

To: UDC Commission Members

From: Peter Ostlind

Re: Edgewater Redevelopment Proposal

Date: January 20, 2010

Attached you will find a review of the Madison Comprehensive Plan in relation to the current proposal for the Edgewater redevelopment. The review presents relevant portions of the Comprehensive Plan. The review was not intended to be an exhaustive listing of every part of the Comprehensive Plan that might be applicable but rather a compilation of a number of the significant statements in the plan that relate to the current proposal. I hope you will find this informative as you consider the proposal before you.

January 19, 2010

**Review of the Madison Comprehensive Plan as it relates to the Edgewater redevelopment proposal.**

The following review of the Madison Comprehensive Plan was completed to identify those portions of the plan which specifically relate to the current Edgewater proposal. The intent is to aid the reader in reviewing the current proposal in relation to the adopted comprehensive plan.

The Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan includes a list of **Key Recommendations**. The first recommendation listed notes that new developments should be compatible with the existing neighborhood.

“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 planned neighborhood character and density.” Vol. I page Into – 6, (emphasis added)

This recommendation is further defined in the section on **Historic and Cultural Resources**. The intent is to recognize and protect the architectural character within Historic Districts.

“Each district has a specific set of criteria against which all new construction, alterations and demolitions are reviewed to ensure that the essential character of these districts and the significant structures within them is maintained.” Vol. I page 8-2

These criteria are the specifics of the Mansion Hill Historic District that the Landmarks Commission found that the Edgewater proposal failed to meet when the Commission denied a Certificate of Appropriateness.

The chapter on **Land Use** states that Madison will encourage infill and higher density redevelopments and establishes policies to guide this redevelopment. Policy 4 identifies principles to guide all infill and redevelopment within the older neighborhoods.

“Redevelopment scale and density should be appropriate to redevelopment objectives defined in the applicable City plans and reasonably compatible with established neighborhood character ...” Vol. II page 2-22

The value of historic preservation is cited numerous times in the Comprehensive Plan. In particular the chapter on **Land Use** has a section on the Downtown noting this interest and citing historic preservation as a desirable downtown characteristic.

“The recent increased pace of redevelopment has created a corresponding interest in historic preservation and neighborhood conservation in at least portions of Madison’s oldest neighborhoods, such as Bassett, Mansion Hill, Old Market Place and First Settlement.”  
Vol. II page 2-105

“Emphasis on historic preservation and neighborhood conservation as defined in City-adopted neighborhood, special area, and other special plans, such as historic preservation plans, and/or City zoning regulations and historic and urban design guidelines.” Vol. II page 2-106

The plan notes that the downtown area has a mix of uses and densities but identifies characteristics that unite certain sub districts of the Downtown.

“Although the range of uses and densities within the Downtown as a whole is very wide, it is made up of numerous relatively compact sub areas characterized by shared predominant land uses; development density; building height; scale and urban design; special amenity features; historic character; or other distinguishing attributes.” Vol. II page 2-107

The plan groups these downtown sub-districts into two categories; Mixed Use and Residential. Both the Langdon and the Mansion Hill sub-districts are classified as Residential. (Vol. II page 2-107) The Edgewater site is located at the east end of the Langdon sub-district boarding the Mansion Hill sub-district.

In the specific comments on the Langdon sub-district the plan notes that preservation and neighborhood conservation are issues that must be addressed as properties are redeveloped. There is also a specific section on **Building Height**.

“Two to 8 stories, with the tallest buildings in the State St. transition zone.” Vol. II page 2-114

The current Edgewater proposal is a 14 story building above the lake or a 10 story building above the plaza. The proposal tower extends more than 40’ above the 1940’s building.

The specific comments on the Mansion Hill sub-district reiterate that “because of the historic significance of this sub-district” historic preservation and consistency with established City plans and special area plans is required for any development or redevelopment. Regarding building height there is this specific statement:

“2 stories minimum, maximum established by underlying zoning” Vol. II page 2-115

The Comprehensive Plan includes **Objectives** and **Policies** that “provide the basic framework on which on which all land-use decisions, whether public or private, shall be based.” “An **objective** is a statement that describes a specific future condition to be attained. A **policy** is defined as a course of action or rule of conduct to be used to achieve the goals and objectives of the plan.”

**Objective 51:** Protect and enhance features and places within the community that are of architectural and historic significance.

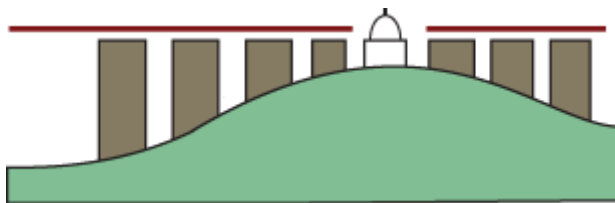
**Policy 3:** New development should create harmonious design relationships between older and newer buildings, particularly in older neighborhoods with an established character and buildings of historic or architectural interest and value. Vol. II page 2-45

It's interesting to note that the photo adjacent to Policy 3 in the plan is of the Quisling Clinic Apartments, a recent infill and redevelopment that enhanced the integrity of the Mansion Hill Historic District.

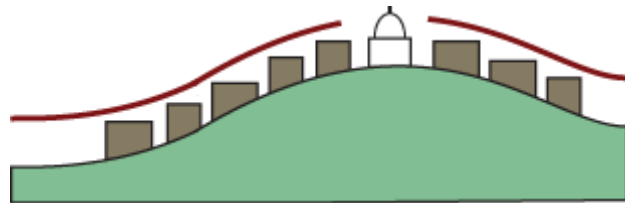
The plan also includes objectives relating to the form and height of buildings constructed within the Downtown.

**Objective 50:** Create a visually striking and dramatic Isthmus skyline, while at the same time protecting views of the Capitol.

**Policy 2:** Establish building height standards for the Downtown/Isthmus area that will result in a skyline that reflects and emphasizes the natural topography, with taller buildings on the high ground and lower buildings toward the lakeshores. Vol. II page 2-44



*Skyline effect resulting from establishing maximum building heights relative to the base of the Capitol dome.*



*Skyline effect resulting from establishing maximum building heights relative to the natural topography of the Isthmus*

There are a series of Objectives and Policies for Established Neighborhoods. Objective 42 is to ensure that new development is compatible with the existing characteristics of the neighborhood. The policy is quite clear that the means to accomplish this do not include every proposal which might come forward.

**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.

Vol. II page 2-35

Included in the plan are a series of *Objectives and Policies for the Natural Environment*. This section relates our built environment to the natural assets of the city, in particular to our lakes.

**Objective 56:** Ensure that views and vistas of significant value, such as views of the lakes, open space or the Capitol, are treated sensitively by new structures or potential visual obstructions.

**Policy 2:** Protect Madison's shorelines from incursions by overly dense development that will degrade views to and from the lakes, rivers and creeks.

**Objective 57:** Preserve natural areas with outstanding ecological and aesthetic qualities.

**Policy 1:** Adopt and enforce zoning code, land division ordinance and other regulations that protect from development environmental corridors and the natural resource features of which they are comprised, such as lakeshores, hilltops, and significant wooded areas, for example.