in the Downtown Advisory Report (Schreiber/Anderson, Howick, 2004). The second submission addressed the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan (January 2006).*

*The pages to follow are a reproduction of the first submission.*

*The Downtown Advisory Report organized its suggestions among Seven Issue Areas: Land Use, Housing, Transportation, Economic Development, Open Space & Recreation, Civic & Cultural, and Urban Design.*

*In the pages below, we list the DAR's Goals and Recommendations, and then add a third section with our group's additional recommendations. Finally, we added an Eighth Issue Area, "Quality of Life" which addresses points not well represented in or well suited for other areas. These recommendations were endorsed by CNI's Executive Council in advance of submission.*

*As the Downtown Plan Process is now taking a revitalized step forward on the city level, we wanted to re-present our recommendations to the Planning Department, and also include the Plan Commission. We hope that you find our recommendations helpful as you address the Planning Department's proposal, and we pledge to remain vigil as a neighborhood organization representing downtown residents as the process moves forward in 2010.*

*All the best,  
Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc Downtown Plan Ad Hoc Committee*

*Melissa Berger, chair  
Jonathan Cooper  
Ledell Zellers*

*Fred Mohs  
Davy Mayer  
Peter Ostlind*

***Capitol Neighborhoods supports sustainable practices in all downtown planning practices and initiatives. The concept of sustainability should be implicit in all aspects of creating and implementing a downtown plan.***

## **1. LAND USE**

### ***Land Use Goals Summary***

1. Downtown should be a place to live, work, learn, recreate, gather, shop, dine & enjoy entertainment.
2. Downtown should consist of strong neighborhoods, relatively high density compact development & a mixture of interconnected uses & activities.
3. Downtown will balance the preservation of historic character & resources with opportunities for new growth & development.
4. Downtown planning and decision-making will be coordinated with the City, the University of Wisconsin, & the State.

### ***Land Use Recommendations Summary***

1. *Ensure new growth and development complements & connects to surroundings.*
2. Evaluate the development review process.
3. *Improve relationships & communication among developers, City & neighborhoods.*
4. Coordinate efforts between the State, the UW and the City.
5. Expand retail on King Street, E. Wilson Street, the State Street District & the Square.
6. Prepare & update neighborhood plans.
7. Establish land use districts & sub-districts to guide downtown development.

### ***CNI Committee's Additional Recommendations***

1. Land Use Goals must be supported by transportation plans.
2. Be sensitive to the close proximity of incompatible uses (e.g. nightlife and residence, etc).
3. Downtown Plan should be congruent with established neighborhood plans.
4. Guard historic character of neighborhoods by being wise about where development happens.
5. Downtown Planning and decision making should be coordinated with Madison Metropolitan School District.
- 6 All new development in the downtown should go through UDC review.
7. Enforce maintenance requirements for downtown building stock (residential, commercial, and institutional).
8. Preserve and promote adaptive re-use of original building stock.
9. We do not advocate surface parking.
10. "Recognize that infill development is not inherently "good" simply because it is infill, or higher density because it is higher density. Where increased density is recommended, it is always only one among many community and neighborhood objectives, and other factors such as architectural character and scale (including building height, size, placement and space) block and street patterns, landscaping and traffic generation are also important." (Comprehensive Plan)
11. "Balance the goals of accommodating growth and increasing average density within the City neighborhoods by clearly defining locations where redevelopment is encouraged, and by requiring that redevelopment be guided by a detailed neighborhood or special plan." (Comprehensive Plan)

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## **2. HOUSING**

### ***Housing Goal Summary***

1. Downtown should have many housing choices for different household types, sizes & incomes.

### ***Housing Recommendations Summary:***

1. Create strategies to encourage a greater diversity in the types and sizes of housing units to provide more choices, particularly for families & lower/middle-income households.
2. Develop strategies to encourage owner-occupied or long-term rental/lease properties.
3. Expand City programs to rehabilitate historic downtown residential properties.
4. Consider alternative financial & regulatory strategies for creating affordable housing.
5. Promote financial support for renovation of the existing housing stock.
6. *Coordinate high density residential buildings with transit, pedestrian & bicycle facilities.*
7. Increase use of underutilized public/private parking ramps & lots.

### ***CNI Committee's Additional Recommendations***

1. If Madison is committed to bringing families downtown, we must assure conveniently located schools.
3. The housing stock in our neighborhoods is continuing to decline. Preservation of housing stock is important and existing housing stock should be well maintained. Small cap TIF and other remedies are critical.
4. Safety in our neighborhoods is crucial to create housing market confidence.
5. Support and promote housing options with yards and green-space.
6. Support and promote owner occupied, affordable, market-rate housing.
7. Housing policies should support properties maintaining their values over time.
8. City policy should promote green building, water care / conservation, and energy efficiency, modifying ordinances and building codes to support environmental principles, while balancing with good urban design principles.

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### **3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

#### ***Economic Development Goals Summary***

1. Downtown should be a vital part of Madison's economy, focused on government, higher education, retail, arts & entertainment.
2. Downtown should be promoted as a great place to live, work, recreate & shop.
3. Venues to provide the downtown & neighborhoods with goods & services should be expanded.
4. Engaging retail experiences should be maintained, enhanced and expanded; the Capitol Square should be a retail destination.

#### ***Economic Development Recommendations Summary:***

1. Provide adequate office space for existing & new businesses to grow downtown.
2. Determine if the downtown has space/capacity to attract/support major new businesses.
3. Neighborhood residents should communicate desired services to the business community.
4. Coordinate economic development planning with arts, culture & entertainment.
5. Work with partners to create an engaging retail experience.
6. Support retail development on the Capitol Square.
7. Involve the business community in parking solutions, **recognizing that most parking structures have less than 60% occupancy.**
8. Create a unique & positive marketing & branding strategy for Downtown.

#### ***CNI Committee Additional Recommendations***

1. Retail must be expanded to better support the day-to-day needs of those living downtown.
2. Quality jobs located downtown will continue to be a large factor encouraging people to move downtown.
3. Historical buildings provide affordable small business opportunities. Assure continued availability of these locations to retain these opportunities.
4. Ensure that downtown's walkability is maintained and enhanced.
5. Communicate information on downtown's huge buyer pool (students, residents, workers) in the downtown and aid business in capturing this market.
6. Encourage use of TIF for businesses
7. City should identify land for downtown businesses, and play an active role in encouraging business downtown.
8. Recognize the role of tourism, and particularly heritage tourism (in-city and regional). Leverage and enhance relationships with partners such as Madison Trust.
9. Assure that buildings are kept in good repair through all available means including building inspections sanctions. This impacts safety, economic vitality, tourism, urban beauty, etc
10. Recognize that most parking structures have less than 60% utilization. Help communicate that parking downtown is not the issue some think it is. This will help with supporting downtown vitality and will help increase the customer base of downtown businesses.

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#### **4. URBAN DESIGN**

##### ***Urban Design Goals Summary***

1. Downtown should be attractive & exceptionally well-designed with engaging streetscapes, buildings, historic buildings & sites.
2. State Street and established neighborhoods will be preserved & enhanced with complementary & selective infill development.
3. Downtown's skyline should provide tremendous visual interest from all directions and angles.
4. Important views of the lakes & Capitol should be identified, protected and/or enhanced.
5. Public spaces should be designed as high quality urban gathering places with appropriate materials & features.

##### ***Urban Design Recommendations Summary:***

1. Implement the City's *Downtown Madison Historic Preservation Plan*.
2. *Promote the adaptive re-use of older buildings.*
3. Establish a vision for the downtown skyline, & implementation steps to achieve it.
4. *Ensure new growth & development complements the character of the neighborhood.*
5. *Encourage multistory, mixed-use buildings with ground floor pedestrian oriented uses.*
6. *Create a walkable & attractive urban environment.*

##### ***CNI Committee's Additional Recommendations***

1. **Underground all wires in the downtown districts.**
2. **Locally landmark State Street**
3. **Locally landmark the buildings listed as "Historic Resources" in the "Downtown Historic Preservation Plan" and those buildings listed as eligible for landmarks designation.**
4. **Extend the Mansion Hill Historic District to include:**
  - o **The North side of E. Dayton Street between 18 E. Dayton and North Hamilton St. and the west side of N. Hamilton Street from E. Dayton St. to N. Butler Street to the current MH Historic District boundary**
  - o **Etc. See MH Plan**
5. **Locally landmark buildings/districts which are currently National Register landmarked buildings/districts**
6. **Maintain Capitol View Requirements.**
7. **Provide "dark sky" pedestrian lighting on all streets downtown to create cohesive, friendly, and attractive look and promote safety.**
8. **Define important capitol view sheds and restrict building heights further in these areas.**
9. **Define important street-end lake views and develop policies which preserve them. Three critical cases include the lake view from Wisconsin Ave over Edgewater Hotel, and the views from the capitol square down North and South Hamilton Streets.**
10. **In no event should any structure be built higher than the current Edgewater Hotel addition on vacated Wisconsin Avenue.**
11. **Extend the commercial façade grant program to the residential market**
12. **Be diligent in enforcing building codes to avoid further deterioration of the housing/building stock. Work to eliminate demolition by neglect.**
13. **Architecture is public art, the blend of old and new is critical.**
14. **Assure that all HVAC is unobtrusive both visually and aurally. The intrusively loud sound of HVAC systems can negatively impact both living and visiting the downtown.**

15. Protect access to natural light. Consider set-back and step-back requirements in zoning regulations which protect natural light and reduce building shadowing as much as possible.

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## **5. TRANSPORTATION**

### ***Transportation Goals Summary***

1. Provide a balanced transportation system that provides choices in how people travel to/from & around downtown.
2. The downtown transportation system should be easy to use for everyone.
3. Downtown businesses & activities should be easily accessible.
4. Downtown should be an enjoyable place to walk & bike.
5. The design of downtown transportation system should contribute to the character of its surroundings.

### ***Transportation Recommendations Summary:***

1. Improve the way-finding system, incorporating Intelligent Transportation Systems.
- ~~2. Provide on-street parking for the Capitol Square. This has been successfully implemented.~~
3. Create a downtown circulator.
4. Improve & expand pedestrian facilities, amenities & routes.
5. *Expand bicycle trails, routes & connections.*
6. Expand Transportation Demand Management & Transportation Management Associations.
7. Ensure downtown & regional centers are well connected by multi-modal transportation networks.
8. *Preserve locations for future commuter rail stations & encourage transit oriented development.*
9. Consider quieter, cleaner transit & delivery vehicles on State Street, and develop a delivery management plan.
- ~~10. Implement a water taxi service. Low priority for downtown residents.~~
11. Plan for appropriate amounts & locations of necessary parking.
12. Explore cooperative use arrangements when parking facilities are underused.
13. Implement high density parking solutions on the edge of downtown with shuttles.
14. Limit backyard parking to residential only use.

### ***CNI Committee's Additional Recommendations***

1. Environmental Quality—restrict idling vehicles when not in use
2. Increase utilization of current downtown parking by improving signage, circulation, weekend/evening use of private ramps, public relations/education, etc
3. Make bus system more user-friendly, use modern technology and other tools
4. Refrain from over-selling parking permits and charge market rates.
5. Regularly clean streets, have weekly “no parking” morning or afternoon. This will also be good for snow removal, lake quality, and general attractiveness of downtown.
6. Promote Community Car and other car-sharing options which can reduce downtown car density.
7. Encourage street use to consider land use and vigorously examine making Johnson & Gorham between Baldwin and Broom, as well as Franklin and Hancock two-way
8. Self-sustaining neighborhoods mean less reliance on private transportation
9. Redesign parking structures to include pedestrian-friendly street presence
10. Encourage employers to provide bus passes and other mass-transit solutions for their workers
11. Walking an important mode of transportation, maintain Walkability/Beauty of neighborhoods.
12. In planning for parking, be sure to consider cars, mopeds, and bikes; work to eliminate blight of front yard parking which is becoming particularly bad in regard to mopeds.
13. Vigorously explore requiring permeable pavement options for all downtown surface parking.
14. Recognize that most parking structures have less than 60% utilization. Help communicate that parking downtown is not the issue some think it is. This will help with supporting downtown vitality and will help increase the customer base of downtown businesses.

15. Policies promoting Energy Efficiency and Green practices should be utilized while planning all transportation systems.



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## **6. CIVIC & CULTURAL**

### ***Civic & Cultural Goals Summary***

1. Downtown should be a source of civic & cultural pride, containing a concentration of vibrant culture, arts, & entertainment activities.
2. Downtown should be welcoming, accessible & safe for everyone.

### ***Civic & Cultural Recommendations Summary:***

1. Maintain and expand evening and weekend cultural activities.
2. Concentrate and link arts, cultural and entertainment activity nodes.
3. Create an interconnected pedestrian cultural arts & entertainment loop.
4. *Provide cultural activities & opportunities for diverse ethnic, age and social groups.*
5. Involve a diversity of people in decision-making & planning for downtown cultural activities.
6. Create a Wisconsin Idea Center near the Capitol Square & State Street.
7. Encourage the UW to integrate campus cultural life with the downtown.
8. Explore creating new activities oriented toward the lakes.
9. Integrate interpretive signage & public art to communicate local stories.
10. Support public art in a variety of sizes, styles and locations downtown.
11. Expand venues for artists to perform or display work.
12. Coordinate entertainment planning with transportation planning.

### ***CNI Committee's Additional Recommendations***

1. Both perceived and actual safety must be improved including the need for reduction in litter, graffiti, vandalism, etc. as all of these contribute to the perception of a safe environment.
2. Address the homelessness problem including consideration of a day shelter, more emergency shelters, etc. Such shelters should be distributed throughout the city rather than being concentrated in the downtown.
3. Eliminate the stench of human waste from public areas.
4. Encourage new and interesting activities to draw tourists and create vibrancy
5. Recognize role of University with performance spaces, cultural performance series, etc
6. Recognize that the arts include Architecture and can also be a draw for tourists. Assure only excellent new design and construction and improved maintenance of current structures.
7. Engage the UW in making "The Wisconsin Idea" a reality.
8. Cultural and entertainment planning must be coordinated with transportation planning
9. Recognize the role of tourism and particularly heritage tourism (in-city and regional). Leverage and enhance this downtown tourist draw with partners such as the Madison Trust for Historic Preservation.
10. Have a thorough city discussion on design of the Downtown library, including whether it should be a standalone building or a mixed use structure. Require outstanding design.
11. Protect remaining archaeological sites in the downtown.

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## **7. OPEN SPACE & RECREATION**

### ***Open Space & Recreation Goals Summary***

1. Downtown should have easily accessible and linked parks & open spaces.
2. Downtown should celebrate the lakes by expanding recreational opportunities & public access to & along the lakefronts.

### ***Open Space & Recreation Recommendations Summary:***

1. Maintain and improve existing parks.
2. Ensure that open space & recreation facilities are designed and located to maximize use.
3. Identify funding opportunities for open spaces & recreation facilities.
4. Identify the recreation facility needs for the downtown.
5. Balance the needs for parks & recreation facilities with increasing downtown population.
6. Improve accessibility, recreation & civic gathering opportunities at Law Park.
7. *Identify opportunities to expand access to the Lake Monona & Lake Mendota waterfronts.*
8. Restrict lakeshore development that would dominate/disrupt continuity of the shoreline.
9. Expand access & linkages between downtown & regional parks.
10. Encourage the expansion of lakefront paths.
11. Establish & implement a grand vision for Law Park & downtown open space connections.

### ***CNI Committee's Additional Recommendations***

1. Address homelessness problems in Brittingham and other parks where the extensiveness or manner of such use has the outcome of others being unlikely to use the parks because of fear or the fact of the space being essentially unavailable.
2. Lake pollution is a problem. Develop a stronger partnership with the County to protect and improve lake quality. This is critical.
3. Provide for lake access. There should be public high-quality access, for all people, free of charge, ideally preserving green space shorelines. Safety of the shorefront is critical.
4. Lot-line to lot-line development should be restricted, kills open space.
5. Do not allow private landowners/developers to encroach on public land (e.g. end of Pinckney St.) and reclaim any public land that has been fenced for private use.
6. Recognize the attractiveness of pocket parks. Do not allow them to be usurped through narrow focus on intensive land use or through a representation of such green space/pocket parks as being a "discontinuity" of the streetscape.
7. Appreciate that various kinds of parks will get varying intensity of use. Do not make "maximum use" an end in itself but rather provide for a range of kinds of parks and park features.

## **8. QUALITY OF LIFE**

*[the following are important elements but did not seem to fit naturally into other categories]*

1. Address the roar of HVAC. This can have a significantly negative impact on quality of life
2. Address downtown air quality through such things as no idle requirements
3. Take reasonable but strong action to protect access to natural light. Building shadowing must be considered in construction plans.
4. Enforce noise ordinances to get control of boom cars, excessively loud motorcycles and other vehicles.