

# ***DOWNTOWN*** *Plan*

Madison, Wisconsin



Adopted July 2012



to other common outdoor amenities and civic spaces, such as the Memorial Union, Library Mall, the Lake Mendota pedestrian/bicycle path, State Street, and the Capitol Square. However, there is still a need for larger usable open spaces.

Public art enhances public spaces in cities all over the world, and is most successful when thoughtfully integrated into everyday life in a way that contributes to the richness of the

community's identity. As described in the *Public Art Framework and Field Guide for Madison, Wisconsin* (2002), public art is made from the spaces and structures that serve and bring citizens together in the everyday life of a city: roads, bridges, parks, plazas, libraries, community centers, and water works. Public art is not only the sculpture on the bridge or in the park or in front of a building or along a road — it is the overall form of the city's landscape, structures and infrastructure. In creating public art, the interests and concerns of artists intersect those of the community. Public art in this context of "city building" is interactive and concerned with the way a city looks and how it functions. Through their engagement in shaping the city, artists help create the community's future, and a more dynamic public realm.

Downtown is home to a variety of cultural institutions and venues for the performing, visual, literary, and other art forms. It is also home to a variety of museums, the Central Madison Public Library, and many privately-owned galleries and performance venues. The Overture Center and the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center are prominent recent examples of major investments by the City and the community's citizens to support cultural activities. The University of Wisconsin-Madison also provides numerous galleries, museums, and

performance venues, such as the Chazen Museum, Arts Lofts, and Memorial Union Theater. As described in Key 2, Downtown is host to a significant number of arts and culture based events that attract millions of visitors each year.

## ■ Parks

Downtown has a shortage of park and open space land. Currently, Downtown has approximately 80 square feet of park land per person<sup>8</sup> compared to approximately 1,100 square feet per person for the city as a whole — fourteen times the amount available for Downtown residents. As densities increase, this shortage will only worsen unless new parks are established. Developing new park land is a very challenging and expensive proposition



Harry Dumpty  
Artist: Brent George

## Parks Recommendations

**Objective 8.1:** Create additional park land and enhance existing parks.

**Recommendation 199:** Prepare new master plans for James Madison Park and Brittingham Park to make sure they are designed and programmed to meet the needs of residents of an increasingly dense Downtown, including exploring the potential for community gardens.

**Recommendation 200:** Upgrade the open space at North Shore Drive, John Nolen Drive, and Broom Street to improve its aesthetics as a gateway into Downtown, and to enhance its connectivity and use, including redesigning the dog park.

**Recommendation 201:** Create pocket parks as gathering places that can become neighborhood assets at key locations throughout Downtown.

**Recommendation 202:** Promote the development of private and quasi-public outdoors spaces (such as plazas with landscaping and seating) and consider requiring them as part of large-scale Downtown development projects.

**Recommendation 203:** Create strong linkages to Central Park.

**Recommendation 204:** Develop a new park near the intersection of Bassett and West Johnson Streets to meet the needs of the underserved high-density housing at this location.



Downtown parks need to accommodate a variety of uses

<sup>8</sup> Figure includes those portions of James Madison Park and Brittingham Park outside of the planning area, as well as the Capitol grounds.



## Art in City Building Recommendations

**Objective 8.2:** *Interweave public art that evokes a sense of place and expresses Madison’s cultural diversity into the fabric of Downtown through “art in city building,” which focuses on integrating art into public projects.*

**Recommendation 205:** *Include artists on design teams for new Downtown public spaces, buildings, parks, streetscapes, and pedestrian/bicycle paths undertaken by the City.*

**Recommendation 206:** *Locate signature public art at key Downtown locations, such as gateways and parks.*

**Recommendation 207:** *Identify locations for temporary and/or event-only placement of art pieces and public performances, such as art in storefront windows, or in parks, parking garages, and other public spaces.*



*Philosophers’ Grove at the top of State Street. Artist: Jill Sebastian*

(5-minute walking distance) from other parks, and the existing and proposed residential densities. Many properties in the immediate area have been redeveloped during the past decade with large buildings that provide little to no open space for residents. The area proposed for the new park is well located to serve the hundreds of student-oriented residential units built in the vicinity, as well as the hundreds of additional units accommodated by this plan. The park is recommended to be approximately 1½ to 2 acres in size.

The following criteria should be considered in selecting a specific site within the target area for this park: low improvement to land value ratios, underutilized properties, poor aesthetic quality of existing buildings, ease of assembly (a limited number of parcels / property-owners), opportunity to catalyze positive change, opportunity to provide supporting open space for additional higher-density development in close proximity, and opportunity to create a focal point and positive terminal views.

### ■ Art in City Building

Public art can contribute to a place’s unique identity in significant ways, and Downtown is no exception. Downtown has the city’s highest concentration of public art works, and in more recent years there has been an emphasis on making public art an integral part of Downtown projects, as opposed to commissioning pieces to be “plopped down” in a space. One of the “art in city building” ideals is to expand the definition of public art and to raise the level of design, craftsmanship, and quality of elements found in everyday streetscapes, parks, and private development. For example, the bus shelters on State Street are the result of a design competition and are unique to that street. Likewise, the sculptural forms in the “Philosophers’ Grove” serve as seating and tabletops for users of that space. The gates at

Goodman Pool are another example. This *Downtown Plan* encourages a wide range of public art, from major features to small, everyday objects and even transitional works that may be installed for a short time then change or be removed. This is all part of keeping Downtown interesting, exciting, and ever changing.



*Fountain on Capitol Square*

## ■ Arts, Cultural and Entertainment Venues

Like most cities, many of Madison's arts and cultural facilities are located Downtown — particularly the larger ones. Several of these facilities are located in close proximity to each other near the intersection of State Street and Capitol Square, making it very convenient to go from one venue to the next. Although facilities such as the Overture Center, State Historical Museum and Veteran's Museum, the Madison Children's Museum, and the Central Library, are large and important culture-based locations, the importance of smaller venues such as coffee houses with art galleries, or

bars offering live music, should not be overlooked.

This plan seeks to balance the collection of arts and cultural facilities near the intersection of State Street and the Capitol Square with a similar cluster of University of Wisconsin cultural facilities located near the opposite end of State Street. The six-block long State Street is widely regarded as Madison's premier street. It has an engaging collection of shops, and eating and drinking establishments (many with sidewalk cafes) that provide the makings for a well connected and active cultural corridor. This is a strength that should be further developed.

## Arts, Cultural and Entertainment Venues Recommendations

**Objective 8.3:** *Provide a wide variety of cultural experiences for a diverse population by clustering and connecting arts, cultural, and entertainment venues and strengthen the arts, culture, and entertainment corridor that runs from the UW campus, up State Street to the Capitol Square area.*

**Recommendation 208:** *Concentrate cultural venues near the top of State Street/Capitol Square and designate a cultural district connecting it to similar clusters on the UW campus at the interface with Downtown.*

**Recommendation 209:** *Support existing Downtown branding programs (e.g., University of Wisconsin, Business Improvement District, Greater Madison Convention & Visitors Bureau) for the cultural district that includes marketing, education, retail, entertainment, and wayfinding.*

**Recommendation 210:** *Seek to locate an urban multi-purpose entertainment facility, which could include a cineplex, in the vicinity of State Street and the Capitol Square.*

**Recommendation 211:** *Enhance the existing pedestrian-friendly environment that includes opportunities for outdoor cafes and places for spontaneous street performance within a well-designed streetscape.*

**Recommendation 212:** *Promote and support first floor retail space around Capitol Square to help link State Street and King Street as a retail, entertainment, and cultural destination that is clean, safe, and visitor friendly.*

**Recommendation 213:** *Develop an "Arts, Culture, and Entertainment Business Plan" to encourage locally-owned retail with cultural entrepreneurs and artists investing in the Downtown arts, culture, and entertainment corridor.*

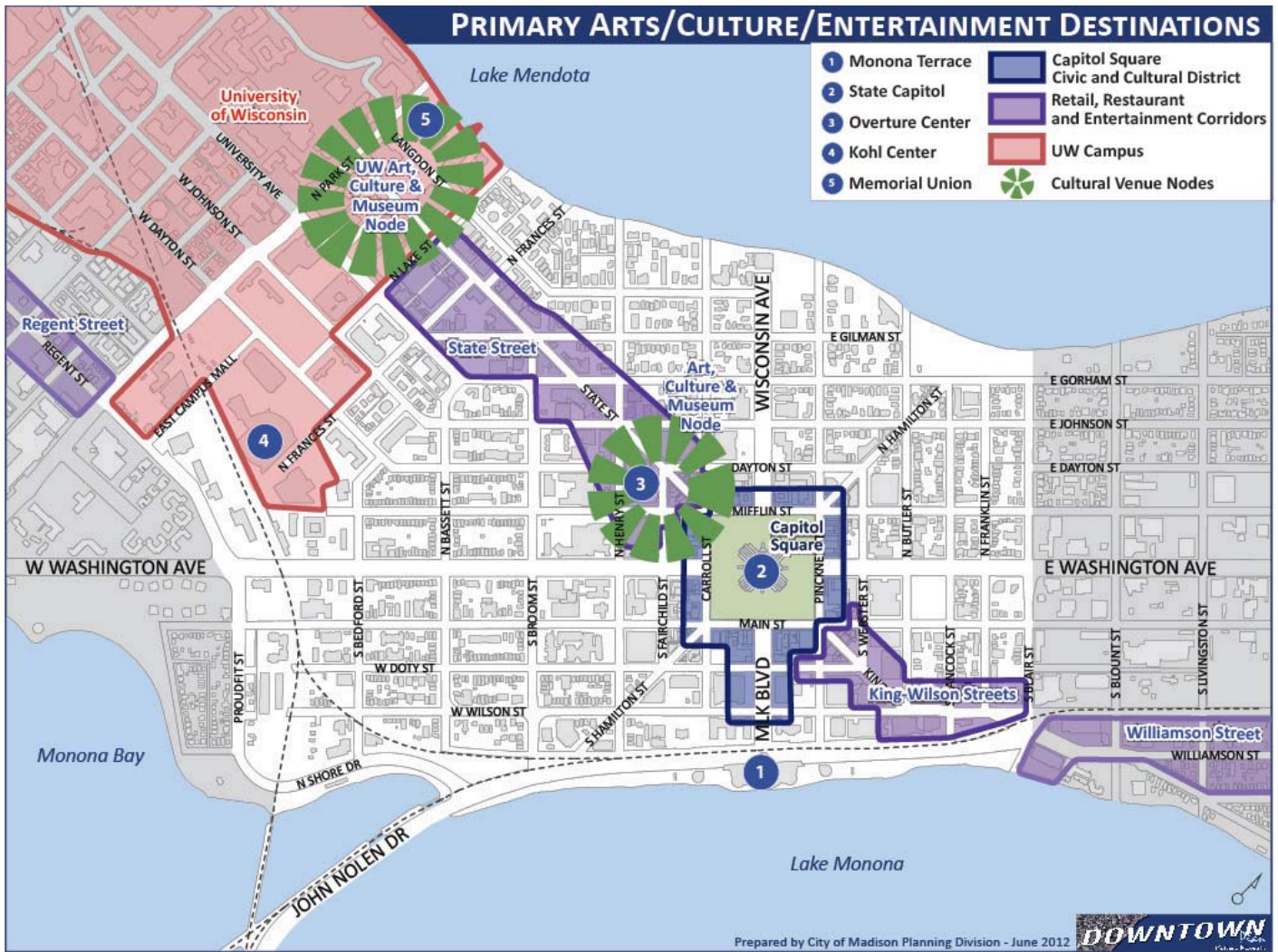
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Four Lakes Artists: Myklebust + Sears



State Street bus shelter



## Arts, Cultural and Entertainment Venues Recommendations

(continued)

**Recommendation 214:** Promote the arts, culture, and entertainment corridor by supporting collaboration between or among the City, UW-Madison, Madison College, Downtown Madison, Inc., Downtown Business Improvement District, Greater Madison Convention and Business Bureau, Greater State Street Business Association, Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce, and other stakeholders.

**Recommendation 215:** Promote private/public cooperation for the use of public open spaces and facilities for a diverse array of festivals, street fairs, performances, special events and exhibits.