



DRAFT

DOWNTOWN PLAN

Downtown Working and Business Session Results

On June 25, 2008 members of the community met in the Overture Center to share ideas regarding “Downtown Working and Business”. The meeting attendees formed four groups; each group was asked to answer the following three questions:

- 1) What makes Downtown an attractive location for employers, businesses and workers?
- 2) What opportunities exist to enhance the Downtown’s business and working environment?
- 3) How can your big ideas about “Downtown Working and Business” advance the goal of sustainability?

Below are the groups’ answers for each of the three questions. These comments are taken from flip-chart paper used by the groups as well as comment cards that were filled out individually. The answers are grouped into broad categories. An asterisk denotes comment card comments. Additionally, the groups wrote and drew some of their ideas on maps. Those ideas can be found on the summary maps which are available through the Downtown Plan website.

This information is being provided for informational purposes only and will inform the Downtown Plan during the next steps of the planning process.

1) What makes Downtown an attractive location for employers, businesses and workers?

SETTING
Beautiful setting
Lakes
Greenspace
Greenspace*
Capitol building and grounds
Architecture
Vibrancy, people
AMENITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE
Fun place to work: eat, entertain
Culture activities (musicians, outdoor cafes)
Retail, restaurants (uniqueness, convenience) (3 comments)
Sports
Farmer's market (2 comments)
Walkable
Walkability to services*
Easy parking-under subscribed (3 comments)
Easy parking*
Access by many modes of transit (2 comments)
Easy to get in and out (but not through)
High quality buildings (Block 89)

Ease of travel*
workers can bus, bike to work- not car dependent*
Diversity of services- errand running during work possible*
Places to eat for lunch*
Things to do after work*
Locally owned restaurants with locally grown produce are an attraction*
LOCATION
Central location (geographic)
Central Location to East and West*
Geographically well located- access to legislature and Kohl Center* (two comments)
Good hub for business (Isthmus) (4 comments)
Prestige for certain industries (financial, law)
Prestige* (two comments)
Close to home*
Centralized location with many transit options*
“trendy” locations fro Gen X/Y near State St.
WORKFORCE, CONSUMERS, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Supply of educated employees
UW-student market (2 comments)
UW-generator of new jobs
Two employers: State & UW, education generators
Ready pool of young and/or professionals as talent and consumers*
SMALL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY
Appropriate scale for small/local businesses
Synergy of small business/retail
Opportunities to increase density
DOWNTOWN LIVING FACTORS
Housing options for all income levels
Health services nearby
MORE IDEAS
Synergy*
Historic walking tours
Outdoor vendors love us pedestrians, indoor vendors loathe*
Residential diversity supports new business, especially restaurants (but turn-over is noted)*

2) What opportunities exist to enhance the Downtown’s business and working environment?

DEVELOPMENT
East Washington BUILD implementation
Develop East Washington commercial opportunities (2 comments)
Redevelop older office building stock near top of State Street

Redevelop Bassett/West Wash
Encourage redevelopment of "old student areas"
Brayton lot possible mixed-use development
Less resistance to redevelopment (consistency)
More progressive and proactive economic development policies
More progressive and effective use of TIF, Renew small cap TIF and expand
Diversify economy beyond state workers
Nodes of Development- top of State St., Proudfit to W.Wash. to Lake, E. Wash Corridor*
TIF- More proactive*
Density* (two comments)
Brayton Lot- Mixed-use/office/parking/public market*
East Wash. Corridor Potential- but too far a walk for peds, a wasteland separates E. Wash. from Capitol Square and Downtown. Any employer needs to provide on-site restaurants, etc.*
MASS TRANSIT
Remote parking locations with shuttle system/commuter rail (3 comments)
Express buses to suburban park & rides
Increase bus schedule/frequency (2 comments)
Circulator to capture __4 mile commuters
Utilize Alliant Energy to shuttle commuter parking users Downtown* (three comments)
Light rail* (two comments)
Bus trolleys*
INCREASE HOUSING OPTIONS
Add housing/commercial/keep rental housing
Rental mixed housing
More entry level housing (30K-60K income level)
Increase housing for 30K- 60K income households* (two comments)
Workforce housing-all wage ranges
More mid-range housing* (two comments)
RESIDENT SERVICE DEMAND
Cineplex
Grocery store
Not enough grocery stores downtown*
Not enough specialty retail (furniture and dept. stores)*
Target type store
Medical/health care
Enable land owners to aggregate larger footprints to support contemporary retail needs
Need for more specialty retail to service downtown residents
Create shopping nodes for neighborhoods to increase walkability*
Why are Social Security and the DMV not downtown??*
PARKING
Convert surface parking to multi-story parking
More private/public parking structures

Redevelop parking ramps
Use existing parking ramps for major employment infill
More proactive on parking
Must have parking at competitive price to get office tenants- street parking will not work for employers*
SAFE/HEALTHY ACTIVITY PROMOTION
Noise pollution (bars closing, HVAC)
Nighttime activity (safety)
Non-"binging" centered activity
Draws that bring more "adults" downtown later
TOURISM
Eco-tourism branding
More sports-related tourism, especially lakes
LAKES
Water quality in lakes needs improvement
Enhance lakes
DOWNTOWN CHARACTER
Maintaining downtown character
Keep/enhance greenspace
Aesthetics matter!
Attractive buildings matter*
Keep balance of bars and retail
MORE IDEAS
More help for homeless- discourages business and visitors to see drunks, homeless outside door*
Jobs so that you can afford to live downtown
Large employment centers downtown
Lower taxes*
Public and private partnerships*
FIRE- diversify*
Other locations always cheaper- you have to want to locate downtown*
Running out of space downtown long term*

3) How can your big ideas about “Downtown Working and Business” advance the goal of sustainability?

DENSITY AND SUSTAINABLE DESIGN
Density
Green built density
Jobs + Density
Density-work near where you live
Structure building to add on to top
Sustainable design and density go together

Green roofs (white or vegetation)
Tearing down a few crappy old houses and building a larger building
Denser housing and business development minimizes the need for cars* (two comments)
More mid range housing to increase walking to work*
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Renew small cap TIF and expand
Jobs so that you can afford to live downtown
Large employment centers downtown
TARGET store downtown- see Nicolet Mall example, does not need to be gargantuan*
MORE IDEAS
Create pedestrian downtown
Walkability*
Keep mixed-income through diverse housing
How to deal with NIMBY's?*
"Sustainability" seems to drift to increasing property tax base*
Clear signal from City that can tear down buildings and do projects*
Make redevelopment, rehabbing, and building opportunities and regulations clearer to understand- be consistent in regulation* (two comments)
Student pop. does not need as much parking*