



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Economic Development Division

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OVERVIEW

In June of 2010 the City of Madison launched an initiative to study the development process and generate recommendations for improving it. Over a six month period, input was solicited at meetings and in written form. The Economic Development Committee approved a preliminary report in February 2011 and a final report in May 2011 after receiving additional input through the Board of Estimates, Landmarks Commission, Plan Commission, and Urban Design Commission. Once the report is accepted by the Common Council, staff will generate initiatives, budget proposals, and ordinance changes for the Mayor and Common Council's consideration.

ORGANIZATION

The report opens with an overview of the process and discussion of its importance. The substance of the report is organized into approximately six dozen recommendations grouped into phases:

1. Pre-application phase
2. Application, review, and approval phase
3. Post-approval phase
4. Administration improvement (on-going)

Following the recommendations are eight appendices summarizing the recommendations and providing additional background information.

KEY THEMES

As you read the report, you will notice several key themes emerging:

- **Broad community engagement** – Many recommendations are geared toward preparing people to understand the development process and toward getting the broadest possible participation in the development process
- **Employing technology to increase information and transparency** – Various recommendations seeks to increase the availability of information and the transparency of the development process by moving information online and using technology to reach broader audiences
- **Structuring the process for greater predictability**– The report seeks to articulate a process that offers greater predictability (of process, not outcomes) to developers, alders, staff, neighborhood members, and other stakeholders
- **Empowerment of staff as facilitators** – The report recognizes that with good processes, strong training, and clarity about authority, staff can play a role in ensuring that development applications are complete, timely, and ready for community scrutiny

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Many of the most controversial recommendations have been removed from the report. For example, the report no longer addresses the subject of super-majorities nor does it seek to limit the ability of committees or commissions to re-refer matters.

Here are some of the more significant recommendations that remain:

A.1.a – Require developer/property owner to register project via web-based system. The goal here is to provide early notification and use technology to start stakeholders on the same page.

A.2.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. The goal of this recommendation is to meet early, communicate clearly, and establish a plan to guide the specific project during its consideration.

A.2.b. Enhance notification of projects to broadest group of neighborhood stakeholders as possible. The goal here is to engage as many people and stakeholders as possible and increase participation in the neighborhoods.

B.3. Encourage stakeholders to provide comments on the project that reflect a range of viewpoints in lieu of a specific recommendation. The goal of this recommendation is to move away from yes/no feedback during the pre-application phase and toward providing feedback on what is desirable/undesirable about a potential project to guide its development.

B.4. Encourage stakeholders to utilize a variety of means to secure neighborhood stakeholders' feedback during the Pre-Application phase. This recommendation seeks to use technology to solicit additional feedback from neighborhood stakeholders.

D.2. Identify and propose changes to empower staff to grant administrative approvals where appropriate. This recommendation seeks to empower staff to make more minor or routine decisions that do not necessarily require board/commission approval.

E. Improve effectiveness of Commissions/Committees/Boards. This batch of recommendations suggests offering orientation, training and mentoring to commissions, committees, and boards. They also encourage regular self-review of the commission/committee/board work and mission.

F.4. For any item referred by a board or commission, the commission should specify the reason for the referral and the specific items which need to be addressed prior to the project returning to the board or commission. This recommendation seeks to increase the feedback that applicants receive from boards or commissions to enable them to address outstanding issues.

F.5. Commissions should differentiate between "conditions of approval" that are based in city ordinance requirements and those which are recommendations from the board or commission.

Similarly, this recommendation seeks to clarify the feedback that applicants are receiving and to make that available to the Common Council during their deliberation on a project.

G.2. Integrate the Enterprise Land and Asset Management (ELAM) system with the City's Legislative Information Center and the Development Services Center website. This proposal is to provide development-related information in one place so that it can be easily accessed by anyone.

J.1. Keep the City's Comprehensive Plan and neighborhood plans up to date. These two recommendations seek to ensure that plans are current and relevant guides that developers can rely and build on. Plans should provide a balance, articulating the neighborhoods ambitions while being achievable.

J.2. Neighborhood plans should consider economic feasibility and market realities. (see above)

J.3.c. Provide a small annual stipend to members of the Plan Commission, Landmarks Commission, Urban Design Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals to off-set the cost of attending conferences or training related to their respective roles. These two goals seek to fund the ongoing training of staff and citizens who are regularly involved in the development process. For example, the recent Congress for a New Urbanism provided a cost-effective opportunity for many to increase their knowledge and expertise.

J.3.d. Increase funding for and encourage all staff involved in the development review process to regularly attend conferences and training opportunities for their respective fields. (see above)

K.1. Update development guidelines. The next four recommendations are about improving the technology the city relies on to increase access to timely information, increase transparency, and facilitate engagement.

K.2. Prioritize the restructuring of the Department of Planning and Community & Economic Development website to provide a direct link from the City's homepage, and to incorporate web modules from Best Practice cities. (see above)

K.3. Review and expand the use of the Development Services Center website first implemented in 2009. (see above)

K.4. Clearly establish and publicize on the Development Services Center website the process to hear appeals of administrative rulings by City staff. (see above)

L.1. Implement the Development Review and Permitting Center (the physical one-stop-shop). As the city plans for the redevelopment of the Madison Municipal Block and Government East Block, there could be opportunities to implement this vision in a cost-effective manner.

L.2. Renovate the Common Council chambers so everyone can see presentation materials including the direct linkage of presentation materials through the web and City Channel. These two

recommendations are about improving the technology the city relies on to increase access to timely information, increase transparency, and facilitate engagement.

L.3. Install permanent computers and projectors within all meeting rooms used for development review meetings. (see above)