

**White Paper/Renewed Landmarks Ordinance**  
**Downtown Madison, Inc. (DMI)**  
October, 2014

**Vision:**

**“Madison’s renewed Landmarks Ordinance will actively steward the cultural resources that together and separately make Madison and our local historic districts unique while encouraging community and private investment in and around these cultural resources to effectively promote a Madisonian quality of life aimed at attracting and retaining a vibrant and diverse workforce, providing an array of housing options, maintaining and encouraging investments in real estate, and promoting heritage tourism by clearly communicating and displaying our cultural resources to create a stronger and more sustainable community.”**

We recognize that our collective investment in understanding and cultivating our historic resources has not kept pace with need and interest. Our goal for a renewed Landmarks Ordinance is to provide clarity and consistency so that all stakeholders know what to expect in the process. The renewed ordinance will recognize that cities grow, change and develop over time and local historic districts are a part of this evolving urban fabric and historic cultural landscape. The renewed ordinance will also recognize that local landmarks and historic districts are part of the overall goals of the city to encourage economic development, improve the quality of life and support business and employment growth.

We encourage updating our historic and cultural databases, especially for local landmarks and historic districts, but we should also consider the need to properly maintain information regarding National Register of Historic Places listings. Benefits of such information include fewer surprises for property owners, potential tax benefits, opportunities for community building and "placemaking" within our landmarks historic districts, and greater public understanding and education. To that end, terms such as “contributing” and “non-contributing” should be the subject of ongoing education for leaders across the community but especially for neighborhood associations, business organizations, and the owners of properties in local landmarks historic districts or of local landmarks. In particular, we cannot overstate the importance of understanding the difference between local landmarks and historic districts and those listed in the state and/or national register of historic places without local designation.

Lastly, we believe our historic and cultural resources can be a catalyst for creating a vibrant, diverse, and sustainable community. To achieve this end, we believe the ordinance should recognize the financial responsibility required to maintain our historic and cultural resources and encourage redevelopment, rehabilitation and enhancement of our historic and cultural resources that recognizes the importance of balancing our interests in historic preservation with our interests in healthy, sustainable neighborhoods, considerate growth and development, and the highest achievable quality of life for all Madisonians.