



TO: Members of the Economic Development Committee

FROM: Bradley J. Murphy, Planning Division Director

DATE: April 8, 2011

SUBJECT: Additional Comments on the EDC Development Process Improvement Initiative Report

Within the Planning Division, the Neighborhood Planning, Preservation, & Urban Design Section works regularly with Madison neighborhood associations by providing organizational, technical, and planning expertise. Below, for the Commission's consideration, are several comments on the EDC Development Process Improvement Initiative Report (January 31, 2011) related to neighborhood interactions with the development process which are in addition to those provided by the reviewing boards and commissions.

- A. GOAL: Establish predictable, consistent processes and expectations for neighborhood stakeholders & staff review of development proposals during the Pre-Application Phase of projects.**
2. *Standardize the process of notification and review of Projects during the Pre-Application Phase of the project.*
 - a. *Meet with Alder(s), Neighborhood Association President(s), Neighborhood Business Association President(s), and DPCED staff to determine the structure of the Pre-Application Phase of the project. (Page 18)*

Recommended Changes:

Meet with Alder(s), Neighborhood Association President(s) or their designee, Neighborhood Business Association President(s) or their designee, and DPCED staff to determine the structure of the Pre-Application Phase of the project.

Planning Division should work with Neighborhood associations and other neighborhood stakeholders ~~should~~ to develop and agree to a standardized format for their review of development proposals ~~that is~~ to be adopted citywide.

- b. *Enhance notification of projects to broadest group of neighborhood stakeholders as possible. (Page 19).*

Neighborhood associations are voluntary organizations with limited resources. At the onset of a development project, a public notification strategy should be developed by the developer with input from the alderperson, neighborhood association, and city staff. Efforts should be discussed by all of the parties to coordinate and leverage resources. For instance, during the review of a recent development proposal in the 2500 block of University Avenue, meeting dates and times were

identified at the onset of the project. All four entities were able to encourage various stakeholders to attend via mailings, listservs, and postings.

Neighborhood associations differ in the degree of formal mechanisms to reach their residents, and if using non-electronic sources such as newsletters, the printing deadlines may not coincide with the proposed development project timeline.

Recommended Changes: Add: *When the developer registers the development project, a public notification strategy should be developed by the developer with input from the alderperson, neighborhood association, and City staff. Coordinated efforts should be discussed by all of the parties to leverage resources.*

B. GOAL: Inclusive, fair, and uniform neighborhood input into development projects

1. *Require neighborhood review of a development proposal in such a manner that incorporates different perspectives through a variety of different means. (Page 21).*

And

3. *Require neighborhood associations to provide comments with a range of viewpoints in lieu of a specific recommendation (Page 21) and 4. Require neighborhood associations to utilize a variety of means to secure neighborhood stakeholders' feedback during the Pre-Application phase (Page 22).*

The City of Madison does not have authority over the internal operations of a neighborhood or business association. The City can suggest that neighborhood and business associations work collaboratively with alderpersons, City staff, and developers on proposed development projects with the intent of soliciting specific comments of the proposed project from different stakeholder groups.

Neighborhood associations have varying levels of capacity and financial resources. The alderperson and neighborhood association can provide a developer with invaluable information on the various stakeholders within the neighborhood and how to effectively solicit their input. More active neighborhood associations typically have more experience and greater capacity to work collaboratively with the alderperson and developer to leverage resources. In less active neighborhoods, it may be prudent to rely on the public notification strategy that has been agreed upon. The responsibility for financing the outreach effort should be clarified.

PRE-APPLICATION PHASE

C. GOAL: Increase property and development information available to residents, property owners, and investors/developers.

2. *Enhance the information that is available to guide residents, business owners, property owners, and prospective developers as they are preparing applications. (Page 32).*

A standardized template of pertinent information would be useful for neighborhood associations and other stakeholders to have at the onset of a development proposal. Information including the site location, lot configuration and characteristics, City policies and, and adopted plan recommendations (such as existing zoning, Comprehensive Plan land use designation and adopted neighborhood plan recommendations) would provide baseline information to all parties. This information is part of the Plan Commission report but could be compiled at the pre-application phase for alderperson, neighborhood association, neighborhood stakeholders, and business association prior to the discussion of the development proposal.

The Marquette Neighborhood Association has a template in their development guidelines which request basic site information. (See Appendix 1).

Recommended Changes: ADD: *A standardized form of pertinent site characteristics, and existing City policies and plan recommendations (such as existing zoning, Comprehensive Plan land use designation, overlay districts, and adopted neighborhood plan recommendations) should be completed by city staff as part of the Pre-Application phase.*

E. GOAL: Compliance with Commission/Committee/Board Conditions and Recommendations.

2. *Provide meaningful and effective orientation for all new commission, committee and Common Council members and neighborhood stakeholders. (Page 27)*

Neighborhood associations would welcome the opportunity to attend the training sessions to become more knowledgeable in the function of the Commission/Committee/Boards.

Recommended Changes: ADD: Invite neighborhood associations, business associations and neighborhood stakeholders to attend training sessions.

APPLICATION, REVIEW & APPROVAL PHASE

K. GOAL: Neighborhood plans, training and feedback.

2. *Neighborhood plans should consider economic feasibility and market realities. (Page 38).*

Neighborhood plans are generally mid-range plans (5 to 10 year or longer planning horizon). These plans typically consider economic development, community services, housing, land use, parks and open space, and transportation issues. One of their most important outcomes is to create a vision for the planning area. Examining existing data, conducting interviews with various stakeholders, and carrying out a public participation process results in a vision and action plans being prepared. Several recent processes also have included market studies. Market studies may be conducted in future planning processes if funding is available to hire consultants with the required expertise.

Preparation of neighborhood plans involves extensive involvement from various City departments and agencies and are currently referred to City boards/commissions/committees prior to final Common Council adoption. Neighborhood plans provide strategies to build upon the assets of an area as well as to develop specific strategies to improve the quality of life. Plan recommendations based solely on near-term economic feasibility or near term-market realities would limit the potential of attracting new reinvestment into Madison neighborhoods over the life of the plan. Some of the plan recommendations for Atwood Avenue Commercial District, Villages on Park, and potential redevelopment sites along the South Park Street Corridor and on the Royster Clark site would not have been included in the plans if the content of the plans were restricted to current market feasibility.

The Planning Division will continue to focus on the overall economic development goals, opportunities and strategies as one part of the planning process. Planning Division staff works collaboratively with the Office of Business Resources (OBR) in the preparation of our neighborhoods plans. OBR interviews business owners/tenants, participates in open houses or other public venues, and reviews and comments on preliminary plan recommendations. OBR staff should provide input to the Planning Division throughout the planning process.

Recommended Changes: **Include the narrative discussion (above four paragraphs) in the text of the final report.**

5. ***Host an annual meeting for architects, developers, engineers and project managers to discuss City policies to identify concerns, problems, or changes which should be addressed and to suggest changes to the development review process. (Page 40).***

Soliciting input from architects, developers, engineers and project managers annually on the development review process will provide opportunities to discuss and recommend changes to the development review process. A targeted meeting with neighborhood stakeholders to discuss and comment would also provide additional information to changes to the development process.

Recommended Changes: ADD: ***Host an annual meeting with neighborhood stakeholders to discuss City policies to identify concerns, problems, or changes which should be addressed and to suggest changes to the development review process.***

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