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**Subject:** Neighborhood Input and Context

### **Comprehensive Plan as it Relates to Neighborhood Input and Context**

Neighborhood input and context are cornerstones of the Comprehensive Plan. Unfortunately, City decision-makers are dismissing the role of neighborhood input and context in the approval process for the Midvale Plaza redevelopment project. Continuation of this trend at City Council will establish a precedent eliminating the prominence of neighborhood input and context that the Comprehensive Plan grants to **ALL** Madison neighborhoods.

The residents of Westmorland and Midvale Heights urge the City Council to give neighborhood input and context the weight accorded through the Comprehensive Plan, which the current City Council passed unanimously. Because similar redevelopment projects will be undertaken in many Madison neighborhoods in the near future, we also encourage other neighborhood groups to contact their alders to ensure that the role of neighborhood input and context is not diminished.

Below is a selection of references from the Comprehensive Plan related to the role of neighborhood input and context.

#### **The references below are cited in the Introduction of Volume I:**

- Balance redevelopment and infill development with the preservation of the unique character of Madison's existing neighborhoods, focusing on such issues as requiring that the size and scale of new development enhances and is compatible with the established and planned neighborhood character and density. (Volume I, Introduction, Page 6)
- There is a high degree of interrelationship and considerable overlap between the issues and recommendations in the individual plan chapters. It is important that the Comprehensive Plan be considered as a whole since the recommendations in one chapter of the Plan may be expanded, strengthened or nuanced by the recommendations in another chapter. While specific plan recommendations sometimes appear to be in competition, the intent of the Comprehensive Plan is to establish a policy framework that balances these apparently competing objectives in order to maximize public benefit and best achieve the broad community goals expressed in the Plan. (Volume I, Introduction, Page 9)
- Actively involving community stakeholders and the public in developing Madison's Comprehensive Plan was an important City goal, consistent with the community's long history of public participation in planning activities. Public participation helps to ensure that the resulting Comprehensive Plan accurately reflects the vision, goals, and values of the community. (Volume I, Introduction, Page 14)

**The references below are cited in Volume I, Chapter 2:**

- The City is currently experiencing significant redevelopment and infill development in the central areas of the community. When skillfully designed and constructed, these projects can be positive additions to the neighborhood. However, in situations where the character (i.e., density, intensity, parking, traffic, noises, etc.) of redevelopment or infill development is out of scale with the character of adjacent lands, such development can have a deleterious effect on the quality of the neighborhood. (Volume I, Chapter 2, Page 19)
- The City of Madison has a strong tradition of neighborhood-based planning. There are more than 120 neighborhood associations in the City. The neighborhood associations are instrumental in working with the City's Department of Planning and Development to prepare neighborhood plans for specific areas of the community. (Volume I, Chapter 2, Page 28)

**The references below are cited as part of the Land Use Goals, Objectives, and Policies discussion in Volume II, Chapter 2:**

- The City understands the importance of maintaining its existing neighborhoods as a means of providing a range of attractive, safe, affordable, and quality living and working environments. Many of Madison's existing neighborhoods, especially the older neighborhoods, are well served by mass transit. In addition, preservation of services and shopping in existing neighborhoods helps strengthen the livability and quality of life in these areas. To achieve these ends, the City allocates substantial efforts and resources into maintaining and enhancing Madison's older neighborhoods. Implementation of neighborhood goals, objectives, policies and implementation recommendations will help the City achieve and maintain consistently high quality neighborhoods. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 5)
- Objective 2: Continue to involve citizens in City of Madison planning and plan implementation and decision-making processes. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 12)
- Goal: Energize and empower City residents by providing meaningful opportunities for participation in decisions that affect their neighborhoods and the City as a whole. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 24)
- Objective 24: Continue to promote and strengthen Madison's tradition of active neighborhood associations and organizations. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 24)
  - ✓ Policy 2: Foster neighborhood involvement in all development decisions that will impact the neighborhood. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 24)
- Objective 25: Continue to promote neighborhood identity as a means of creating a sense of belonging to the community. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 24)
- Objective 34: Guide the processes of preservation, rehabilitation and redevelopment in established City neighborhoods through adoption and implementation of neighborhood plans, special area plans and major project plans consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 31)

- ✓ Policy 1: In established neighborhoods identified in the Comprehensive Plan as recommended locations for near term or longer term transition to different or more intensive land uses, prepare and adopt a detailed neighborhood plan that clearly defines the locations where redevelopment, changes in use and/or increased density are recommended, the areas where no significant changes in use or intensity are recommended, and the essential character, scale and design elements that are critical to ensuring that new development is compatible with existing development. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 31)
- ✓ Policy 3: Changes in established neighborhoods should be carefully planned in collaboration with neighborhood residents, businesses, owners and institutions. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 31)
- ✓ Policy 4: Balance the preferences of residents with City wide and neighborhood planning objectives and priorities when determining the acceptability of changes to parcels of land in or adjacent to existing residential development. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 31)
- ✓ Policy 5: Adopt regulations and design standards to protect the desired street and block patterns, land use patterns, and development characteristics of the City's established neighborhoods, such as building size and height, building setbacks and placement on the lot, density, parking, landscaping, and streetscape improvements. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 31)
- Objective 35: Maintain and enhance economically viable neighborhood business centers as a source of local employment, a focal point for neighborhood activities and a centralized convenience shopping and service center for area residents. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 32)
  - ✓ Policy 1: Support the retention of neighborhood based businesses and employers and public uses as centers of neighborhoods. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 32)
  - ✓ Policy 2: Actively promote Madison's existing neighborhood commercial centers as a neighborhood amenity and destination for residents. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 32)
- Objective 41: Maintain a balance between redevelopment and preservation in established neighborhoods that recognizes the general satisfaction of many residents with their neighborhoods as they currently are and focuses redevelopment activity on selected areas and sites within the neighborhood where the objectives of increased density and a wider range of uses will be most supportive of objectives to maintain existing neighborhood character and quality. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 35)
  - ✓ Policy 2: General locations where a transition into a denser neighborhood or district is appropriate should be identified in the Comprehensive Plan and in detailed neighborhood development plans and other special area plans. Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 35)

- Objective 42: Ensure that new development is compatible with the existing and planned design and development characteristics of the neighborhood and minimize land use conflicts between infill or redevelopment projects and existing neighborhood development. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 35)
  - ✓ Policy 1: Infill development or redevelopment in existing neighborhoods should be designed to incorporate or improve upon existing positive qualities such as building proportion and shape, pattern of buildings and yards, building orientation to the street, and building materials and styles. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 36)
  - ✓ Policy 2: 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 spacing) block and street patterns, landscaping and traffic generation are also important. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 36)
  
- Objective 45: Continue public and private efforts to beautify Madison’s neighborhoods. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 37)
  - ✓ Policy 1: Adopt and enforce urban design principles, standards, and guidelines for infill and redevelopment projects in established neighborhoods. These guidelines should address building design, height, setback, materials and orientation to street. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 37)

**The references below are cited as part of the Generalized Future Land Use discussion in Volume II, Chapter 2:**

- The Generalized Future Land Use Plan Maps illustrate a conceptual recommended land use pattern for the City of Madison and its future growth areas as a whole, but the maps are usually not sufficiently detailed to address the many nuances and specialized planning objectives of specific locations. For this reason, the Comprehensive Plan recommends that future changes in land use should be guided by the more detailed recommendations of an adopted neighborhood plan, neighborhood development plan, or special area plan. It is also recommended that such a plan be prepared and adopted for all areas where future land use changes are recommended or anticipated, and that these plans be maintained current. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 73)
  
- No significant changes to the character of existing neighborhoods will be initiated by the Comprehensive Plan. In areas where the Comprehensive Plan’s recommendations differ from the existing conditions, future changes in land uses, if any, will be carefully planned and guided by the detailed recommendations if an adopted neighborhood plan or special area plan. The City will continue to work with neighborhoods as neighborhood plans and special area plans are prepared or revised and ensure that neighborhood residents have opportunities to participate. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 75)
  
- Although the future character of these neighborhoods or districts may be quite different from what exists today, the transition to different uses or development densities should be orderly and guided by the recommendations of an adopted neighborhood or special

area plan. New development also must be reasonably sensitive to surrounding developments that have not made the transition, including any historic structures or other uses that are expected to continue indefinitely. More typically, the land use recommendations for established areas may identify more limited areas for potential infill or redevelopment with different uses or densities. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 75)

- Introduction of new uses into an established neighborhood should be considered only at locations identified in City adopted detailed neighborhood or special area plans and must respect the neighborhood's positive characteristics related to such factors as the level of activity, intensity of use, building size and design, and parking and traffic conditions. Appropriate performance and architectural standards should be included in the adopted neighborhood or special area plan. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 76)
- As noted above, refined recommendations applicable to individual properties will be provided through preparation and adoption of detailed neighborhood and special area plans. The City zoning ordinance may be amended as necessary to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and adopted neighborhood and special area plans. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 77)
- Smaller two, three and four unit apartment buildings may be compatible with the Low Density Residential designation at locations specified in an adopted neighborhood or special area plan, but large apartment buildings or apartment complexes are not. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 79)

**The references below are cited as part of the as part of the Low Density Residential discussion in Volume II, Chapter 2:**

- In general, Low Density Residential areas should be protected from encroachments of higher density or higher intensity uses than presently exist in the neighborhood, and future conversions of housing in older mixed housing type neighborhoods from single family to multiunit should be discouraged. Infill or redevelopment projects should be compatible with established neighborhood character and be consistent with an adopted neighborhood or special area plan. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 79)

**The references below are cited as part of the Neighborhood Mixed Use discussion in Volume II, Chapter 2:**

- Developments within Mixed Use districts should be consistent with an adopted neighborhood plan or special area plan, which may also provide detailed land use or design standards. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 86)
- Generally, buildings should be between two and four stories in height. Specific height standards should be established in neighborhood or special area plans, and should be compatible with the scale and intensity of the adjacent neighborhood. One story buildings may be appropriate in limited circumstances but are not encouraged. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 87)
- The maximum development intensity (floor area ratio) for commercial uses should be established in a detailed neighborhood or special area plan. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 87)

**The references below are cited as part of the Transit Oriented Development discussion in Volume II, Chapter 2:**

- The standards listed below are intended to serve as general guidelines for TODs. It is expected that more specific TOD standards will be provided in detailed neighborhood development plans, special area plans, and the City's zoning ordinance. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 118)
- Recommended land use allocations within TOD core areas are listed below. Not all of the uses listed below will be located in most TODs, and these recommendations are intended to serve as general guidelines to be refined in the detailed City neighborhood development or special area plans prepared for each TOD. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 120)
- Higher net densities of 30 dwelling units per acre or more are recommended within 1/8 mile of the transit stop. These net densities may not always be feasible or desirable, especially in built up areas of the City where adjacent neighborhood development is at a lower density. (Volume II, Chapter 2, Page 120)

**STEERING COMMITTEE MODIFICATION PROPOSAL**

In compliance with the guidelines of the Madison Comprehensive Plan and to set a precedent for excellence in the application of its principles, we ask the City Council to take a leadership role to implement the following appropriate guidelines in this existing low-density neighborhood.

- Expanded, accessible library that is a community focal point
- Sufficient retail space in Phase I to permit the continuity of existing retail services
- Traffic flow that utilizes Midvale and Tokay Blvds. and minimizes spillover into the neighborhoods
- An ideal housing density of 57 with an absolute maximum of 92 units
- Building height at a maximum of three stories with significant setbacks maintained on both the second and third stories
- Design that honors the style and scale of the neighborhood architecture

In the words of the Comprehensive Plan, we ask that you *“balance the preferences of residents with citywide and neighborhood planning objectives and priorities.”*

**THIS PROPOSAL HAS BEEN ENDORSED BY OVER 850 RESIDENTS AND COUNTING.**