



## Planning Division

---

215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Ste 017  
P.O. Box 2985  
Madison, Wisconsin 53701-2985  
Phone: (608) 266-4635  
Fax (608) 266-6377  
[www.cityofmadison.com](http://www.cityofmadison.com)

May 18, 2026

To: Landmarks Commission

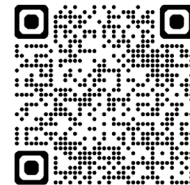
From: Dan McAuliffe, Rebecca Cnare, Kirstie Laatsch, Angela Puerta, Jessica Vaughn

RE: **Downtown Area Plan Historic Resources Discussion**

The Downtown Area Plan kicked off in December of 2025 as a part of *Envision Downtown Madison*, a Public-Private Planning Partnership with Downtown Madison Inc. (DMI.) This partnership consists of a Privately led “Downtown Strategy” and a Publicly led “Downtown Area Plan.” These efforts will share inventories, analysis, and public feedback that will lead to a “Shared Vision and Big Moves.” This shared work will then inform plan recommendations and an implementation strategy for both efforts. If you would like to learn more about the Envision Madison Progress to date, please visit our website:

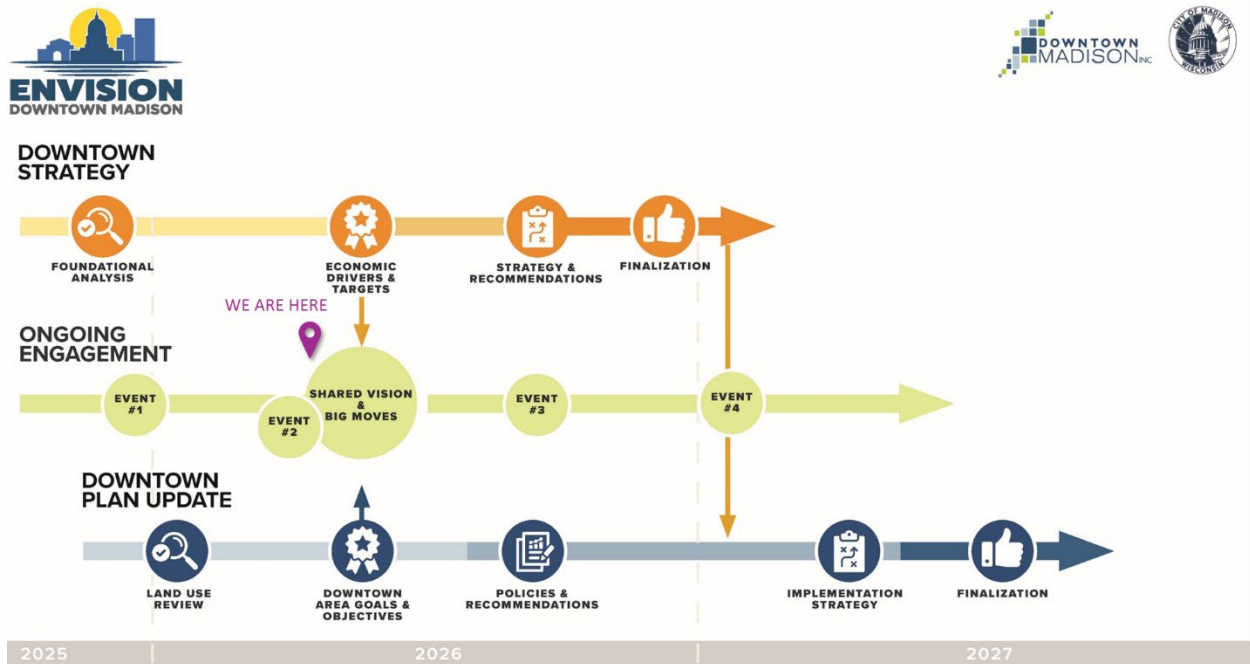
Downtown Area Plan

[www.cityofmadison.com/downtownplan](http://www.cityofmadison.com/downtownplan)



After a brief presentation about our process to date, The Planning team would like to prompt our discussion with a series of questions.

1. Do members of the Landmarks Commission have policy ideas, projects or other potential recommendations that fall under the big moves?
2. What role should Historic Preservation play in the future of Downtown Madison? What do you see as the opportunities, challenges and potential policy guidance to help navigate growth and preservation?
3. The previous Downtown Plan recommended considering co-terminus boundaries for Local and National Register Historic Districts.
  - i. How does the Commission feel about shrinking/expanding local districts to match National Districts?
  - ii. First Settlement – areas of potential change
  - iii. Mansion Hill - areas of potential change
4. Does the Commission have ideas for potential tools, projects, or policies to advance Heritage Tourism and telling place stories?
  - i. Blue Plaque Project
  - ii. Other ideas







# SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK EMERGING VISION AND VALUES



## WHERE DID THESE COME FROM?

The City's Imagine Madison Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Madison, Inc. (DMI) Strategic Plan together define key goals and values that guide the future of Downtown. The Strategic Plan includes a set of five paired values to help articulate how DMI and its members advance the vision for Downtown. One new, sixth vision element has also emerged as a consistent theme in conversations about how Downtown can continue to evolve and improve. Through the Envision Downtown engagement process, these priorities have been strongly reinforced by the community and are reflected here as the Vision Elements and Values for Greater Downtown.

Please review the Vision Elements and Values below and share your feedback on the next board.

1	<p><b>Experiential &amp; Engaging Downtown</b></p> <p>Greater Downtown is a multi-faceted gathering place that offers immersive and memorable experiences for all. Through a unique and dynamic collection of destinations, events, programming, and public spaces, Greater Downtown cultivates authentic connections to people and place.</p>
2	<p><b>Economically Vibrant &amp; Inclusive Downtown</b></p> <p>Greater Downtown is an economically thriving mixed-use activity center with businesses, diverse employment, housing, shopping, dining, cultural, and entertainment offerings that attract, serve, and reflect all Madison residents.</p>
3	<p><b>Safe &amp; Welcoming Downtown</b></p> <p>The Greater Downtown environment and experience are comfortable and inviting for all employers, employees, residents, and visitors regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mobility, or other identifying characteristics.</p>
4	<p><b>Diverse &amp; Equitable Downtown</b></p> <p>Greater Downtown celebrates the diversity and history of the Madison community. Through intentional inclusivity, dedicated resources, cultural competency, collaborative partnerships, and authentic representation, downtown creates spaces where everyone belongs and independent, minority, and women leaders and entrepreneurs are actively supported, empowered, and celebrated.</p>
5	<p><b>Connected &amp; Accessible Downtown</b></p> <p>Greater Downtown promotes accessible movement and mobility in and around Downtown with well-connected, multi-modal transportation networks that link key destinations, services, retail, entertainment, and the lakes is essential for a healthy and thriving Downtown.</p>
6	<p><b>Sustainable &amp; Resilient Downtown</b></p> <p>Greater Downtown Madison embraces sustainability and resilience as core principles for our future. By working together to address environmental, social, and economic challenges, the Greater Downtown creates adaptive solutions and lasting impact through education, advocacy, and collaborative partnerships that ensure continued prosperity and vitality for all.</p>



# THE BIG MOVES

## VOTE FOR YOUR TOP BIG MOVE

### Now that you've learned about each Big Move, which one are you most excited about?

Place one dot next to the Big Move below that you are most excited about.

#### WHAT THESE BIG MOVES ARE

- » Early ideas for how Downtown could evolve
- » Based on community input, planning work, and existing strengths
- » Meant to explore possibilities—not select final projects
- » A starting point for understanding potential directions

#### WHAT THESE BIG MOVES ARE NOT

- » Final plans or approved projects
- » Funding commitments or construction schedules
- » Fixed priorities or guaranteed outcomes
- » The only ideas being considered for Downtown

**1) Come on Down(town):** Become one of the easiest downtowns to get to, and make downtown enjoyable, safe, and clear to navigate with or without a car.

**6) Drive the Next Gen Economy:** Attract investment and growth in existing economic anchors, growing business sectors, and new jobs and businesses.

**2) Curate Unforgettable Districts:** Cultivate and promote several thriving districts within the Greater Downtown that are memorable, walkable, and well-connected.

**7) Make Downtown a Diverse and Complete Neighborhood:** Deliver more housing for more people and support housing choices with amenities that serve daily needs.

**3) Put the “There” Back in State and Square:** Make the ground floors along State Street and the Square reflections of the diverse, high quality offerings Madison and Wisconsin have to offer.

**8) Elevate the Arts, Culture, & Entertainment Scene:** Establish a sustainable roadmap and set of tools for better connecting, activating, funding, and promoting Madison’s great existing events, venues, and cultural and historic resources.

**4) Reimagine People Spaces and Places:** Expand and rethink the delivery, ownership, programming, and operations of public spaces and who they serve.

**9) Become the Healthiest and Greenest Downtown:** Promote and support community and environmental health with green infrastructure, development, and recreation.

**5) Feel the Lake Effect:** Leverage the lakes and lakefronts for access, activation, recreation, and connectivity.

**10) Infuse Learning, Play and Discovery:** Reshape one or more districts in Downtown as a can’t miss destination for kids and families.