



Madison's Central Business Improvement District (BID)

Date: October 14, 2010

To: Mark Olinger, Brad Murphy and Bill Fruhling
Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development

cc: Mario Mendoza
Tim Cooley

From: Mary Carbine
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Re: BID initial feedback on Downtown Plan Draft Recommendations

Dear Mark, Brad and Bill,

Congratulations on the presentation of the Downtown Plan Draft Recommendation on September 23. We know the draft recommendations are the result of a tremendous amount of good work by Planning staff and many stakeholders. Thank you for presenting this vision for the downtown, and we look forward to continued engagement.

Below, please find initial input from the BID Board on the Downtown Plan Draft Recommendations. We will also encourage Board members and BID property and business owners to review the plan and provide their own input.

1. Regarding Big Idea #1, Celebrate the Lakes, the Board supports the vision of reconnecting Downtown to the lakes, enhancing lake access, and beautifying the approach to downtown along John Nolen Drive, as visionary elements that will greatly enhance the experience of downtown residents, customers and visitors.
2. Regarding Big Idea #2 (Post Card Views, pp. 6-7) and Land Use & Urban Design Objective 1 (p.17) the BID Board maintains that the land use vision for the central downtown and BID area should promote the following:
 - A high density urban core that encourages more downtown employers, businesses, residents, and visitors.
 - A higher density that is necessary to support downtown retail and other businesses, arts and cultural organizations and the city's tax base.
 - Creating/maintaining a downtown core that promotes more spaces in which large employers can locate.
 - A land use plan for the central downtown that encourages higher density, rather than 'blanket' building height limits or "blanket" setback requirements. (The BID Board does not support "blanket" requirements that could hinder positive development possibilities.)
 - The existing Capitol View Preservation guidelines for building heights.

3. Regarding Big Idea #7 (Embracing the Past, p. 12) and Land Use & Urban Design Objective 3 (historical preservation, 19-20)

One Downtown Plan draft recommendation is to look at the State Street area as a potential national historic district to take advantage of tax credit initiatives. The draft recommendations also include a number of other preservation-related recommendations. There is great diversity of opinion on historic preservation among BID Board members and property owners. As an organization representing property owners, the BID needs to be at the table as any preservation initiatives within the district move forward. We are aware that some past initiatives that have not gone smoothly in terms of communication with central business district property owners. The BID is available as a resource to facilitate communication, education and dialogue on preservation issues with its constituent property owners.

4. Economic Development:

In general, the BID Board believes the Downtown Plan Draft would benefit by incorporating more Economic Development objectives and specific recommendations. Without a strong economic development to catalyze significant tax base and employment growth, it will be very difficult for the city to realize other objectives and recommendations in the plan (such as “Big Idea #1 – Celebrate the Lakes”).

The BID Board reiterates its endorsement of the vision and recommendations of the DMI Real Estate Professionals as they relate to the central business district. The Board recommends that more of these recommendations be incorporated into the Downtown Plan.

(DMI Real Estate Professionals Recommendations:

http://www.downtownmadison.org/uploads/media/DTREP_10.20.09.pdf)

The BID Board looks forward to actively participating in discussion and the process for completion of the Downtown Plan. Thank you, and please contact me if you have questions.