



TO: Members of the Madison Common Council, Mayor Cieslewicz
FROM: Delora Newton, GMCC Executive Vice President
DATE: July 29, 2009
RE: **Opposition to Vehicle Miles Traveled Resolution**

The Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce (GMCC) opposes resolution 13815, which seeks to minimize motor vehicle traffic. While we credit the author's intent, this ordinance would duplicate goals and practices already outlined in the Comprehensive Plan and discussions taking place as part of the Zoning Code Rewrite project.

The initial draft of this resolution set a goal of reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) 25% by 2020, and would have evaluated all development projects against this goal. Recognizing that there were many unanswered questions, a lack of information on how VMT would be calculated and a high potential for consequences to development, the resolution was amended to remove specific goals and broadly state that the city's policy will be to seek policies and incremental changes that "minimize motor vehicle traffic and its negative effects."

The Comprehensive Plan states that transportation goals and objectives should be accomplished "without negatively impacting development opportunities" and "utilizes *all* modes of transportation, including automobiles." None of this language is recognized in this ordinance. Our interpretation to these exclusions leads us to conclude that despite its relative ambiguity, this resolution aims to reduce vehicle traffic even at the expense of meaningful economic development opportunities.

Supporters argue that the resolution is intended solely to gather more information on traffic to later determine action steps. Obtaining traffic data and other information is valuable; it's the quantifiable goals to "minimize motor vehicle traffic and its negative effects" in tandem with evaluating projects against these policies that we object to.

Madison is a regional center for hospitals, educational institutions, retailers and other businesses. While the GMCC supports the integrated use of transit options, regional access is largely derived via automobile. Arbitrarily attempting to reduce VMT would result in a loss of employment opportunities as employers would be discouraged from locating in the city or expanding in current locations.

The Comprehensive Plan emphasizes integrating and complementing modes of transit, not eliminating them. Madison needs a realistic approach to transportation that enhances and encourages mass transit, while providing safe, reliable infrastructure for those that commute using automobiles.

The GMCC encourages you to place this resolution on file. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.