

AGENDA # 7

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	PRESENTED: May 9, 2018
TITLE: Ordinance #51349 Adopting the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan.	REFERRED:
	REREFERRED:
	REPORTED BACK:
AUTHOR: Janine Glaeser, Secretary	ADOPTED: POF:
DATED: May 9, 2018	ID NUMBER:

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Lois Braun-Oddo, Dawn O’Kroley, Cliff Goodhart, John Harrington, Christian Harper, Tom DeChant, Rafeeq Asad and Amanda Hall.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of May 9, 2018, the Urban Design Commission **RECOMMENDED ADOPTION** of Ordinance 51349 Adopting the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan. Bill Fruhling of the Planning Division gave an overview of the City’s new draft Comprehensive Plan, noting the recommendations that are most relevant to the Urban Design Commission. Madison is growing and this will change a lot about our community: neighborhoods, housing types, transportation modes, how people will spend their free time, etc. It is projected that Madison will grow by about 70,000 new residents in the next 20- 25 years. Even more significant than that in terms of the future urban environment, is the estimated 40,000 new housing units that will be needed to accommodate this growth. The City’s Comprehensive Plan is the overarching policy document for the City that aligns recommendations from many plans and actions the City undertakes. The City is required by State Statute to update its Comprehensive Plan every 10 years. A major goal of this update was to have a more focused, clear, approachable plan that is more likely to be implemented. State Statute requires that when a city regulates land use, such as through zoning, decisions need to be consistent with the Future Land Use Map that is part of the plan. The proposed land use categories focus more on height than density. The plan is organized into six topic areas, and includes 12 goals, 50 strategies to achieve those goals, and 167 specific actions to implement the plan. The plan will go before 17 boards and commissions before being forwarded to the Plan Commission, which is the lead commission. The Plan Commission will hold a public hearing on June 4, 2018, likely followed by one or more work sessions. It is anticipated that the Common Council will adopt the plan in August.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- **Transit Oriented Development (TOD):** TOD’s generally require that buildings be built to the front property line. This can be a problematic City policy and one that the Commission frequently struggles with, especially regarding how to address back-of-house service areas when buildings are required to be built to the front property line. There should be language in the plan that tempers that. Also, individual independent vehicular transportation is not going away, whether it’s automated or electric cars, people will continue to drive on their own. We have to face reality because we’re faced with these decisions all

the time, but it doesn't necessarily make for good urban design when it doesn't respond to reality.

- Tradeoffs: The plan focuses on the “goods,” and doesn't talk about conflicts, tradeoffs, or decision points where you have to choose, and that's really what the commission deals with all the time in deciding on the interplay amongst a variety of design issues. Everybody wants all of these things when you're making a concrete decision, but the consequences need to be weighed as well.
- Measurements and Tracking: The plan lacks a way of measuring “success” and how we will know if we are making progress.
- Vegetation and Tree Canopy: Canopy trees and vegetation are part of the city's infrastructure and must be considered at the beginning of a project. Setbacks need to be provided to allow for trees. It's a general statement that should be in the plan, but isn't. This is a health/social equity issue too. Tree canopy should be measured, and because we are covering so much ground with buildings, some of that will have to be replaced on private property so that it is maintained and we don't lose any more.
- Established Neighborhoods and Multi-Family Housing: The character of established neighborhoods is sometimes being destroyed by new large multi-family projects. The plan recommends more “by right” “missing middle” multi-family housing, which means you're taking away commission review. That's where you get a lot of tension between what's existing neighborhood character and pushing the new development. A new building's large footprint is a major concern because when we attach one parcel to nine others it becomes a different animal. The illustration on page 38 should be replaced because it looks like a big institutional building next to a lower density residential neighborhood, and hopefully we never see this in Madison. The discussion is fine, but the narrative should also address the footprint. The Downtown Plan has a goal to remove the 60s era large footprint developments that we've decided in the plan are not appropriate because the remainder of the context has not changed much. We have to say that again. Strategy 1c in the Culture & Character section talks about design relationships and context sensitive design in established neighborhoods in close proximity to buildings of historic or architectural value. The following should be added to that: “buildings of historic or architectural value, or an established development pattern.”
- Natural Environment: The second sentence of the introduction to the Green & Resilient section says that the visual character of the city is established predominantly by the built environment. That's not so true of Madison. Maybe there should be a statement in this section about the benefits of the natural environment for people and our health and well-being.
- Regional Interactions: Employment and transportation are more regional functionalities and the plan really doesn't speak about how we could be impacted by another Epic located someplace else.

ACTION:

On a motion by O'Kroley, seconded by Braun-Oddo, the Urban Design Commission **RECOMMENDS ADOPTION** of the Comprehensive Plan with their comments forwarded to the Plan Commission for their consideration. The motion passed on a unanimous vote of (8-0).