TO: Madison Economic Development Committee Members
FROM: Delora Newton, Executive Vice President, Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce
DATE: December 2, 2010
RE: Development Process Improvement Initiative

In advance of the newly created Economic Development Committee subcommittee on the Development Process Improvement Initiative, please accept the following comments regarding the most recent draft, dated November 29, 2010.

The Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce (GMCC) Board of Directors thanks all of the hard work put in by city staff and EDC members on the development process improvement initiative. The latest draft is an excellent representation of the many thoughtful comments contributed by various residents, business and neighborhood associations and other interested stakeholders.

The GMCC Board supports many of the recommendations in the latest draft, especially:
- All recommendations outlined in the pre-application phase, which seek to create a more formalized, predictable and inclusive process for everyone.
- G.1, a recommendation to schedule joint meetings, when appropriate.
- G.4, and G.5, which aim to clarify whether various Board comments are conditions for approval or purely recommendations.
- I.1, which would create a staff project liaison for all complex projects.
- I.3 and J.1, which would empower and expand the role of the Development Assistance Team (DAT).
- K.4, which would provide an annual forum for architects and developers to provide general feedback on the review process and city policies impacting development.

While we support a strong majority of the recommendations included in the latest draft, there are areas that could use improvement or complete retraction.

Considering the primary objective of the plan is to create a more efficient, streamlined process, it is curious that one of the plan's recommendations (8.b) is to create a new subcommittee for signage. The EDC should reject this recommendation. As an alternative, city staff should be empowered to make decisions on all signage issues for existing businesses.

There are also sections that would benefit from stronger language and more concrete recommendations.

- Recommendation F.1 offers suggestions rather than recommendations to eliminate overlapping board approvals. The EDC should officially recommend these suggestions and identify other areas where multiple, duplicative Board review can be reduced.
- G.8.f also states a goal instead of a recommendation. As opposed to "working to evaluate" a simple recommendation process, the EDC should identify and recommend how that process should work.

Again, thank you for your continued service and efforts on this initiative. We remain committed to assisting your work and are available at your request.