

### Summary

Policy and ordinances for the Mifflin Street area were initially formed to project and later protect a vision of the community, its people and buildings. A changing landscape of the Mifflin Street area since the late 1960s has meant a change in policy that has not always been enforced due to a lack of resources. This lack of resources has meant a leniency on parking regulations, general home maintenance and porch and yard cleanliness and safety. Although the Building Inspection Department of Madison conducts full inspections on the Mifflin Street rental homes every six to seven years, any interim issues tenants find are brought to the department through complaint only. This often results in missed violations due to tenant fear of landlord retribution or a general lack of knowledge of building codes.

The fact that the Mifflin Street homes are in some amount of disrepair, have no owner-occupants and are in a prime location has made this area a promising environment for redevelopment. However, the redevelopment has remained controversial for a number of reasons. Not only is this street considered historical by some due to the age of the homes and previous events, the housing remains one of the few locations with relatively inexpensive rent that is a very close proximity to UW-Madison's campus. These reasons perhaps, have kept them homes in a sort of holding pattern, for although they all need some amount of maintenance, they remain well above market value similar housing in neighboring areas. In order to revitalize the area, tax incentives, namely through a Small Cap TIF, were offered previously in an attempt to bring in a mixture of owner occupied homes, with the fund offsetting some of those higher than market value costs. However, the fund was not utilized.

The State of Wisconsin limits the amount that counties and municipalities can raise the property tax rate. Previously, the tax levy limits were based on a formula of inflation plus a

growth factor. Recently, Governor Scott Walker changed the ruling, removing the rate of inflation so that it is now solely based on the growth factor. 75 percent of Madison's operating budget comes from this property tax. This now puts more pressure on building new developments to maintain the same revenues. While there may have been a time when policy could have protected the buildings and saved them from demolition or even worked to denote the area as a historic district, the new "City of Madison Downtown Plan" adopted on January 2, 2013, instead looks at the run-down nature of the buildings and envisions an entirely redeveloped area with great economic growth opportunities. In designing the new proposal, Alderman Mike Verveer explained how policies were put in place to ensure that new development would allow the vibrant social aspects of the small community to remain intact, such as a cap on the buildings at six-stories tall, while still increasing the overall economic opportunities of the district through a blend of mixed-use buildings.

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