

CITY OF MADISON
KEY THEMES FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

An early step in preparing the new City of Madison Comprehensive Plan is identifying the key issues that the Plan will need to address. At a series of public open houses held during the fall of 2002, citizens were asked to comment on what they liked and disliked about the community and to identify the planning-related issues that were of most concern to them. Based on this information, and similar information provided by City boards and commissions, staff teams, and a review of current planning documents, several key themes were identified that the Comprehensive Plan will address. These key themes encompass and in many cases overlap with one or more of the nine required comprehensive plan “elements” defined in Wisconsin’s Comprehensive Planning (Smart Growth) legislation: issues and opportunities; housing; transportation; utilities and community facilities; agricultural, natural, and cultural resources; economic development; intergovernmental cooperation; land use and implementation.

While the “element-based” grouping of key themes is familiar to many people and fits naturally within the structure that will be used to present much of the other information, analysis and recommendations contained in the Comprehensive Plan, many participants also expressed interest in articulating a relatively few, key cross-cutting themes that would infuse the Plan with a sense of larger purpose and values, and help tie the elements of the Plan together. Five key themes have been identified:

1. The role of the Comprehensive Plan in shaping the future of the City
2. Madison’s relationship to the region, its institutions and its neighborhoods
3. Enhancing Madison’s unique qualities
4. Planning for future growth, continuity and change
5. Living within our resources

The purpose of this paper is to define and describe these important key themes and provide a sense of how these unifying values will be reflected and addressed in the Comprehensive Plan.

1. THE ROLE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IN SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE CITY

What is the Comprehensive Plan?

The City of Madison has a well-developed comprehensive planning program that has evolved over the last four decades. Planning is a dynamic process and the plans that result from this ongoing process document the results of the process at a given point in time. The City currently has more than forty separate documents that have been adopted over time as elements of its Master (comprehensive) Plan. Many of the citywide elements of Madison’s Master Plan will be updated through the process of preparing a new Comprehensive Plan.

The City of Madison Comprehensive Plan will be an officially adopted public document that establishes an urban development strategy and policies to guide the future growth and development of the community over the next several decades. The Plan will include an assessment of existing conditions and trends, and will provide recommendations for the use and development of land, the extension and improvement of transportation services and infrastructure (such as bus service, public streets, and parking) the development of community facilities (such as fire stations and neighborhood centers) and the economic base of the City, the provision of housing, and the protection of natural resources. The Comprehensive Plan will have a long-range perspective and will be used as a policy document to provide a coordinated approach to decision-making. The Plan will be the basis for making many decisions regarding land use and the location of development, the extension of services and the placement of community facilities. As such, the Comprehensive Plan will be one of the primary tools used by the Madison Plan Commission, the Common Council, and the City administration in making decisions that affect the future of the community.

The new Comprehensive Plan will supplement and update the City's existing citywide master plan elements, which have been developed over time and which provide a policy framework for the preparation of more detailed sub-areas plans. The City has more than thirty sub-area plans, including plans for established neighborhoods, plans to guide the future development of new neighborhoods on the edge of the City, and special area plans such as Downtown 2000, the Downtown Historic Preservation Plan and several corridor plans. The Plan will also provide a framework and guidance for the City's five-year capital improvement program, and for preparing revised and updated land development regulations, such as the zoning code. The City's Comprehensive Plan is comprehensive in the sense that it establishes policies and strategies, which affect the development of the entire City. However, the Plan cannot include detailed recommendations to address every issue that might be important to individual citizens or neighborhoods. These more-detailed recommendations will be addressed as the broader recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan are implemented, often through follow-up sub-area plans developed within the broader framework of the Comprehensive Plan.

Functions and Character of the Comprehensive Plan

The City's Comprehensive Plan will serve several important functions.

- Guide for decision-making. The future of the City of Madison is affected by the multiple decisions that are made by many City boards, commissions, committees and the Common Council on an ongoing basis. The Comprehensive Plan will provide the long-range vision and general policy framework within which the City's boards, commissions, committees and the Common Council will make the incremental development, service delivery and budgeting decisions that will shape the future of the community.
- Policy. The Comprehensive Plan, in its simplest form, is a statement of what the community wants to achieve and what the City wants to strive to become. Planning policies provide the basis for coordinating the decisions of many agencies, boards and commissions involved in the development of the City, and for ensuring that these decisions are consistent with each other and consistent over time. Policies allow decision makers to move from very general statements about what the City wants to be (community values and goals) to more specific objectives, strategies and proposals designed to achieve these goals. The development of

public planning policies is influenced by many factors, including community values, long-range goals, short-range objectives, economic and financial feasibility, political reality, and expected social consequences.

- Detailed planning and implementation. In addition to being used as a guide for ongoing investment and development decisions, the Plan will also provide a framework for the more detailed studies and additional planning activities that will be needed to implement the Plan's recommendations. Because the Comprehensive Plan will not be able to address every issue in as much detail as everyone might like, some issues will be identified for more detailed follow-up work after the Plan is adopted. These issues might include revision of the City's development regulations or preparation of more detailed plans on specific topics, such as stormwater management, or geographic sub-areas such as a corridor plan for a major commercial arterial street, or a redevelopment plan and strategy for a contaminated or "brownfield" site. The Plan will also provide the basis for development of the City's five-year capital improvement program. These follow-up studies can be thought of as part of the ongoing Comprehensive Plan refinement and implementation process---a process which will include monitoring and periodic reevaluation of the Plan, and which will provide the basis for the future Plan updates that are essential if the Comprehensive Plan is to remain relevant and effective.
- Reflect the values of the community and promote the public interest. It is important, therefore, that the planning process encourage the active participation of all individuals, businesses, institutions and special interest groups. The Comprehensive Plan must balance the interests of many different individuals and groups and be a reasonable reflection of the goals and values of the entire community.
- A tool to communicate with citizens, businesses and institutions. The Plan can serve as an informational and educational tool for everyone involved in making decisions that affect the future of the community. It should help guide public and private sector investment decisions, and add predictability to the decision-making process for development projects that are consistent with the Plan's recommendations.
- A basis for making ordinance-based decisions. The Comprehensive Plan will be a legal document used by the Madison Plan Commission and Common Council in making development decisions, and will be referenced in City ordinances that affect development decisions. It will also be relied on by courts of law in deciding cases that are appealed to Circuit Court. City decisions that are consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan will stand a much better chance of being upheld in Circuit Court than those that are not. Beginning in 2010, the Wisconsin Statutes require that all decisions regulating land use and development shall be consistent with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan, so that after 2010, the Plan will become an even more significant regulatory or legal document.
- Flexible and realistic. The Plan should provide a vision of what the community wants the City of Madison to be in 25 years, and include recommended policies, strategies, and specific implementation steps to realize that vision. The Plan should be realistic in the sense that it reflects the values of the community, the community's long-range goals, the City's financial capability, and political realities. The Plan must balance adaptability and

specificity. While the plan will include an analysis of development and socio-economic trends and projections for the future, planners and decision makers recognize that 25-year projections and forecasts are often inaccurate for a variety of reasons. Rather than providing a blueprint for each and every decision, these projections and the Plan recommendations will provide general direction and guidance flexible enough to respond to unanticipated changes that may occur in the future.

2. MADISON'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE REGION, ITS INSTITUTIONS AND ITS NEIGHBORHOODS

The City At the Start of the Century

Early in the 20th century, Madison was a small community of a little more than 19,000 people. Its neighbors, at some distance away, were tiny farming communities. The boundaries of the City were essentially those of an extended Isthmus. New housing developments and subsequent annexations were occurring in the "suburbs"---areas now known as the West Lawn, University Heights, Fair Oaks and South Madison neighborhoods. A cross-section of residents and businesses anxious to have Madison partake in the economic opportunity of the new industrial age formed a special organization, the 40,000 Club, to promote the doubling of Madison's population by the second decade of the 20th century. Another group was developing a plan for the City's beautification. Although recognized as the capital and administrative center of State government as well as the home of the State's major university, Madison's industrial sector was just taking shape with the growth of such "high grade" factory companies as Gisholt, Mason Kipp (Madison Kipp) and the French Battery Company (Rayovac).

Plans and decisions about where and how the City would grow were being made in many different ways---by the University of Wisconsin-Madison as it expanded; by real estate developers responding to residents' desires for new and affordable housing; by concerned citizens seeking to limit growth and maintain the City's essential character; and, by businesses seeking to create environments that would help their enterprise grow and prosper.

Comparing Madison of a century ago to Madison today, it is obvious that the City is no longer a small, compact community insulated from its neighbors and the larger world. As Madison and other communities in Dane County have grown, the City has become the center of a much larger region. Many of the issues are the same---where to grow and how much, affordable housing, transportation for workers---but the environment in which the City functions today is considerably more complex, and the number and scale of the entities that affect the future of the City more numerous.

For the first time, Madison's population is less than 50 percent of the total county population. The major institutions that have shaped Madison and provided the City with stability and resilience to uncertainty are still major forces influencing not only Madison's growth, but that of the State as well. The City, though referred to as a single governmental unit, is a dynamic network of established and new neighborhoods, employment centers, commercial districts and corridors, and school districts that are often affected by national and even international forces beyond local control.

The plans and visions of individuals, organizations, institutions and other communities will continue to influence the shape and direction of the City's future. But in contrast to a century

ago, the tool of the Comprehensive Plan provides a framework for identifying these plans, evaluating them against common goals and objectives, and aligning them to the greatest extent possible.

Through the Comprehensive Plan, the community will examine how it wants to grow and change in the context of three critical dimensions:

- The role of the City in the region
- The City's ongoing relationship to its major institutions
- The City in relation to its key sub-areas

The City and the Region

When surfing the Internet for directions to an address in Madison, a user might first come upon map showing Madison's location in relation to Chicago and Milwaukee. This larger geographic area describes a multi-state region, typically thought of as a common integrated development area that has a separate identity in a national or international marketplace.

Richard Florida, the author of The Rise of the Creative Class who writes extensively on the relationship of the attributes of place to a community's economic prosperity, suggests that Madison is part of a region bounded by Chicago to the south, Milwaukee to the east and Minneapolis-St. Paul to the northwest. Within this area, he argues, is the third-largest concentration of creative workers, knowledge-driven companies and thriving markets in the nation---a powerful combination for achieving success in the global economy.

From the perspective of developing a regional identity for successful economic development in the global marketplace, working within the context of so large a geographic region makes sense. For the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan, however, the practical definition of the Madison region, that area of interdependent communities, markets and activities, usually comprises Dane County and parts of the six abutting counties. This area is the broader market area from which Madison draws employees for its businesses, customers for its commercial and retail establishments, and participants in its cultural and recreational offerings.

The City in relationship with the larger region of neighboring communities will influence the Comprehensive Plan in a number of ways. Two key groups of issues where regional relationships will have special importance are: issues related to planning for economic development, land use, housing and transportation; and issues related to governance and how to best provide public services such as police protection or refuse collection.

Economic development, land use, housing, and transportation. Madison and its unique economic assets are a driving economic force in the City, region and state. However, not all business and job growth opportunities can be met solely by the existing City workforce or be located only on sites within the City of Madison. Responding to this potential growth will require thoughtful decisions about how much and where growth should occur within the City and how much will occur outside of it, and about how people and goods will need to move within the region to serve this development. Although the City will continue to be the major center of employment, commercial trade and arts and culture, surrounding communities are also seeking to develop and improve their communities. The potential competition for development between the City and its

regional neighbors raises issues of costs, impacts, and wise use of limited resources that are important to all residents of the County.

Service delivery and governance. In Dane County alone, there are 61 municipalities, 16 of which border the City of Madison---five cities, three villages and eight towns. Portions of seven school districts lie within the City's boundaries. Some of Madison's sewer and water districts also serve other communities. Gas service to the City is provided by one utility, but electric service is provided to different parts of the City by two separate utilities. Most of the challenges that the Comprehensive Plan needs to address---efficient, effective transportation, air and water quality, housing cost disparities, education opportunities, workforce availability---transcend municipal and service district boundaries. They are issues truly regional in nature and will require a regional response.

The decreasing fiscal capacity of local governments to provide high quality services at a reasonable cost raises questions about alternative methods to deliver services that might eliminate duplication and improve efficiencies. One of the important conclusions reached by those who study the evolution of cities from single entities into "citistates" is that business development and governance are becoming more regional and interdependent. The competitive position of businesses that now must compete in the global marketplace is directly connected to the ability of the communities in which they are located to deal effectively with regional issues.

The City and Its Institutions

Another key dimension of the City is the role of major institutions and their facilities in influencing and defining Madison's growth and future. Because Madison is the Capital and home to a major university, the type and pace of its development has been and will continue to be shaped and pushed by the missions of these somewhat independent entities. The type of City that Madison is now has been greatly influenced significantly affected by the presence and growth of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison Area Technical College, Edgewood College and other educational institutions. In the past 15 years, the role of the University has changed significantly from one of being primarily a center of higher education and research to one of technology transfer and economic development. This has meant not only expansion and development of new facilities on the main campus, but the development of new off-campus lands for new facilities such as research parks to accommodate and nurture the growth of emerging technology businesses in the area.

With the legislature and the main offices of all State agencies located in Madison, the State has had a profound effect on the growth and development of the City, particularly the central portion of the City. The presence of State government has always been an advantage to Madison, providing a base of high quality job stability through most economic downturns. The State's current fiscal situation may have a significant effect on Madison in terms of potential employment losses, office space occupancy, and redevelopment opportunities in the areas where State facilities are located.

The City and Its Neighborhoods

In part because of Madison's unique geography with a central Isthmus, in part because Madison values the role that small-area identity plays in fostering a sense of connection to the larger

community, neighborhoods and other special sub-areas of the City are another dimension that defines the context within which Madison plans for growth and change. At the smallest level is the neighborhood, the size and shape of which varies considerably by geography and issues. There are currently more than 100 neighborhood associations and resident associations in the City of Madison.

At the next level are planning councils, which have been formed for the east, central, south, west and northeast areas of the City to provide a way for neighborhoods and others from the area to come together to address issues and opportunities that extend beyond a single neighborhood's boundaries. There are eight active neighborhood business associations representing business on neighborhood business streets, like Monroe Street and Williamson Street and major commercial areas, like the East Towne and West Towne areas. In addition, active planning is occurring around major commercial transportation corridors, such as Park Street and East Washington Avenue.

A central challenge for the Comprehensive Plan is finding the balance between the vision and goals for individual neighborhoods and the vision and the goals for growth and change in the City as a whole. The tension between these levels of community and geography is already a part of many land use and development decisions, and is reflected in debates about how to balance the desire to encourage redevelopment and increased density in older neighborhoods with goals of preserving neighborhood scale and character; or how to weigh a major employer's desire to expand within a neighborhood against the neighborhood's concerns about increased traffic and the loss of housing.

Decisions that in the past might have been regarded as purely local have larger city, even regional consequences; decisions that in the past may have been regarded as only a community-level decision have both neighborhood and regional consequences.

Madison is clearly a part of a larger, complex system of geographies, institutions, and competing jurisdictions. In defining a direction and policies for how, where, and at what pace the City should grow and change, the Comprehensive Planning process will not only consider what city residents and business would like to see happen; the plan will also take into account the City's relationship with other communities and institutions, identifying opportunities for alignment and coordination.

3. ENHANCING MADISON'S UNIQUE QUALITIES

Continuing Influences on the Madison Character

Three primary influences have been identified which contribute to Madison's unique identity and helped shape the community's "world view." These influences will also help shape the content of the Comprehensive Plan and its individual elements:

- Capital City. Madison's founding as the capital of Wisconsin, its continuing roles as political leader and/or font of both positive legislation and negative regulation, and the infusion of participatory values into its local decision-making processes, including the number, quality, and energy that many citizens, neighborhood, civic, and other voluntary associations bring to civic life.

- County seat. Madison is the county seat of Dane County. As such, many Dane County offices and facilities are located within the City, reinforcing its real or perceived role as the governmental and service center of Dane County.
- University city. The emergence of the University of Wisconsin as one of the nation's premiere research universities, and all of its various land use, economic, and cultural implications.
- Beautiful city. Madison's prime location among several lakes in the midst of a large attractive and agriculturally productive county.

Civic Involvement

Madison citizens have created a history of active involvement in civic affairs originating in the founding of the city, continuing through such past civic groups as the Park and Pleasure Drive Association, and currently expressed through enthusiastic participation in an array of over 120 neighborhood associations and 900 volunteer members of City advisory committees and commissions. Two key factors nurture this involvement: City recognition of the value of these groups in enhancing the quality of life within the city, and City support for processes that encourage such involvement---including outreach, orientation and support to individuals and groups not traditionally involved in these discussions and activities.

The Comprehensive Planning process continues the commitment to broad public participation in civic activities, and will use multiple approaches to become involved in, and take responsibility for, activities that effectively build a sense of community. The Plan will articulate ways that the City can cooperate with Madison's public and private groups to promote continuing discussion of alternative futures and resident involvement in civic issues.

City-University Connections

The University of Wisconsin-Madison has played a significant role in the well-being and culture of this community. The University's influence extends beyond its institutional and geographical boundaries in terms of spin-off businesses, sports, student life, the arts, the educational level of its citizens, and the creative forces fostered within many of the City's institutions, employers and associations.

Various elements of the Comprehensive Plan suggest ways that private, City, County, and State support for the University's continued development as an educational and research center of excellence are interrelated to the health and identity of the Madison community. They suggest the importance of strategic coordination and use of University knowledge and resources to leverage business, cultural, and civic life in the community in ways that enhance Madison and its neighborhoods.

The Comprehensive Planning process addresses some of these choices by exploring ways that the community can strengthen its modes of communication, planning and cooperation to leverage University resources in ways that benefit both the community and the University itself. In addition, it asks how the knowledge and experience of the university community can help

inform and promote continued evaluation of community endeavors and enhance their effectiveness and development, beyond the occasional University Research Park or South Madison University Partners office.

Thus, the Plan will enhance University-City connections in ways that promote the strengths of the University as an educational and research institution, and leverage those resources to enhance city life.

Madison and the Environment

Madison's location among several lakes in an agricultural region rich with farms and scenic natural environments represents one of Madison's unique and defining characteristics. Its beauty continues to amaze visitors and impress anew its residents. As newer subdivisions and commercial areas are built, or as new redevelopment takes place within the older areas of the City, Madison's challenge is to physically and spiritually link these new or redeveloped areas to its existing fabric. The Comprehensive Plan will address some of these natural and cultural connections in its various elements and documents by suggesting how these new areas may physically connect by street, transit, and path to the central lakes and creeks, and natural areas of the region; by exploring how Isthmus-area redevelopments may enhance or block lake and capitol views; by analyzing the length of walks or bike paths to natural or rural areas; and by suggesting how the names of new neighborhoods might be chosen to convey a sense of Madison's history or distinguishing features and reinforce a sense of place, identity, and location.

The Plan will make these issues more tangible by exploring ways to better identify key natural areas, historic buildings and places, and encouraging municipal, business and community discipline, authority, and the commitment of resources to preserve the vital aspects of Madison's historic and natural heritages. The Plan will also provide recommendations for building partnerships with other jurisdictions and private groups and companies to jointly identify and protect or enhance important natural or historic qualities, and creatively re-using or adapting existing resources, such as the enhancement of a drainage ditch into a creek walk or natural area.

The Comprehensive Plan will suggest ways that the planning for new neighborhoods, urban redevelopment, transportation corridors and public streets can enhance a "Madison" or regional identity. The Plan will also address how the City can improve its permitting, design and investment processes to create or preserve lake and capitol views, and connections to natural corridors and areas. In all these and additional ways, the Plan will seek to enhance and preserve the connection of Madison's physical built environment to its beautiful setting on several lakes amidst a larger agricultural and rural region.

By thoughtfully considering the characteristics and history that have combined to make Madison a special place as it develops the Comprehensive Plan, the City and its citizens can enhance Madison's identity as a world-class 'livable city' with many unique qualities.

4. PLANNING FOR FUTURE GROWTH, CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

The City of Madison and the Dane County region have both experienced relatively steady employment and population growth over the last several decades, and this growth is projected to continue. However, the long-term ability of the City of Madison to accommodate growth

through urban expansion is becoming more limited. Growth through redevelopment has its own set of limitations and potential conflicts. The community is not just growing, but also changing. Demographic shifts and increased diversity, technological advances, changing business practices and evolving lifestyles all will require corresponding changes in the way the multiple functions of the city are organized, designed and served. Key questions that the Comprehensive Plan will address include how much growth is expected; to what extent, where, and how should it be accommodated; and what public improvements, facilities and services will be required to serve this growth and the needs of a changing population?

While growth and change are important drivers of the Comprehensive Plan, equally important are conservation and enhancement of the special qualities that make Madison a great place to live, work and play. Growth is not an end in itself, and decisions made about the location and character of new development will have to balance the need to accommodate growth and change with the desire to preserve the character and qualities of the City's established neighborhoods, business districts, and employment centers.

Future Growth Needs

Preliminary projections of regional employment and population have been prepared both for Dane County and for the City of Madison. These indicate that by 2030, about 85,050 additional persons may work in the City of Madison and about 70,950 additional persons may reside in the City. The continued growth of both Madison and Dane County is driven by the recognition that they are good places to locate and expand a business and great places to live.

The City's ability to accommodate the projected growth essentially depends upon whether the City can provide suitable locations and the required amounts of land for the new businesses and residential developments. This in turn partly depends upon the specific types of future employment anticipated and on the housing preferences of future residents.

To the extent possible, the Comprehensive Plan will identify the specific types of employers and businesses projected to be expanding in the City and the types of locations and sites they will be seeking. The Plan will also evaluate the housing needs of the growing and changing population, including the location, design and cost of housing.

Balance Between Growth and Capacity

Although its share of total Dane County employment and population is projected to slowly decrease, the City of Madison will continue to grow and will remain the predominant urban center in the region---and the primary center for activities such as government, higher education, cultural events and medical services. While its regional share may decrease, the City will remain the largest employment center and largest residential community in the region by a large margin. Current City plans recognize that continued participation in regional employment and residential growth is essential to maintaining Madison as a dynamic and vital community, and to its continued ability to provide for the needs of all of its residents--including an increasing share of the region's lower-income and special needs residents.

However, while providing locations for future employment and population growth is an important City objective, the development potential of the City is not unlimited, and not every

development may be considered a wise use of the City's land resources. One issue the Comprehensive Plan may consider, for example, is whether the City necessarily should accommodate extremely low-density developments.

Potential Growth Locations

There are basically only two ways that the land demands of a growing economy and population can be accommodated:

- Vacant or agricultural lands on the periphery of the City can be developed for urban uses.
- Land already used for one type of urban activity can be redeveloped for a different activity or at greater intensity.

Historically, the largest proportion of City growth has been accommodated through peripheral expansion; but expansion opportunities are becoming limited, and the City's continued participation in regional growth and development will depend increasingly on how efficiently the City uses its remaining peripheral growth opportunities, and on its ability to identify and implement redevelopment opportunities within the already-developed portions of the community.

Peripheral Expansion Issues

- Limits to expansion. At the time the *Peripheral Area Development Plan (PADP)* was adopted in 1990, the edges of the City of Madison barely extended to the South and West Beltline Highways and Interstate Highway 90-94. Today, virtually all of the land within these highways has been developed and development is occurring in fourteen new neighborhoods beyond that former urban edge. While there is still a large amount of undeveloped land within the City, and additional lands that the City could grow into, the long-term limits to City expansion are apparent, constrained by adjacency to other cities and villages, negotiated boundary agreements and environmental and topographic conditions.
- Density, capacity and impacts. The amount of new employment and population growth that the remaining peripheral development land can accommodate, and how long it will last, are strongly affected by the intensity and density at which new development occurs. Other things being equal, more development can be accommodated on a given amount of land at higher intensities and densities than at lower intensities and densities. The Comprehensive Planning process will evaluate the development potential of identified peripheral growth locations under alternative intensity and density assumptions. Growth accommodation is not the only objective to consider when recommending a development intensity and density, however. Also to be considered are the types of sites and facilities desired by growing businesses, the housing preferences of current and future residents, the effect of intensity and density on the design and character of urban neighborhoods and commercial districts, and the differential impacts of alternative development intensities and densities---on traffic generation and transit service potential, for example. The Comprehensive Plan will review and recommend land use patterns, development intensities and densities and neighborhood design standards that will seek to balance these multiple objectives of peripheral development.

- Community separation and interface. Creation of permanent open space corridors between Madison and surrounding urban communities was a key *Peripheral Area Development Plan* recommendation, but one that has been only partially implemented to date for a variety of reasons. During the Comprehensive Planning process, the potential benefits of preserving open space separation corridors at Madison's urban edge, and the opportunities to implement these corridors, will be reviewed and reevaluated.

The entire Madison urbanized area effectively functions as a single community. The pattern of land uses, development intensities and densities and supporting transportation infrastructure within each individual community must take careful account of the plans of its neighbors, whether or not there is an open space buffer between them. In cases where there will be no open space separation, planning the interface between Madison and its neighbors will be particularly challenging since many development and urban design standards may need to be coordinated.

Redevelopment Issues

Madison's physical condition is generally good, and it is likely that redevelopment within established neighborhoods will be recommended at selected locations rather than on a wholesale basis. Even in the oldest neighborhoods long-identified and recommended as places where substantial redevelopment may occur (such as some of the downtown neighborhoods), current plans recommend rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings rather than replacement when possible, along with selective infill and replacement.

A few relatively large areas do exist within the City where the existing land uses are becoming obsolete at that location (the former railroad yards on the Isthmus, for example). Substantial redevelopment to different and more-intensive uses may be appropriate at some of these locations. In other neighborhoods, the primary uses are not expected to change significantly but many existing structures may eventually be replaced with new development at higher densities, while many older structures are also retained. Redevelopment in both the commercial and residential portions of the downtown tends to follow this pattern. More typically, only limited portions of a neighborhood may be identified as areas where redevelopment is recommended.

In the case of commercial development, significant near and long-term redevelopment opportunities may be identified within existing commercial districts---including portions of major commercial corridors, such as Park Street and East Washington Avenue, and at older shopping centers. While the problem of increased traffic congestion due to higher development intensities and densities is daunting, most of the large regional retail districts have at least the potential to be redeveloped to include a wider range of uses, including residential uses in some cases. Further, it may be possible to redesign these areas over time in ways that will greatly improve their function, physical appearance and attractiveness for transit, pedestrian and bicycle travel.

The Comprehensive Plan will identify both large and small potential redevelopment locations within the community and recommend a sequence for more-detailed investigation and planning for future redevelopment. Depending on their size and location, some potential redevelopment

areas may require a special planning process, while others may be addressed as part of preparing a general plan for the neighborhood where the site is located.

Continuity and Conservation

An important objective in all adopted City plans is that new development be compatible with the established character of the existing neighborhood. While continued City employment and population growth will increasingly depend upon identifying sites suitable for redevelopment to more-intensive uses, this goal must be balanced against the equally important goal of preserving and protecting the qualities that make the City's many neighborhoods and commercial districts desirable places in which to live, work, and play. This balance will require that potential redevelopment sites be chosen carefully, and that redevelopment occurs at a scale and character compatible with the established community that surrounds them. It may also mean that there are also limits to the amount of future growth that can be accommodated through urban redevelopment.

Growth Infrastructure

Growth, whether it occurs in new peripheral neighborhoods or through redevelopment in older areas of the City, will require a broad array of public investments in new facilities and services to meet the needs of increased economic activity and a growing population. The Comprehensive Plan will identify these important needs and recommend the appropriate physical and service improvements. Many of these issues will be addressed within the required elements of the Comprehensive Plan--and in particular the elements that address transportation, utilities, community facilities, parks and open spaces, and cultural resources. Careful planning for extension or expansion of the physical infrastructure can provide service delivery efficiencies that will help reduce costs and promote a more sustainable long-term development pattern.

5. LIVING WITHIN OUR RESOURCES

One of the common themes running through the issues identified under each element was the need to live within the resources available now and in the future. One of the purposes of developing a Comprehensive Plan is that it examines all of the City's systems to strive for the efficient use of resources as the City grows and changes.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a concept synonymous with the issue of living within available resources over time. It means striving toward a development pattern that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability gives equal weight in present decisions to the future as well as to the present. Although most often associated with the discipline of environmental studies, the term can be broadly applied to many of the systems of a city, from housing, to land use, to transportation, to utilities and community facilities.

Central to the concept of sustainability is the recognition that there is a finite set of resources. The carrying capacity of the land and various systems within the community can efficiently support only a certain level of activity before it takes a disproportionate share of resources than

the benefit that is gained - the law of diminishing returns. For example, there are only a certain number of lanes that can be added to a roadway to keep traffic moving efficiently. After that point is reached, the amount of benefit that is achieved by adding more lanes is reduced. Sustainability considers the whole instead of the specific. It emphasizes relationships rather than pieces in isolation. Sustainability is not about regressing to primitive living conditions, rather it is about understanding the situation, and developing communities in ways that are equitable, and make sense ecologically and socially. The supply and demand aspects of resources must strive to achieve a balance. From the neighborhood level, to the city itself, to the region, each piece should work together to the extent possible.

How the Comprehensive Plan Can Address Sustainability

The recommendations contained within the Comprehensive Plan won't force changes in the way people live. They will however, lead to a development pattern that will provide opportunities for those who choose to live a more sustainable lifestyle. Examples of recommendations included in the Plan to address this issue will include:

- Short-term actions that will save money in the future. For example, by identifying the need and future locations of fire stations, the land can be purchased before extensive development takes place and land prices escalate. Another example would be to incorporate “green building” practices that employ environmentally friendly construction methods and operational systems that will also reduce long-term costs.
- Reduce the cost of providing services in the future. The Plan will explore actions such as co-locating facilities and establishing partnerships with other service providers. The Plan will also consider the lifecycle costs of improvements. For example, designing subdivisions that can be served by sanitary sewer systems that utilize gravity and the natural topography of the land to move wastewater will reduce the need for pump stations, which require electricity to operate and need to be replaced periodically.
- Enhancing the City's tax base. The long-term growth of the City's tax base is an important component of the City's long-term fiscal health. The Comprehensive Plan will incorporate and use development patterns that will help encourage investments which increase property values and the efficient use of land, and which minimize the costs of providing public services.
- Incentive programs to facilitate certain types of sustainable activities. An example of a current program that promotes sustainable activities is the City's recycling program. This program requires minimal household sorting of materials and offers curbside pickup, both of which make it easier for residents to recycle. This diverts a significant amount of material from the waste stream that would otherwise end up in landfills, which in turn extends the life of the landfills and reduces the amount of land needed for landfills in the future.

In order to move towards a more sustainable community, decisions will need to be made about prioritizing the limited resources that are available. The Comprehensive Plan will provide the framework for making decisions about how services will be delivered to various portions of the City and various population groups.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This paper is intended to provide an overview of the important key themes that have been derived from the review of the issues generated for each individual element of the Comprehensive Plan. Future phases of the planning process will identify alternative approaches to addressing these issues and analyze the potential benefits, costs and consequences of alternative choices.