ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

EMAIL COMMUNICATION

JULY 15, 2020 MEETING

LEGISTAR # 60995

LEGISTAR # 61060

NOTE: MEETING NOT HELD DUE TO LACK OF QUORUM

Mikolajewski, Matthew

From: Patricia Blanco <tkleinblanco@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 4:24 PM
To: EDC
Subject: Oppose 60995

I am writing in opposition to 60995, which outlines the use of public tax dollars for repairs on commercial structures housing State Street businesses. 60995 accompanies 61060.
During the pandemic, small businesses have been able to apply for various business grants and loans such as SBA EIDL, PPP, We're All In This Together, the Ethnic Minorities Grant, and Dane Buy Local. While these grants help small businesses hobble along, the reality is that none of this money gets to the heart of the issue.

For the most part, business grants and loans like PPP only help to subsidize business owners' rent or offset costs so business owners can pay their rent. Rent is one of the highest costs for most businesses. Yet very few property owners have offered rent abatements or forgiveness during the pandemic. Rent on State Street and in downtown Madison is exorbitantly high, and private property owners continue to profit even when their tenants are incapacitated. Whereas loans like PPP direct public tax dollars towards rental costs, the Downtown Recovery Program now seeks to further help private property owners by allocating public tax dollars to those properties. This is happening simultaneously with an affordable housing crisis and the crisis of gentrification in our city. We cannot continue allocating money to the benefit of private property over people.
If we actually want to help businesses, then we need to ask why so many of them are compelled to stay open during a global pandemic when we have yet to flatten the curve. We need to ask what measures should we be taking so that businesses can fully shut down and people can stay safe. Is our answer to this problem really to continue subsidizing private property's profits?

Instead, we should be looking at examples of other governmental bodies that centered the needs of people during the pandemic. We need to look at examples of governments that gave money directly to people and proposals for rent forgiveness. We need to look at successful measures of implementing rent control and regulation on real estate. These are things that could alleviate the current burdens on people *and* small businesses.
In conclusion, I am opposed to 60995, and increasing regulation of the funds in this article will not diminish my opposition. The solution is to maintain public tax dollars for public benefit.

Tricia Blanco

2026 E Dayton St

Mikolajewski, Matthew

From: Patricia Blanco <tkleinblanco@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 4:20 PM
To: EDC

I am writing in opposition to the approval of 61060, which would appropriate $500,000 from public services and use it for private businesses.
The $500,000 for the Downtown Recovery Program would be pulling funds away from uses for Engineering, the Library, and unrestricted funds for the city. It is morally unethical, especially during a global pandemic, to reallocate funds from public infrastructure and programming towards the benefit of private property.
City departments across the board are already facing a 5% budget cut. Just last week on July 9, 2020, the Madison Public Library Board met to review options to eliminate staff positions and community programming in order to meet a budget cut of $900,000. The Downtown Recovery Program is using $120,000 from the Library-Neighborhood LED Upgrade that could have been reallocated to prevent some of those cuts. The Downtown Recovery Program is further using $275,000 from Engineering-Facilities Horizon List Planning at a time when the Streets Division is facing a $1.4 million cut and the Parks Division is facing an $800,000 cut.
The crux of this issue remains the subsidizing of private property ownership with public tax dollars. The Downtown Recovery Program aims to support small downtown business owners, with 41 business owners indicating that they will have difficulty reopening and may close permanently. But there is at best flimsy evidence that providing public tax dollars to repair buildings would help any of these 41 State Street businesses survive the pandemic. For all we know, we are only helping to repair the buildings, with no guarantee of security and longevity to the business owners, but a guaranteed benefit to the owners of those commercial properties.

*Finally, I wish to call out the manner in which the city is trying to pass the use of public funds for private property. On 7/14/2020, the Economic Development Committee listed 61060 as the appropriation of $500,000 for the Downtown Recovery Program. On 7/15, the EDC changed 61060 on their agenda to state that it was $250,000 for the Downtown Recovery Program and $250,000 for the Downtown Equity Program, with no explanation of what the equity program is and both agendas linked to the same supporting Downtown Recovery Program document. Only today, on 7/20, without earlier notification of the public, is there a revised document explaining that the Downtown Equity Program is a way to help support new entrepreneurs of color to do business downtown. But there is no indication that this $250,000 would go directly into the hands of black and POC entrepreneurs, and not towards paying the rent and building costs of private property owners. And while 61060 now describes a new Downtown Equity Program, it is important to point out that its partner document 60995, which describes how the total $500,000 can be used, remains unchanged. There is no document describing how funds will be used for the Downtown Equity Program. And again, the crux of this issue remains the pulling of funds from public infrastructure and using it to subsidize private property. In conclusion, I am here today in opposition to 61060 and the misuse of public tax dollars for private properties' benefit.

Tricia Blanco

2026 E Dayton St

Mikolajewski, Matthew

From: Raymond Temeyer <rbtemeyer@oregonsd.net>
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 3:37 PM
To: EDC
Subject: Opposition to 61060 and 60995

Hello! We should not be using tax dollars to help businesses. They should have insurance.

Mikolajewski, Matthew

From: Anya Piotrowski <piotroah@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 12:50 PM
To: EDC; All Alders; Mayor
Subject: Public Comment for 60995

I am writing in opposition to 60995, which outlines the use of public tax dollars for repairs on commercial structures housing State Street businesses. 60995 accompanies 61060.
During the pandemic, small businesses have been able to apply for various business grants and loans such as SBA EIDL, PPP, We're All In This Together, the Ethnic Minorities Grant, and Dane Buy Local. While these grants help small businesses hobble along, the reality is that none of this money gets to the heart of the issue.

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Instead, we should be looking at examples of other governmental bodies that centered the needs of people during the pandemic. We need to look at examples of governments that gave money directly to people and proposals for rent forgiveness. We need to look at successful measures of implementing rent control and regulation on real estate. These are things that could alleviate the current burdens on people *and* small businesses.
In conclusion, I am opposed to 60995, and increasing regulation of the funds in this article will not diminish my opposition. The solution is to maintain public tax dollars for public benefit.

--
Anya Piotrowski, M.A.

"Não seja aquele tipo de pessoa que procura e, quando acha, sai correndo com medo." ~ Paulo Coelho
(Don't be the type of person that goes looking, and when you find it, leave running with fear.)

Mikolajewski, Matthew

From: Anya Piotrowski <piotroah@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 12:49 PM
To: EDC; All Alders; Mayor
Subject: Public Comment for 61060

I am writing in opposition to the approval of 61060, which would appropriate $500,000 from public services and use it for private businesses.
The $500,000 for the Downtown Recovery Program would be pulling funds away from uses for Engineering, the Library, and unrestricted funds for the city. It is morally unethical, especially during a global pandemic, to reallocate funds from public infrastructure and programming towards the benefit of private property.
City departments across the board are already facing a 5% budget cut. Just last week on July 9, 2020, the Madison Public Library Board met to review options to eliminate staff positions and community programming in order to meet a budget cut of $900,000. The Downtown Recovery Program is using $120,000 from the Library-Neighborhood LED Upgrade that could have been reallocated to prevent some of those cuts. The Downtown Recovery Program is further using $275,000 from Engineering-Facilities Horizon List Planning at a time when the Streets Division is facing a $1.4 million cut and the Parks Division is facing an $800,000 cut.
The crux of this issue remains the subsidizing of private property ownership with public tax dollars. The Downtown Recovery Program aims to support small downtown business owners, with 41 business owners indicating that they will have difficulty reopening and may close permanently. But there is at best flimsy evidence that providing public tax dollars to repair buildings would help any of these 41 State Street businesses survive the pandemic. For all we know, we are only helping to repair the buildings, with no guarantee of security and longevity to the business owners, but a guaranteed benefit to the owners of those commercial properties.

Furthermore, I wish to call out the change in the agenda from yesterday to today. Yesterday, the Economic Development Committee listed 61060 as the appropriation of $500,000 for the Downtown Recovery Program. Today, 61060 is now described as $250,000 for the Downtown Recovery Program and $250,000 for the Downtown Equity Program. However, both agendas link to the same supporting document for the Downtown Recovery Program. Item 60995, which describes the use of funds from 61060, also makes no mention of the Downtown Equity Program. And again, the crux of this issue remains the pulling of funds from public infrastructure and programming and using it to subsidize private property.
In conclusion, I am here today in opposition to 61060 and the misuse of public tax dollars for private properties' benefit.

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(Don't be the type of person that goes looking, and when you find it, leave running with fear.)

Mikolajewski, Matthew

From: Valerie A <valerie.arent@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 5:08 PM
To: EDC; All Alders; Mayor
Subject: Item 61060 opposition

EDC, Common Council, and Mayor Rhodes-Conway,

I am writing in opposition to the approval of 61060, which would appropriate $500,000 from public services and use it for private businesses.

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Furthermore, I wish to call out the change in the agenda over the past couple days. Earlier in the week, the Economic Development Committee listed 61060 as the appropriation of $500,000 for the Downtown Recovery Program. Today, 61060 is now described as $250,000 for the Downtown Recovery Program and $250,000 for the Downtown Equity Program. However, both agendas link to the same supporting document for the Downtown Recovery Program. Item 60995, which describes the use of funds from 61060, also makes no mention of the Downtown Equity Program. And again, the crux of this issue remains the pulling of funds from public infrastructure and programming and using it to subsidize private property.
In conclusion, I am here today in opposition to 61060 and the misuse of public tax dollars for private properties' benefit.

Valerie

Valerie Arent, NCC, LPC-IT
Pronouns: She/ Her/ Hers or Valerie
Email: valerie.arent@gmail.com
Phone: 773-870-9907 (txt available)

Mikolajewski, Matthew

From: Valerie A <valerie.arent@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 5:08 PM
To: EDC; All Alders; Mayor
Subject: Item 60995 Opposition

EDC, Common Council, and Mayor Rhodes-Conway,

I am writing in opposition to 60995, which outlines the use of public tax dollars for repairs on commercial structures housing State Street businesses. 60995 accompanies 61060.

During the pandemic, small businesses have been able to apply for various business grants and loans such as SBA EIDL, PPP, We're All In This Together, the Ethnic Minorities Grant, and Dane Buy Local. While these grants help small businesses hobble along, the reality is that none of this money gets to the heart of the issue.

For the most part, business grants and loans like PPP only help to subsidize business owners' rent or offset costs so business owners can pay their rent. Rent is one of the highest costs for most businesses. Yet very few property owners have offered rent abatements or forgiveness during the pandemic. Rent on State Street and in downtown Madison is exorbitantly high, and private property owners continue to profit even when their tenants are incapacitated. Whereas loans like PPP direct public tax dollars towards rental costs, the Downtown Recovery Program now seeks to further help private property owners by allocating public tax dollars to those properties. This is happening simultaneously with an affordable housing crisis and the crisis of gentrification in our city. We cannot continue allocating money to the benefit of private property over people.

If we actually want to help businesses, then we need to ask why so many of them are compelled to stay open during a global pandemic when we have yet to flatten the curve. We need to ask what measures should we be taking so that businesses can fully shut down and people can stay safe. Is our answer to this problem really to continue subsidizing private property's profits?

Instead, we should be looking at examples of other governmental bodies that centered the needs of people during the pandemic. We need to look at examples of governments that gave money directly to people and proposals for rent forgiveness. We need to look at successful measures of implementing rent control and regulation on real estate. These are things that could alleviate the current burdens on people *and* small businesses.

In conclusion, I am opposed to 60995, and increasing regulation of the funds in this article will not diminish my opposition. The solution is to maintain public tax dollars for public benefit.

Valerie

Valerie Arent, NCC, LPC-IT
Pronouns: She/ Her/ Hers or Valerie
Email: valerie.arent@gmail.com
Phone: 773-870-9907 (txt available)

Mikolajewski, Matthew

From: Innnoveering <fwb@innoveering.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 7:30 PM
To: EDC
Subject: Comments for cancelled July 15 meeting

I am a Madison resident;

Fred W. Bergmann
938 E Dayton St. Apt 1
Madison, WI 53703
(608) 566-9132
fwb@innoveering.com

Public Comment for 61060

I am writing in opposition to the approval of 61060, which would appropriate $500,000 from public services and use it for private businesses.

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In conclusion, I am opposed to 60995, and increasing regulation of the funds in this article will not diminish my opposition. The solution is to maintain public tax dollars for public benefit.

Please include these comments in the next meeting scheduled to consider 61060 and 60995. At this time the rescheduled meeting is not shown on the website.

Mikolajewski, Matthew

From: Jenie Gao <here@jenie.org>
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 5:54 PM
To: All Alders; Heck, Patrick; EDC; Mayor
Subject: In opposition to 60995

To the Economic Development Committee, Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway, and Councilmembers:

I am writing in opposition to 60995, which outlines the use of public tax dollars for repairs on commercial structures housing State Street businesses. 60995 accompanies 61060.

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Jenie Gao

Mikolajewski, Matthew

From: Jenie Gao <here@jenie.org>
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 5:53 PM
To: All Alders; Heck, Patrick; EDC; Mayor
Subject: In opposition to 61060

To the Economic Development Committee, Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway, and Councilmembers:

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In conclusion, I oppose 61060 and the misuse of public tax dollars for private properties' benefit.

Jenie Gao

Mikolajewski, Matthew

From: Sierra Helena Kailea Saplan <shksaplan@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 4:04 PM
To: EDC; Rhodes-Conway, Satya V.; All Alders
Subject: "No" to Item #1

Dear Economic Development Committee, Mayor Rhodes-Conway, and Common Council members,

Hello. My name is Kailea, and I'm a resident of the Bay Creek neighborhood where I'm represented by Alder Tag Evers. I'm emailing you today urging you to oppose agenda item #1, resolution 61060. I will provide some of the same reasons here that I provided for yesterday's Common Council meeting as to why this item should not be passed:

Tonight you will be addressing the issue of investing $500,000 into State Street, item #1 on your agenda for the Common Council meeting. Just as I registered in opposition to the curfew and this proposal back in June, I have registered in opposition to this item today. **I'm not against supporting the small business owners on State Street, particularly during this pandemic.** But I am certainly opposed to investments in State Street when our lower-income neighborhoods, and our Black and Brown neighborhoods *continue* to be overlooked. **I am also certainly against funding State Street recovery using money from programs and projects that were meant for other Madison neighborhoods.** I find this quote from Justice Castaneda, Director of Commonwealth Development, to be particularly illustrative of the issue of continued investment in this district:

"The history of Madison's downtown is one of exclusion, corruption and of boosterism and land-grabbing. That Madison was rife with redlining and racially exclusive deed restrictions is now well known; the areas along the Isthmus and especially within immediate proximity to the capitol were effectively handed off for political favor as the city was initially established. The neighborhoods immediately east and west (the two lakes blocked off the immediate north/south) followed suit by restricting access to land ownership to white residents until the late 20th Century. The development of the downtown neighborhoods was done with deliberate exclusion of ownership and investment opportunities for Black families and families of color, and was concurrent with the lack of investment and peripheralization of the neighborhoods that housed significant Black populations and other residents of color.
The residuals of this exclusion remain, and are manifest in current challenges in our democratic processes and institutions, as the downtown neighborhoods enjoy significantly more efficient transit systems, access to parks / open spaces, walkable neighborhoods and political representation in elected positions and in the multitude of boards, commissions and committees that provide input on city processes."

You might argue that past racist investment and development in District 4 does not mean that current business owners in this area should suffer-- true as that may be, it's the same logic that allows white supremacist culture to flourish unquestioned in this country. It is clear to me that this recovery fund is based on inequity, and economic and racial injustice when you *take* funding from the following projects and programs to support State Street:

- Neighborhood Library LED Upgrade
- Horizon List Planning (which includes money for:)

- Equity Business Initiative
- Intersection Safety
- Renovation/ Reconstruction of Fire Station 6 on the south side and 10 on the north side
- Construction of Reindahl Library on the east side
- Electrification of Metro Transit's fleet of buses
- Expansion of Hill Creek Park on the west side

These programs and neighborhoods cannot afford to fund State Street businesses. But do you know who can? **The Madison Police Department, whose obscenely bloated budget at $85 million is disproportionate to the community support and improvement services they provide.** I suggest you amend agenda item #1 so that the funds come from city departments and agencies that can afford it.

Thank you for you time,

Kailea

P.S. The argument that "70 percent of businesses are locally owned and operated, and 62 percent of businesses are owned by women and people of color" is not enough to make this an equitable move. How many businesses are owned by white women? Of the POC, how many are specifically Black-owned? In a time when we are being asked to reflect deeply on our negative impact on our most vulnerable populations, these questions matter. I, of course, support businesses owned by women and people of color, but this is not enough information for us to understand the full impact of this recovery fund. Does the money made by these business owners go into our lower-income neighborhoods and our predominantly Black and Brown neighborhoods? Do these business owners employ Black and Brown employees and other POC? Do these small business owners continue to call the police on Black and Brown, or poor and transient, community members, exacerbating issues of equity and injustice? Social justice is the intersection of class and race-- it is not enough to give money to a select few owners who are female and people of color.