

From: [Linda](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Legistar 89347, reconsideration of sole source contract
Date: Monday, October 6, 2025 9:51:04 PM

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I urge you to support reconsideration for the following reasons:

1. The resolution stated: "WHEREAS, these funds can be used within the boundary and ½ mile from the boundary of TID #50 in Downtown Madison" and "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City's \$150,000 allocated to the project will be used for work within the boundaries of TID #50 and within ½ mile from the boundaries of TID #50." But Legistar 89347, despite its title, is not just a Downtown Economic Investment Strategy, it is a *Greater* Downtown Economic Investment Strategy including Bay Creek and the isthmus. The isthmus and Bay Creek are clearly not within ½ mile of the TID #50 boundary. Thus, it appears inappropriate to include these areas within the Strategy zone.
2. Part (most?) of the reason for giving the sole source contract to DMI was that DMI had raised funds that it could use to supplement the City's \$150K contribution. (Document #4 of the Legislator record states: "The City could not replicate the level of private-sector support for this planning effort by contracting with a different organization or consulting firm.") Yet no mention was made of how much money DMI will be providing to this Strategy. If merely, for example, another \$15,000, then the City could cover that level of financial support.
3. DMI is focused on the downtown, as is the BID. What is suitable for the core downtown area is different than the isthmus which has substantial traditional neighborhoods. Plus, the business mix is different. While State Street has lost many little funky businesses, Willy has gained some newer businesses. Willy also has service businesses serving resident needs, such as Ace and Howe Brothers. Yet the Strategy does not mention any focus on seeking out businesses that are in the "greater" area. And since DMI charges for membership, those little local businesses may consider membership just an added expense.
4. The Strategy talks about parcels with a low improvement to land value as being opportunity sites for future economic growth. This means redevelopment. Willy Street is in a historic district and there is value to that historic district, but the historic buildings probably have a low improvement value. The Strategy does nothing to distinguish the different character of the historic district. The "highest and best use" concept in real estate ultimately comes down to what is the most profitable, a narrow market-driven definition of value that overlooks social, environmental, and cultural benefits.
5. Community engagement will be determined by EQT by Design, under a separate contract. While the Project Management Team (MIG Team, DMI, the City, and the BID) will review the community engagement plan, there are no standards set by Council. There will be coordination with the Downtown Plan input process, but the isthmus area and Bay Creek are not part of the Downtown Plan. Perhaps Council will have a say if the EQT contract comes before Council, but document #2 in Legistar 89347 seems to say that all contracts will be handled through DMI.
6. The Mayor told DMI that the City would be taking action even before plans (Downtown Plan, economic strategy) are done. The Mayor said it is important to be doing it together; that it can be parsed out what government is best equipped to do versus

what the private sector is best equipped to do, and that she and Jason Illstup had already discussed this. Has that vision of what the City is best at as versus the private sector been shared with Council? The Strategy does detail tasks, but the City/private mix has much broader implications.

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Lehnertz