

### **Downtown Coordinating Committee**

The Downtown Coordinating Committee (DCC) recommends that the Madison Common Council adopt the City of Madison Downtown Plan prepared by the Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development and submitted in November 2011. The DCC respectfully submits the following suggestions for revisions, clarifications and/or changes to the document before it is finalized. The committee's comments are presented below in the order of their appearance in the Plan.

#### **KEY 1 – CELEBRATE THE LAKES**

We support Objective 1.1 and its six recommendations

We would suggest that water sports other than boating, such as kayaking, fishing, paragliding, etc. should also be encouraged on the lakefront,

#### **KEY 2 – STRENGTHEN THE REGION'S ECONOMIC ENGINE**

##### Employment

**Objective 2.1** emphasizes the focus on tech-based businesses. The objective and supporting recommendations should also point out the target of Creative Industries as being desired in the recruitment efforts.

##### Room to Grow

**Objective 2.3** -- We are supportive of the objective but do not see connections in the plan that will provide the actions required to achieve these goals.

The call for predictability in process, but flexibility in opportunity is important to the sectors of the market who will be responsible for the innovation and creating in investing in the type of buildings and supporting infrastructure needed in achieving the vision of the plan. Also, there should be acknowledgement that the downtown area is the place in Madison where density **should** be encouraged.

**Recommendation 16** – should read “Guide and Incentivize development to locations recommended in this Plan.”

##### Retail

The Plan must recognize that the downtown is a regional attraction and visitor destination, and that the City and its partners must work to maintain this unique position. The current objective should be stronger in its vision, but based on retail realities.

##### **Objective 2.5**

**Recommendation 23** – Provide more convenient access to retail goods and services through business clustering and placement strategies to build critical mass of contiguous retail, encourage cross-shopping opportunities, avoid potential commercial conflicts, and reduce business turnover.

##### Vibrant, Engaging Downtown Environment

##### **Objective 2.6**

**Recommendation 30** – add a mix of executive housing and affordable workforce housing.

Visitor and Tourist Information

**Objective 2.7**

This objective is weak. It should incorporate the strategic plans that have been defined in the CVB's Destination 2020 documents.

**KEY #3: ENSURE A QUALITY URBAN ENVIRONMENT**

Support the key's vision of creating a "sense of place" in the downtown, and that this place should be an experience destination that is responsive to the mix of users in the downtown area.

Views

**Objective 3.1**

We support this objective recognizing that the view shed contributes to the visitor perspective and that views are one of our many assets.

**Recommendation 35:** Recommend flexibility in implementation to achieve the objective and remove the blanket requirement of setbacks and stepbacks so that implementation will balance innovation with the maintenance of the viewshed.

**Recommendation 36:** Recognize that not only are the tops of buildings important, but the street level facades also contribute to the positive experience and are important.

Mix of Land Uses

**Objective 3.2** should read "Provide a dynamic and flexible mix of land uses and densities that enable ample opportunities..."

**Recommendation 41** - Flexibility should be stated rather than assumed.

Building Scale

**Objective 3.3:** Support the objective's acknowledgement that buildings fit into the greater fabric of the downtown.

**Recommendation #45:** Staff should further clarify areas where setbacks, stepbacks and/or built-to line requirements are intended

**Recommendation #46:** Remove and incorporate into recommendation #45.

Urban Forest

**Objective 3.5**

**Recommendation 52 and 54** - Add retail signage considerations as a factor influencing placement of street trees.

**KEY 4- MAINTAIN STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS AND DISTRICTS**

West Rail Corridor

**Recommendation 75:** add the word "mixed-use " in the text to be consistent with the language in the recommendation.

## **KEY 6 – INCREASE TRANSPORTATION CHOICES**

The introductions should clearly state that implementation of the Complete Streets principles and practices in the Downtown is a fundamental component of the transportation vision embodied in this plan.

### Comprehensive Transportation Study

**Objective 6.9** with its single recommendation 158 - “Prepare a comprehensive multi-modal transportation and parking strategy...” - is the over-arching recommendation of Key 6 and should be listed first. All other objectives and recommendations in Key 6 should be considered components of or inputs to the comprehensive transportation and parking study proposed in the City’s 2012 budget.

The area of study for the comprehensive transportation and parking strategy should conform to the expanded sense of “downtown” (including Capitol East, West Rail Employment, Park Street Health, and UW Campus areas) discussed in opening text of the whole plan and of Key 6. Moving Objective 6.9 up to the beginning provides a better segue from the opening statements of Key 6 and sets the context for the presentation of the subsequent transportation objectives. In addition to what is listed on page 90, important topics for the comprehensive transportation and parking strategy should include:

- Identify a specific location for a downtown inter-city bus terminal.
- Reevaluate the viability of Doyle Square as the site of a transportation hub. The site was hastily identified in 2010 by Governor Doyle as the location for the Amtrak Passenger Rail station. It’s feasibility as multi-modal transit hub was not thoroughly studied. Now that the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative has decided it will by-pass Madison in the Milwaukee-to-Twin Cities route, the likelihood of this location serving as an Amtrak station in the next 20 years, if ever, is miniscule. The site should be considered for a local commuter rail station as part of future service between Middleton, the airport and/or Sun Prairie. Lastly, Doyle Square has limited Madison Metro connectivity compared to other potential sites. (Also see Recommendation 60 under Objective 4.1)
- Evaluate converting the entire downtown one-way network to two-way operation to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), improve navigation for out-of-town visitors, improve visibility and access for downtown businesses, and enable successful achievement of the complete streets principles for the downtown environment.
- Identify physical strategies that would support a downtown two-way conversion such as establishment of closer-to-downtown park-and-shuttle locations (e.g. East Washington & First Street, South Park Street & the Beltline, and University & Segoe). Such perimeter sites to downtown will lend themselves to Transit Oriented Development in addition to relieving the pressure of the single-occupant vehicle on the core.
- Identify incentive strategies that would support a downtown two-way conversion such as expanded Transportation Demand Management programs with local employers.

### Connections to Other Cities

Remove the assumption that the Monona Terrace site will be the future location of the Amtrak Passenger Rail Station. Leave the option open for other potential sites to be evaluated as discussed above in Objective 6.9 and below in Recommendation 112.

### **Objective 6.1**

**Recommendation 112** – Change this recommendation to: “Explore potential sites for a future inter-city passenger rail station. Madison may someday connect with the Midwest Regional Rail system and the station will likely need to be located on the main line route that links Madison via Watertown to the east and Portage to the north. Potential sites could be Union Corners, First Street & East Washington, or the Dane County Regional Airport, among other possibilities.”

**Recommendations 113 and 115** – Combine these recommendations into one: “Locate an inter-city bus terminal downtown. Integrate the bus terminal with or provide close proximity to a variety of intermodal connections such as a bike station, multiple Madison Metro Bus routes, commuter rail, downtown circulator (streetcar) service, car sharing service and motor vehicle parking to facilitate the first or final leg of an inter-city trip.”

**Recommendation 114** – Add: “In the future, airport connectivity should be part of a larger commuter rail service with metropolitan and suburban connectivity in addition to downtown.”

#### Transit Service

Make a stronger statement about the vision for transit. For example: “The goal for downtown is that for more and more people (consumers), places (destinations) and purposes (employment, recreation, tourism, etc.), transit will be the travel option of choice because it is attractive, convenient and efficient.”

### **Objective 6.2**

**Recommendation 116** – add: “A regional transit entity should have a dedicated funding source such as a sales tax, wheel tax or other mechanism. Absent reinstatement of RTA’s by the legislature, Dane County and the City of Madison should work together to explore and establish a greater metropolitan area transit system on their own authority. Such a system would implement the transit services discussed in this section throughout Madison and the rest of Dane County.”

**Recommendation 123** - Add to the final sentence: “and to downtown perimeter park-and-shuttle facilities located at downtown-edge sites, for example East Washington and First Street, South Park and the Beltline, and University and Segoe.” (Also see Objective 2.2, recommendations 13 and 14.)

#### Complete Streets

The Downtown Plan should acknowledge that the one-way traffic system, implemented in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in Madison and many other cities, has had a long-term negative impact on the downtown environment and economy.

### **Objective 6.3**

**Recommendation 124** – Change to: “Review and evaluate the benefits and costs of converting the one-way network back to two-way in the greater downtown area between Breese Terrace on the west and Baldwin Street on the east.”

**Add a new Recommendation (between 126 and 127):** “Study establishing W. Mifflin between the Square (Philosophers’ Grove) and the Kohl Center as an intensive, complete street. Consider the concept of “woonerf” (as described by the Downtown Design Professionals) - a curbless, free-form esplanade used equally by all modes. This five block experiment could be

the catalyst for reinventing the West Mifflin area as a unique urban place with a dynamic variety of mixed uses and building styles like nowhere else in the City. This recommendation is valid for both Mifflin neighborhood alternatives presented for Objective 4.3 in this Plan.

### Parking

The idea of “park once” should include the concept that the parking location not be all the way downtown. There is evidence that commuting drivers into Madison are willing to shift modes to transit, bicycle or walking for the last “mile or so” of their trip.

The overbuilding of parking capacity downtown will never allow a transition away from Automobile-Oriented-Development in the urban core. City parking policy and practices must be part of an overall strategy of active Transportation Demand Management in the downtown, and not simply respond to demand related to one mode. Parking demand management needs to be part of the comprehensive multi-modal solution. (Also see Objective 2.1, recommendation 12.)

### **Objective 6.4**

**Recommendation 131** – Please add: “In addition, the consultant should examine the fundamental land use problem of devoting high-cost downtown land to automobile parking (all day storage) instead of using lower-cost land on the perimeter.”

**Recommendation 132** – Add the following: “Dedicate stalls in Madison Parking Utility facilities for use by car sharing services.”

**Add a new recommendation:** “Address the problem of moped parking on front lawns and terraces in downtown neighborhoods.”

**Add a new recommendation:** “Evaluate the policies for on-street parking in downtown and adjoining neighborhoods. Include an evaluation of the costs associated with on-street parking permits to ensure that the price for annual permits reflects the full cost to the City.”

### Bicycle Facilities

#### **Objective 6.5**

**Recommendation 139** – Conduct more consumer market research to determine desirable locations for bike stations.

**Recommendation 140** – Add: “Provide more bicycle parking in all existing Madison Parking Utility facilities downtown.”

### Pedestrian Connections

#### **Objective 6.6**

Recommendation 146 – Clarify the extent to which the Langdon mid-block walk way is intended for motor vehicles and specify measures to separate pedestrian and bicycle flow.

### Wayfinding

The wayfinding problems of visitors described on page 88 should be identified as one of the enduring negative impacts upon the Downtown environment and economy resulting from the introduction of the one-way network of streets in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century.

#### **Objective 6.7**

We support the wayfinding recommendations under objective 6.7.

### Transportation Demand Management

A robust set of Transportation Demand Management strategies is an essential part of diversifying travel demand across more modes of transportation and away from dependence on the single occupant vehicle (SOV). Such diversification will be essential to the successful conversion of the downtown street system from one-way to two-way. This section presents a rather passive role for the City in this area. There should more the City can actively do to increase the adoption and implementation of TDM programs.

#### **Objective 6.8**

**Add a new recommendation:** “The City will support expansion of car sharing services in the Downtown including providing at least one car sharing vehicle in all Madison Parking Utility facilities.”

### **KEY 7: BUILD ON HISTORIC RESOURCES**

Recommendations 163 – In the text define the nomination process for potential landmarks.

### **KEY 8 – EXPAND RECREATIONAL, CULTURAL AND ENTERTAINMENT OFFERINGS**

The key should incorporate the city’s tools of using policy and recommendations that will encourage developing downtown as an experience destination that allows the private sector entertainment facilities to develop and for innovative business opportunities to come to fruition. It is known that arts and culture will develop organically, and the city’s role is to provide the infrastructure necessary to support and encourage this growth.

### Arts Cultural and Entertainment Venues

#### **Objective 8.3**

**Recommendation 187** – Add “Develop flexible land use and massing policies to allow for a wide range of urban multi-place entertainment venues, given market demands” to existing language

**Recommendation 189** – Add “Position the district as a regional visitor destination by providing high standard as clean, safe, visitor friendly.” to the existing language

**Recommendation 191:** - Promote the arts, culture and entertainment by supporting collaboration between or among ...

### **KEY 9 – BECOME A MODEL OF SUSTAINABILITY**

#### **Objective 9.1**

**Add a new recommendation:** “Green roofs will be installed on City buildings wherever possible and on new construction to improve energy efficiency and reduce the heat island effect. City buildings and new construction on land sold by the City for development should be models of sustainability.

### **CALL TO ACTION**

The vision laid out in the narrative of the Downtown Plan clearly identifies the downtown as the economic and cultural center of our region. To achieve this, the key will be a thriving economic base that continues to grow, adapt and flex to meet the changing needs of the population that lives, works and plays within the downtown. The balance between “idea and action” in the current Downtown Plan is unclear. The success of the implementation of the plan is contingent on the Public and Private sectors working together.

To emphasize this, it is recommended that:

1. The Call to Action incorporate every recommendation in the Plan, and that each action item identify the City AND private sector resources/partners needed to achieve success.
2. Incorporate a full set of the City's tools that it has at its disposal to achieve success. More emphasis on the City's use of incentives, funding opportunities and encouragement tools should be incorporated throughout the plan narrative and the Call to Action as these tools will support the elements that will ultimately be implemented by the private sector and will be necessary to achieve success.