



City of Madison
NOTICE OF POSSIBLE QUORUM
COMMON COUNCIL

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
www.cityofmadison.com

Common Council Retreat:
Policymaking & Complex Constituent
Dynamics

Consider:
Who benefits? Who is burdened?
Who does not have a voice at the table?
How can policymakers mitigate unintended consequences?

Saturday, September 13, 2025

9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Parks Division Lakeside Office
330 E Lakeside St
Madison, WI 53715

The Common Council Office is hosting a retreat for members of the Common Council titled “Being Public: Navigating the Spectrum of Disagreement and Conflict as Elected Officials” on Saturday, September 13, from 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM at the Parks Division Lakeside Office. This retreat will be facilitated by Abha Thakkar, Mosaic LLC. This will help alders:

- Identify patterns of constituent interactions
- Balance values, goals, and obligations
- Develop proactive constituent messaging
- Be intentional in responses

This retreat will include a mix of generative sharing and private reflection, with the goal of helping alders clarify individual and collective decision-making processes and to ultimately facilitate responsive governance and policymaking in challenging times. Members of the Common Council have been invited and a possible quorum of the Common Council may exist at this event.



COMMON COUNCIL RETREAT: POLICY-MAKING & COMPLEX CONSTITUENT DYNAMICS

September 13, 2025
In Person



1

Identify patterns of constituent interactions

We'll look at the spectrum of constituent interactions, from healthy disagreement to experiences of harassment or even harm. What is showing up for you in your district? What are some of the more challenging relationships or issues to navigate? What resources are available for the more extreme interactions?



2

Balance your values, goals and obligations

How do you fulfill your responsibilities as a representative of your constituents, even those you disagree with, and where do you draw the line for yourself? We'll weigh how you balance your values, goals and obligations in this complex brew of relationships and systems you navigate.



3

Develop proactive constituent messaging

One of the best ways to help your constituents trust that they will be heard even when you disagree is to communicate regularly and predictably. Set reasonable expectations around the complexities of policy-making and for what can be accomplished by a legislative body in city government.



4

Be intentional in your response

When we can choose how we respond rather than being reactive, it helps support healthy public discourse. This is especially critical in the wake of high profile, polarizing issues, especially when we recognize the complexity behind a "yes" or "no" vote. How do you communicate in those instances?



Facilitated by Abha Thakkar, Mosaic LLC

Abha has spent the last 20+ years as a community organizer, nonprofit administrator, trainer and convener of systems-level work. She brings with her a unique combination of skills and experience, including grassroots leadership development, community organizing, non-extractive public engagement, food systems resilience, community journalism, solidarity economics, restorative justice, and nonprofit operations, including fiscal management and policy and process

development. Abha specializes in organizational systems, facilitation and coaching for collective impact initiatives, nonprofits, and local government through an antiracist lens. Learn more about her work at mosaicmadison.com

Abha was born in India into a family of revolutionary leaders and community organizers who resisted the British colonizers on two continents. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin, has a 14-year old daughter and has traveled to over 60 countries, doing work in many of them to support the social-emotional and educational needs of vulnerable children.

