

February 23, 2009

Mr. Mark Olinger, Director
Dept. of Planning and Economic and Community Development
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Mr. Olinger,

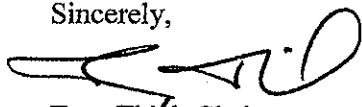
The Downtown Coordinating Committee looks forward to its review and consideration of the forthcoming Downtown Plan. We support its vision for multiple identities and land uses. Indeed, downtown is not just one place – geographically or functionally. We also appreciate its acknowledgement that transportation design will be a determining factor in the success or failure of place-making downtown. Other recent plans, including the Madison Comprehensive Plan, the East Washington Capitol Gateway Corridor BUILD Plan, as well as the plans of central Madison neighborhoods, have also cited the need for a comprehensive and multi-modal transportation and parking strategy to support the future economic, residential and cultural growth of the broader downtown area.

Madison has recently completed, or will soon complete, a number of mode-specific studies including the Ad Hoc Long Range Metro Transit Plan, the Platinum Bike Study, the Parking Utility Strategic Plan and Policies, the Streetcar Study, Transport 2020 and the Regional Transportation Plan 2030 that all identify opportunities for increased utilization of various transportation modes in addition to the automobile. It's time for Madison to capitalize on these studies by melding them into a bold, multi-modal plan that lays out an integrated transportation blueprint for the central city. This concept was advanced recently by a Common Council resolution (file ID 11560) with sponsorship by six alders. Lastly, the potential acceleration of inter-city passenger rail to Madison by the federal stimulus package and the Governor's budget adds even more urgency to developing a multi-modal downtown transportation design.

While an effort of this magnitude is beyond the scope and budget for the Moving Around section of the Downtown Plan, we think it is imperative that the Downtown Plan become the springboard for the larger transportation initiative that central Madison needs. Madison is not alone in the need to broadly rethink the transportation paradigm of the last 50 years. The Complete Streets movement and the Well-Connected Networks concept from the Congress for New Urbanism point to new models that, while continuing to support automobile travel and parking, seek to diversify planning, design and investment beyond the automotive monoculture of the 20th century. Many cities are benefiting by pursuing innovative directions such as these.

We urge that the Downtown Plan call for the funding and development of a balanced, multi-modal transportation strategy. A forward-looking transportation plan will not only support the vital land use objectives for the central urban area, but will also support Madison's role as a thriving economic and cultural center at the hub of a diverse, regional transportation network.

Sincerely,



Troy Thiel, Chair
Downtown Coordinating Committee

cc: Mayor Dave Cieslewicz

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cc: Common Council
Mario Mendoza
Joel Plant
David Dryer
Brad Murphy
Bill Fruhling
David Trowbridge
TPC members
P/B/MVC members
UDC members
DCC members
Susan Schmitz, DMI