



Downtown Plan – Plan Commission Discussion Workshop

November 9, 2009

5:30 pm

Agenda:

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENT

STAFF PRESENTATION

Previous downtown planning efforts and overview of the current Downtown Plan process to date

PLAN COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Discussion on major Issues for each theme area

- Moving Around
- Downtown Living
- Downtown Working and Business
- Arts, Culture and Entertainment
- Parks, Open Space and Recreation
- Land Use and Urban Design

ADJOURNMENT

MOVING AROUND: MAJOR ISSUES

- **Consider the Development of a Multi-Modal Transportation Terminal/Center.** Located along West Washington Avenue between the railroad tracks and Bedford Street (incorporating the existing former transportation terminal along the railroad tracks, the convenience store and the U-Haul property) the center should incorporate a bicycle station, accommodations for inter-City bus, Madison Metro and commuter rail and connections to an inter-City rail station.
- **Downtown Circulator System.** Pursue the development of a circulator transit system to connect major destinations within the Downtown and to connect downtown locations to activity centers and employment centers adjacent to Downtown including the University of Wisconsin campus, the Park Street Health Care Main Street, Capital Gateway and East Rail Corridor. The identification and evaluation of a circulator system route and the appropriate mode, should consider a larger Isthmus-wide service area and include a schedule with frequent dependable service.
- **Circulation System Changes.** The following streets be seriously considered for conversion from their existing one-way alignment to accommodate two-way traffic:
 - a. West Wilson Street,
 - b. Broom Street,
 - c. Bassett Street, and
 - d. South Hamilton Street between Wilson and Main Streets.

These streets noted above contribute to some of the confusion that motorists and infrequent visitors to the Downtown experience trying to navigate the Downtown street system. Returning these streets to two-way operation while simplifying wayfinding, may also result in additional turning conflicts at key intersections, which will need to be evaluated.

- **Downtown/Isthmus Transportation Plan.** In order to manage current and future transportation demand across multiple modes and to integrate the transportation infrastructure and services needed to serve the land use and development recommendations emanating from the Downtown Plan, Comprehensive Plan and other Isthmus plans, a comprehensive multi-modal Isthmus area transportation plan and parking strategy should be prepared. This multi-modal planning initiative should bring together and coordinate the recommendations from the transportation studies and plans recently completed and currently underway, which include:
 - a. Transport 2020,
 - b. Madison Streetcar Study,
 - c. Platinum Bicycle Task Force recommendations,
 - d. Parking Utility Strategic Plan and Policies,
 - e. Regional Transportation Plan, and
 - f. Intercity Rail Study.

DOWNTOWN LIVING: MAJOR ISSUES

- **Accommodating Continued Downtown Density Growth**

The Comprehensive Plan calls for the accommodation of significant population density increases throughout the City, including downtown. How should the downtown and adjacent areas accommodate this additional density within the existing fabric while maintaining preservation of historic districts, allowing for expansion of employment areas as well as neighborhood conservation areas?
- **Rehabilitation of Existing Downtown Housing Stock in Strategic Locations**
 - a. Develop funding/ordinances to support the ‘un-conversion’ of student rental houses back to larger more modern units with private open spaces that could meet a variety of housing needs in strategic locations where more housing unit diversity is desired.
 - b. Increase enforcement and policing of minimum housing codes and landmark ordinance code violations.
 - c. Develop conservation districts in neighborhoods where little density/growth is desired.
- **Strategies for Encouraging a Greater Diversity of Downtown Living Options**

Encourage rehabilitation and redevelopment of housing units to provide different housing options for varied groups including:

 - a. *Families:* Develop/concentrate housing with larger more modern units sizes and private open space to encourage families in areas closest to elementary schools.
 - b. *Workforce Housing/Professional:* Work with major downtown employers (Hospitals, Government, and University) about strategies to encourage workforce housing in/near downtown.
 - c. *Seniors:* Many of the recently added downtown condo unit residents will be aging over the next twenty years. Services, transportation, and activities should provide opportunities for aging in place.
 - d. *Students:* Continue improvement of enforcement/communication with landlords and tenants over responsibilities. Recent success with trash carts on moving day provides examples of better ordinances/coordination efforts. In addition, the city should work with both UW and private landlords to determine future student housing needs and trends.
 - e. *Special Needs Populations:* The City should help in efforts to coordinate services for homeless population/ special needs population and work with social service agencies to determine locations for stable housing options near/at locations where support services are available.

DOWNTOWN WORKING AND BUSINESS: MAJOR ISSUES

- **Create a vibrant, engaging downtown environment where businesses want to locate and workers want to work, and which fosters creativity and entrepreneurship.**
 - a. Make the downtown easy to get to and move around within.
 - b. Provide a range of suitable locations for multiple types of businesses.
 - c. Provide workforce housing attractive to younger working individuals and households.
 - d. Provide additional retail, service, and entertainment uses to support downtown living and working.

- **Maintain the downtown as an important regional employment center by providing suitable locations for the formation and expansion of basic sector businesses, including the State of Wisconsin.**
 - a. Direct most business development to designated employment and mixed-use locations and away from locations primarily recommended for other uses (such as residential neighborhoods).
 - Locations for larger, taller office developments (including government offices)
 - Locations for smaller scale employment uses (including loft and flex buildings)
 - b. Create strong linkages to major “near downtown” employment centers. (see below)
 - c. Address employee parking needs as part of a multi-modal transportation approach.

- **Integrate the downtown commercial centers more closely with other existing and planned “near downtown” employment locations to create additional business sites.**
 - a. Improve transportation linkages and the ease and speed of movement among downtown and near-downtown employment areas.
 - Enhanced transit service, including frequent downtown “circulator” service
 - Enhanced pedestrian-bicycle routes
 - b. Develop gathering places and community activity centers within and near major employment concentrations.

- **Enhance the attractiveness of the downtown retail sector to residents, workers, and visitors.**
 - a. Fill “gaps” in the availability of retail goods and services by creating and expanding retail nodes conveniently located near employment or residential use areas.
 - b. Identify potential locations for retail uses requiring a relatively-larger floor area.
 - c. Focus most retail activities at defined locations where they can benefit from synergies and help create engaging pedestrian corridors.
 - d. In general, discourage development of retail uses at other downtown locations, except for limited neighborhood-serving convenience uses in residential districts.
 - e. Most downtown retail activities should occur in multi-story, mixed-use buildings, with either employment or residential uses above the retail.
 - f. Create additional short-term parking at select locations to support retail uses.

ARTS, CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT: MAJOR ISSUES

- **Arts, Culture and Museum District**

Designate an arts, culture and museum district at the Capitol end of State Street to complement the similar district that the UW is building at the west end of State Street and UW campus area. A new/renovated library should be included in this city cultural district.

- **Entertainment Core and Cultural Districts Link**

Strengthen the retail, entertainment, art district spine the runs for the UW campus, State Street, Square to King Street with an emphasis creating first floor retail space on the square. State Street should serve as the link between the two cultural districts with small scale exhibits for music/art.

- **Enhance City's Built Environment through Public Art**

Weave art and culture into the fabric of Madison's downtown and everyday life by integrating arts and culture into planning and development of city capital investments in downtown infrastructure. Include artists on design teams for new downtown public spaces/buildings, parks and pedestrian connectors to have a higher degree of design excellence and artistic expression.

- **Potential Catalytic Projects**

1. *Gateway Art should emphasize entrances into downtown*
2. *New Library within cultural district will strengthen adjacency of public activities*
3. *Imax and/or cineplex in the cultural district could add vitality to the district*
4. *Explore creating new activities and public art oriented toward the lakes and the future development of Law Park on Lake Monona and the path on Lake Mendota.*
5. *Monona Terrace Tunnel – create a public art project to enhance the tunnel as a Madison experience*

PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION: MAJOR ISSUES

- **Lake Monona –Law Park**
Fill Law Park to the dock line from previous permit issued by the Corp of Army Engineers to provide new open space and improved access to the lake. Explore Frank Lloyd Wright boathouse or enclosed activity center, and safe pedestrian crossings from the downtown to the new expanded park.
- **Lake Mendota path between the Memorial Union and James Madison Park.**
The City has already obtained easements in front of many properties extending from Wisconsin Avenue (Edgewater Hotel) east to Blair Street at its intersection with James Madison Park. Additional easements should be acquired as redevelopment projects occur and as opportunities present themselves along this corridor. The implementation of this path should be pursued in phases as easements are obtained for each segment, including the improvement of existing street-end rights-of-way. Consider the use of TIF financing to improve this path.
- **New Park in High Density Residential Neighborhood**
Purchase land for park/green space in the area of West Washington Ave, Gilman, Broom and Proudfit Streets to meet the needs of the high density housing at this location. (Example: securing the vacant land at the corner of Gorham Street/University Avenue.)
- **Extend East Campus Mall from the Campus to Monona Bay**
Design the current plans of the east Campus Mall from the Union Terrace, through campus all the way past Regent Street to include an extension through the Greenbush triangle to the pedestrian bridge over W. Washington Avenue in order to complete the pedestrian connection between the Lakes and improve access to Brittingham Park.
- **Develop New Master Plans for James Madison and Brittingham Park**
Develop master plans for the two largest downtown area parks, Brittingham and James Madison. New plans should evaluate current uses and infrastructure and plan for improvements to make the parks more useful for the current downtown population, and to add to the vitality and success of downtown.

LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN: MAJOR ISSUES

- **View Corridor Preservation**
Preserve primary and secondary view corridors and strictly adhere to the requirements in the Regulating Plan section of this document as new development occurs.
- **Building Heights Regulation**
Establish building height requirements for the downtown that will result in a skyline that reflects and emphasizes the natural topography and that encourage tall buildings with interesting and varied upper stories and tops rather than buildings that are essentially large rectangular boxes.
- **Redevelopment Opportunities**
Maintain a tiered database of substantially underutilized properties that contain architecturally insignificant properties (individually or a part of a larger grouping). Actively pursue the redevelopment of “first tier” priority properties, and work with owners of the “second tier” properties on redevelopment proposals.
- **Strategic Locations for Neighborhood Nodes**
Ground floor commercial uses should be concentrated in specific neighborhood nodes, enhanced with streetscape amenities, such as bump-outs at intersections, benches, bike racks, more landscaping, etc. to encourage pedestrian activity.
- **Historic Preservation Planning**
Review and consider revising the Mansion Hill and First Settlement Local Historic Districts to better reflect the uniqueness of those districts and protect the contributing structures to those areas while identifying opportunities for new development that would strengthen those neighborhoods for the long term.