

STATEMENT TO:

City of Madison ALRC and Madison Common Council

11 September 2017

FROM:

Greater Madison Convention & Visitors Bureau

In 2016 and into 2017, the Greater Madison Convention & Visitors Bureau invested resources into assessing Madison's position in the marketplace as a destination for leisure visitors, conventions and events. The process involved two initiatives: DestinationNEXT – an industry diagnostic tool to measure "Destination Strength" and "Community Engagement in Tourism" versus other destinations around the world; and, Destination Visioning – a process by which we could create action steps and implementation to responsibly support Madison's future as a destination and expand community engagement in our work.

Our DestinationNEXT assessment, assessed us exactly in the middle of all 200+ destinations from around the world that had employed the diagnostic tool, leading us to understand we can grow both in strength as a destination and in engaging our community.

Our Destination Visioning work identified several key strategies that are important to implement in order to lift the perception of Madison as a destination and elevate the city as a preferred place to visit, hold a convention or host an event.

Three of these findings are tied directly to the request from the Edgewater Hotel for the license which would allow them to host events for their guests and the community.

As the City's only hotel on one of our lakes, the Edgewater holds a very special place in our destination's history and future. The research strategies that support the Edgewater's application are:

- *Activate the Lakes: The study clearly stated that the community should "develop plans to activate the lakes for public use and engagement of visitors and residents alike". The type of events the Edgewater hosts and wants to host, have been and can continue to be a beacon and favorite among residents and visitors. The Edgewater has demonstrated that it understands the city's history and interest in music and sports.*
- *Event Mix: Our study states, "Madison has demonstrated its ability to host significant events such as World Dairy Expo and a variety of sporting, culinary, cultural and music events. Madison needs to leverage this experience and the infrastructure it enjoys to both enhance existing events and create or attract new ones."*
- *Authentic Experiences and Building on Madison's Strengths: As noted in the study, we must "Enhance existing assets and experiences building on greater Madison's strengths in culinary, cycling, historical, culture, natural beauty, access to outdoor activities and retail."*

As you ponder the request for this application, we hope you will bear the above in mind and the deep research that led to these findings.

Related to this topic, we encourage you to listen to the following Public Radio podcast that was recorded in August, during a GMCVB media FAMiliarization visit. The author attended the FAM tour and visited the Edgewater an evening when an event was being hosted on their Plaza.

<http://kcbx.org/post/madison-wisconsin-s-historic-edgewater-hotel-bellwether-america-s-hospitality-industry#stream/0>