

City of Madison Planning Division 2021 Annual Report



Julia Schilling, *Shift* (2021). Photo courtesy the artist.



Letter from Heather

From my perspective, the last couple of years are a bit of a blur as we continue to perform much of our work for City of Madison residents, elected, and appointed officials in a virtual setting. In 2021, we've helped to welcome several new Alders and members of the boards, committees, and commissions we staff. Meanwhile, we've seen three amazing colleagues move on to new adventures and endeavors, including Janine Glaeser, Sydney Prusak, and Jule Stroick, who retired from the Planning Division after 33 years of service.

The Planning Division team has continued to work well together and to contribute to larger #TeamCity efforts while we ease back into the office setting and continue to define a "new normal" for our collaborative work. Importantly, across the efforts we lead or are a part of, we continue to be guided by the Comprehensive Plan's lenses of Racial Equity, Sustainability, Health, and - perhaps in sharper focus in the wake of the pandemic - Adaptability.

Major accomplishments in 2021 include:

- Completion of the decennial redistricting process, which establishes new Alder district and ward boundaries based on the 2020 Census results
- Adoption of the Odana Area Plan, which lays the framework for an evolution of the West Towne Mall area and surroundings in the decades to come
- Ordinance changes recommended in the Comprehensive Plan and the Mayor's Housing Forward initiative that focus on making it easier to construct housing in Madison
- Establishment of strong communication channels to Town of Madison residents who will become City residents in late 2022
- Sustaining a fast-paced development review function, despite staff shortages, to ensure that we provide decision-makers with solid information and recommendations

We are so grateful for the dedication of individuals serving on the boards, committees, and commissions we support, and look forward to a bright 2022.



Heather Stouder, AICP
Director, City of Madison Planning Division

Public Engagement Summary



Meetings

Planning Process meetings: **32**

Development proposal neighborhood meetings: **~30**

Board/Committee/Commission meetings: **107**

(PC, UDC, Landmarks, MAC, JCAC, DCC, AHRC, LORC)



Project email lists

Messages: **42**

Total recipients: **976**



Online engagement

Social Media Followers: **2,210**

(Twitter + Instagram + Facebook follows for Planning Division)

Website Visits: **197,018**



By mail

Postcards sent: **10,251**

Public engagement is pivotal for shaping the city and communities we serve. As we enter another year of the pandemic, continuing to improve access and inclusivity to build on ideas of community empowerment and participation is more important than ever. From public zoom meetings, scannable QR codes, and building collaborative relationships with different organizations, businesses, residents, and communities, the Planning Division strives to encompass new methods to reach wide, diverse audiences.

Some projects hit pause on in-person public participation and moved online due to the pandemic, while other projects were able to provide hybrid options for both virtual and in-person engagement as the year continued. Staff held pop-up public engagement sessions for the South Madison Plan and Alder Redistricting effort. Establishing guiding principles like Community Wealth Building and Centering Nature and Sustainability for the Greater East Towne Area Plan and Anti-Displacement and Gentrification for the South Madison Plan in response to community feedback helped empower residents and strengthen the community's voice in plans.

For projects like the Town of Madison Attachment, an

integrated public engagement strategy is aiding outreach to Town residents. Staff continues to leverage emerging strategies like the marketing 'geofencing' tactic to engage the public based on location, a voicemail hotline to answer questions in several languages, a project webpage offered in three different languages, text and email alerts, and live streaming virtual public meetings in different languages.

The Planning Division continued to improve its public engagement playbook and tools in 2021 by seeking new forms of public engagement while improving traditional engagement, a combination that is more likely to lead to sustained interest in outcomes and equitable public decisions in the future.



A Community Impact Session to help develop the South Madison Plan, September 2019

Ordinance Updates

Housing

As Madison continues to grow and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, the construction of new housing also continues to rebound from the recession of a decade ago. While cranes seen throughout the city symbolize many new housing units under construction, Madison still needs more housing of all types and price points, and within that, more choices for households with low incomes. As recommended in the Comprehensive Plan and reiterated as part of the Mayor's "Housing Forward" initiative, the Common Council passed two key zoning ordinance amendments in 2021 to make it easier to construct new housing options.

The Council passed a broad set of changes in July for areas already planned and zoned appropriately for mixed-use and multi-family residential development. The changes increased the allowable housing densities and changed the permitting process to allow for small- and mid-scale multi-family housing development to move forward "by right" (as a permitted use), rather than requiring conditional use review and approval. Nearly every multi-family residential building required discretionary review regardless of scale before these changes were made. With the changes adopted, it is now possible for developers and property owners to move forward with more certainty when their (re)development project includes much-needed housing. While the changes are modest, the hope is that Madison will see more housing options in small to mid-scale buildings in the coming years, and that it will be easier for a new and more diverse set of developers to initiate these projects.



Small and mid-sized multifamily projects like this one at the corner of Winnebago and Russell Streets no longer require conditional use review and approval.

Accessory Dwelling Units

Meanwhile, as growth continues along Madison's redeveloping commercial corridors (which comprise only a small portion of the City's land area), nearly 25% of the City is developed as single-family homes. A creative way to incorporate additional housing options in these areas is through construction of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). An ADU is a second housing unit either incorporated within an existing home (such as a basement apartment) or constructed in a separate building on the same property. While ADUs have been allowable in Madison since 2013, they have required conditional use review and approval by the City's Plan Commission, and have been subject to design guidelines and strict size limitations. At its final meeting of 2021, the Common Council unanimously passed a series of zoning ordinance amendments to increase the allowable size of ADUs and to allow them to be constructed as a permitted use.



1040 Williamson Street with an Accessory Dwelling Unit.

Streatery

In 2020, DPCED staff found ways to break and remake outdoor dining rules to help save our local restaurants during the beginnings of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Streatery program was born out of emergency orders, and staff continued to adjust rules and found ways to help many local businesses survive, even through the winter. Over the course of 2020 and into 2021, it became clear that the Streatery program would be here to stay. Restaurants and patrons alike loved the new opportunities for expanded outdoor dining, as well as the availability of heaters to soften the colder temps of spring and fall. The city experimented allowing outdoor live music, fire pits, and even geodesic domes on private property. In 2021, DPCED staff were leaders in the national conversation of outdoor dining across the country, and shared best practices with peer cities as they began to hone in on what a permanent Streatery program could look like. Through surveys, workshops, and information sharing sessions with participants, City staff, Alders, the Mayor, and members of City committees and commissions, DPCED staff drafted new ordinances and ordinance amendments to make the transformational Streatery program into a permanent part of our urban fabric. Streatery ordinances and amendments are expected to be introduced in January approved in February 2022, just in time for the 2022 Outdoor dining season to begin.



Harmony Bar, Atwood Avenue



Osteria Papavero, Wilson Street



Young Blood Beer Co., King Street



Fair Oaks Diner, Fair Oaks Avenue

Adopted Plans

Odana Area Plan

The Odana Area Plan was adopted by the City Council on September 21, 2021. A plan for the Odana Area was recommended by the 2018 Comprehensive Plan to facilitate mixed-use development, address connectivity improvements, and provide for more parks, open space, and other amenities and infrastructure necessary to support residential development. The Odana Area Plan addresses those elements to facilitate redevelopment within an area that has, thus far, not seen as much activity as many other commercial areas of the city. The ultimate goal of the plan is to unlock the area's significant development potential and guide the transition and redevelopment of predominantly commercial areas into mixed-use Activity Centers. The Plan also helps prepare the Area for successful integration of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service, which is planned to begin operation in 2024 and run from Mineral Point Road, through downtown, to East Towne Mall.



Odana Area Plan Boundary shown in red

The Odana Area Plan's public engagement began just as COVID struck in March of 2020, which necessitated a shift in strategy. Instead of in-person meetings, the project team pivoted to a series of virtual meetings via Zoom, in partnership with the Greater East Towne Area Plan team. The series of meetings reached hundreds of interested residents, many of whom had not participated in planning processes before. Public engagement remained virtual throughout the process via a series of other events and meetings, including business outreach in partnership with the Madison Black Chamber of Commerce, the Latino Chamber of Commerce of Dane County, and the Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce. Feedback received throughout the process led to creation of many of the recommendations within the Plan.

Redevelopment interest has been starting to pick up in and around the Odana Area over the past several years, and with COVID putting increased pressure on an already challenged retail sector, the Odana Area Plan establishes a path forward for the creation of complete, mixed-use neighborhoods.

Hanson Neighborhood Development Plan Amendment

The Hanson Neighborhood Development Plan (NDP) was adopted in August 2000. Planning staff amended the Hanson Neighborhood Development Plan in response to a proposal to develop the "Overlook Residences" north of DiLoreto Avenue. The development proposed 577 multi-family units. An amendment to the NDP had to be considered since the proposal significantly exceeded the planned density for the area.

The amendment area covered approximately 125 acres, generally bounded by Interstate Highway 39/90 on the East, the perennial stream and wetlands to the West, DiLoreto Avenue to the South, and Hanson Road to the North. The Plan amendment provided detailed recommendations regarding land uses, transportation, public utilities, and services.

South Madison

The South Madison Plan is an update to the 2005 South Madison Neighborhood Plan for areas south of Wingra Creek, east of Fish Hatchery Road, north of USH 12 & 18 (Beltline), and west of Lake Monona. Community engagement was paused due to COVID-19 in March of 2020. Since restarting the planning process, a series of public meetings were held, the South Madison Market Study was completed and reviewed with the South Madison community, focus area concept plans were developed and reviewed, and strategies and recommendations were developed and reviewed. Anti-displacement and gentrification, community wealth building, and opportunities to thrive are the Plan's guiding principles. The Plan also changed into an action plan in response to community input after the planning process restarted. The final draft of the South Madison Plan was introduced at the November 2, 2021 Council meeting and was adopted by Council at its January 4, 2022 meeting.



Photo: Hedi Rudd

Greater East Towne Area Plan

2021 was busy for the Greater East Towne Area planning process. There were public meetings in May and November to gather input, a Racial Equity and Social Justice analysis of draft recommendations, and public comments collected by email throughout the year. The project team completed the draft plan in December. Five guiding principles for the plan were established to create a framework: Creating a Place, Focus on Mobility, Community Wealth Building, Center Nature and Sustainability, and Resiliency. Recommendations follow the elements of the City's Comprehensive Plan and provide guidance for future growth and development over the next 10 to 15 years.

The plan sets the stage for creating a Mixed Use Activity Center with smaller, more human scale blocks along a new street and pedestrian/bicycle network. Regional Mixed Use is at the heart of the area's land uses, surrounded by Medium Residential, Community Mixed Use, and Low Medium Residential. Two new neighborhood parks are proposed, along with expansion of Mayfair Park and a 200-foot buffer of Starkweather Creek. There are also recommendations for a Tax Increment District, an equity-based market study, a business incubator, business development assistance with a focus on entrepreneurs from Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, and other related recommendations.

The final draft plan will be introduced to the Common Council on January 4th for Board, Committee and Commission review. It is anticipated that the Common Council will adopt the plan as a supplement to the City's Comprehensive Plan in February 2022.



Example diagram of a community park



Example diagram of a neighborhood park



Example diagram of a central urban plaza



Example diagram of Low-Medium Residential housing adjacent to a public park

Development Review

The development review process guides and improves development proposals from the earliest conceptual states to the point building permits are issued. The Development Review and Plan Implementation section continued another busy year, reviewing nearly two hundred land use and land division applications. While the overall number of dwelling units approved was down from 2020's record-setting pace, multifamily approvals were ahead of 2018 and 2019. The Plan Commission welcomed three new members and the Urban Design Commission welcomed a new member in 2021.

The Planning Division led a process, beginning in 2020 and continuing well into 2021, in collaboration with Zoning and the City Attorney's Office, to adjust residential densities and conditional use thresholds in many multifamily residential, mixed-use, and commercial zoning districts. Such changes were done, in part, to encourage the development of more small-scale multifamily and mixed-use developments and contribute to Citywide efforts to address housing needs. See more on that effort in the "Ordinance Updates" section.

Another major change to the work done by the Development Review section was brought about by changes to the demolition permit process. Again working with Zoning and the City Attorney's Office, Staff led a process to streamline the demolition permit process, most notably for proposals with permitted uses that would otherwise not require Plan Commission review.

Select Project Profiles



145 West Wilson Street

Ten-story mixed-use building with 206 dwelling units and 809 square feet of commercial space



421 Charmany Drive

Six-story mixed-use building with 178 dwelling units and 4,400 square feet of retail space

Development Review Statistics

Residential Approvals

89 Single-Family Lots (net)

2,827 Multifamily Units (gross)

Commercial/Retail Approvals

683,075 sq. ft.

221 Hotel Rooms

Proposals Before Plan Commission

92 Conditional Uses or CUP Alterations

26 Zoning Changes

31 Plats and CSMs

47 Demolitions

Proposals Before UDC: 81

Proposals Before Landmarks: 51

341 State Street, 315-321 W Gorham Street, and 322 W Johnson Street

Ten-story mixed-use building with 386 dwelling units intended for students and 23,200 square feet of retail and business incubator space



1858-1890 East Washington Avenue

Six-story mixed-use building with 290 dwelling units and 15,000 square feet of commercial space

849 East Washington Avenue

Fourteen-story mixed-use building with 214 dwelling units and 9,880 square feet of commercial space



575 Zor Shrine Place

Two five-story residential buildings with a total of 479 dwelling units

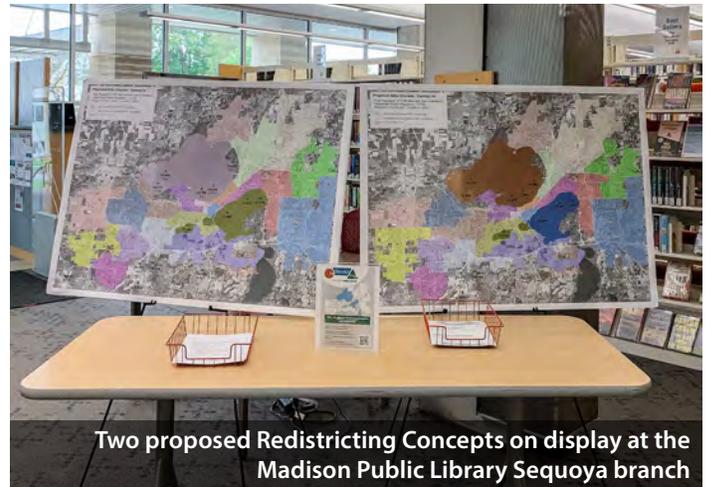
Alder Redistricting

Redistricting is the process of adjusting voting districts based on population changes between the Federal Government's decennial censuses. Every municipality, county, and state must redraw their wards/precincts, alder districts, county supervisor districts, state assembly, state senate, and federal House of Representatives districts using the 2020 Census population count. For the City of Madison and its residents, this means adjusting wards and alder districts to balance city population growth so each resident has equal representation on the City Council. The City's population grew the most in the UW Campus/Downtown/Isthmus area, the far West Side, and far Northeast Side.



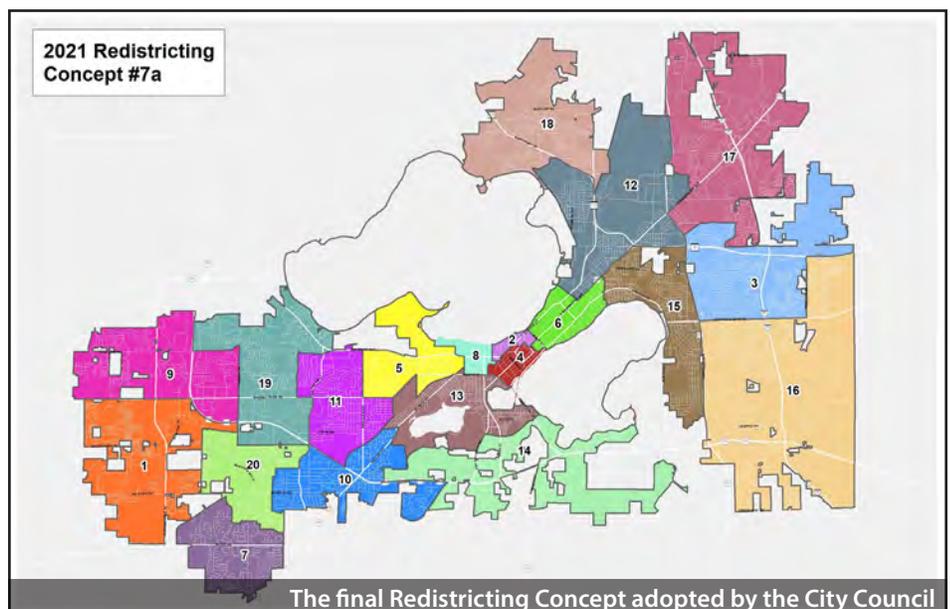
The City created an Ad Hoc Redistricting Committee, comprised of four Alders and three residents, to lead the redistricting process. The Committee adopted criteria for establishing alder districts, including the criteria that are required by the state and federal governments.

The Redistricting Committee, with the support of a staff team from the Planning Division and the City Clerk's Office, met nine times between August 12th and October 7th, when it recommended ward and alder district boundaries to the City Council. During that time, staff generated nine different redistricting scenarios with hundreds of maps containing background information and analysis. The timeline for redistricting was compressed due to the COVID-related delay in the release of 2020 Census results and the need to have wards in place before December to allow for County Board candidates to circulate nominating papers for the Spring 2022



election. The compressed process meant that redistricting was accomplished in less than half the normal timeframe. While that meant less public engagement around redistricting concepts than in past efforts, staff still held outreach events at public libraries and held online redistricting meetings where residents could learn about the process, offer feedback, and have their questions answered. The Redistricting Committee received hundreds of comments from engagement events and emails from the public.

Ultimately, the Redistricting Committee recommended Concept #7a to the City Council, and the Council adopted the concept on November 2, 2021. Several amendments to the concept were approved, most of which were minor changes to ward boundaries to respond to Dane County's requests to tweak ward boundaries to better integrate with their Supervisor District boundaries.



The Historic Preservation Program continued its all virtual format in 2021. All submittals and committee/commission meetings were virtual.

2021 marked the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the City's historic preservation ordinance. The history of the program was compiled in the Madison Preservation Plan adopted in 2020. The Landmarks Commission has continued to use the Plan, in conjunction with information from the Underrepresented Communities Historic Resources Survey, to broaden the focus of its work. In our anniversary year we took steps to better tell the full story of Madison. It is fitting that we got to experience the most significant archaeological discovery in the City's history in 2021.

On November 9, 2021, City staff and District 19 Alder Keith Furman were present for the Wisconsin Historical Society's recovery of a 1,200 year-old dugout canoe. The Preservation Planner coordinated the City's response and support for the recovery effort, which included the Mayor's Office, City of Madison Parks Department, and Madison Police Department. The canoe is the oldest intact watercraft recovered in Wisconsin and was found near the locations of two prehistoric Native American villages. This is a reminder that the Madison area, which the Ho-Chunk call Dejope, has been the site of long-term human habitation with a deep history.



A team of archaeologists and divers retrieves a 1,200-year-old dugout canoe from Lake Mendota

Proposals Before Landmarks

51 Certificates of Appropriateness (CoAs)

180 Staff-Approved CoAs

79 Advisory Demolition Reviews

11 Other Project Reviews

For meeting and project processes, the Landmarks Commission met 19 times via Zoom and welcomed Bill Quackebush, the Ho-Chunk Nation Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, to its meeting on March 1 to talk about strengthening the collaboration between the heritage preservation programs of the City and the Ho-Chunk Nation. On April 23, the Wisconsin Association of Historic Preservation Commissions awarded the City an Award of Excellence in the Identification and Designation Category for our Underrepresented Communities Historic Resources Survey. In addition to the traditional review of projects, the commission also fulfilled its role as a consulting party for the Federal historic preservation compliance process (Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act) in reviewing the proposed route and installation of stations for the Bus Rapid Transit project. Finally, the commission made amendments to its Policy Manual to clarify tribal consultation processes, and made text amendments to the existing historic preservation ordinance that corrected the period of significance for First Settlement Historic District, clarified legal notification processes, and formally implemented a conditional approval process.

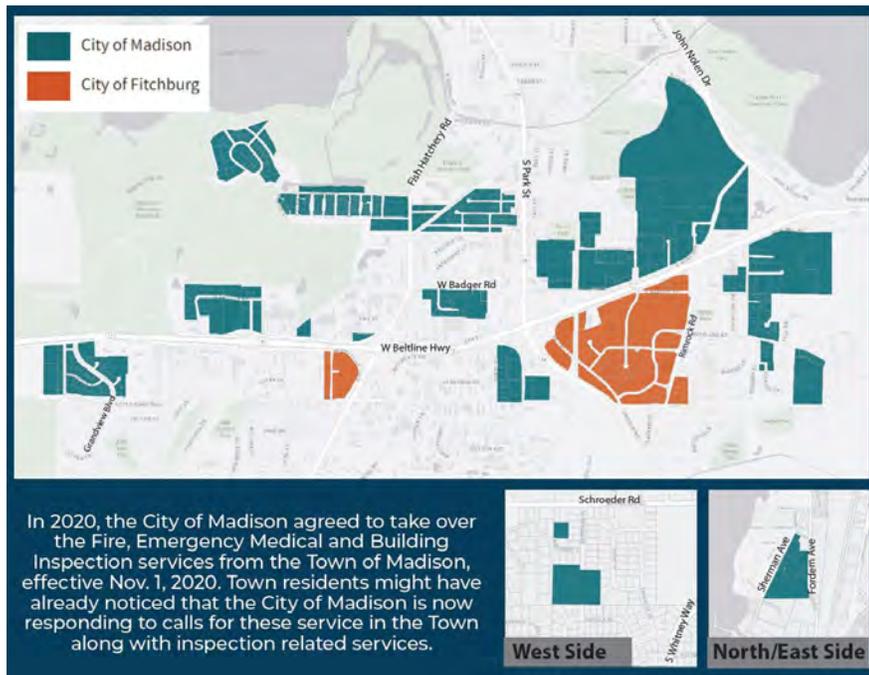
The Landmarks Ordinance Review Committee met 9 times over the course of the year to work on finalizing the amended ordinance for the City's historic districts. The Committee will hold public meetings at the beginning of 2022, update the project website, and create an online survey to gather feedback on the draft ordinance from stakeholders. Hopefully the new ordinance will be adopted shortly thereafter.



938 Spaight Street: Existing conditions left, proposed restoration right

Community Connections & Partnerships

Town of Madison Attachment



out to future residents, businesses, and property owners. About a third of the Town's population are non-English speakers, 78% of the population lives in multifamily units, the Town government has limited capacity and funding to notify residents, and there is uncertainty about how COVID-19 will unfold.

The City's Communications Team, led by the Planning Division, is using many tools to reach Town residents, including but not limited to translating communications to Spanish and Mandarin, working with designCraft Advertising on a digital targeted media campaign, a telephone hotline, and community navigators. The telephone hotline allows people to leave a message and receive a response in their preferred language. The Communications Team hired four community navigators to help get the word out in the Town by going

On Oct. 31, 2022, the City of Madison and City of Fitchburg will absorb the Town of Madison. A majority of the Town's 3.9 square miles will be attached to the City of Madison. The City of Madison will absorb about 835 parcels and approximately 5,000 of the Town's 6,236 residents.

A number of service changes will affect incoming residents, businesses, and property owners. The City has collaborated with the Town of Madison and City of Fitchburg to notify and inform the residents of the Town about the upcoming attachment and how it will impact them. There are several communication challenges as the City of Madison reaches

door-to door, distributing flyers, posting yard signs, answering questions, and more. There have been several public information meetings - both virtual and in-person - along with text message alerts, mailings, postcards, posters, and outreach to apartment managers, businesses, neighborhood leaders, schools, community-based organizations, and outreach in areas where Town residents may frequent.

As Oct. 31, 2022 approaches, the City is continuing to connect with Town residents in the midst of COVID to make sure they understand how the City provides public services and that their questions are answered in a timely manner.



2021 Neighborhood Grant Program

The Planning Division continued administering the Neighborhood Grant Program in 2021, with four grants awarded. The Junction Ridge Neighborhood Association is using its grant to create a Neighborhood Oasis at Junction Ridge Park. The group completed the patio and garden and began establishing a native prairie. They plan to install a retaining wall along the patio and interpretive signage in the prairie area in 2022.

Mentoring Positives, Inc. and Darbo Neighborhood Council received a grant to help build organizational capacity and get more people involved in its work. The group will use the grant to expand the diversity of its membership, meet with neighbors to find out their needs and dreams, and increase resident voice in community decisions that affect their lives by improving communication through podcasts, videos, other social media, and a printed newsletter.

The Summit Woods Neighborhood Association received a grant to create a gathering place in Mohican Triangle Park with native perennial plantings and seating.

The Marquette Neighborhood Association, Inc. received a grant on behalf of Broom Street Theater. The theater will create a public gathering place in its front yard with seating, plantings and a Sid Boyum sculpture.

Neighborhood Grant Implementation

Bayview Foundation used its 2020 grant to create Bayview Portraits. Published in 2021, the book tells the stories of the community's diverse residents. For example, Teang Ou fled the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia in 1975 to a refugee camp in Thailand, eventually settling in Wisconsin, and moving to Bayview in 2014. "Since I don't have a car, other people come to take me to the store or food pantry," she says in Bayview Portraits. "There are many people here who are nice and help me." Nina Okwali emigrated from Nigeria to Bayview, where she has raised two sons. "Our neighborhood is safe, which is the most important thing to me. My kids can go play outside and I don't worry."

The Eken Park Neighborhood used a 2019 grant to paint picnic tables and mural panels for the Commercial Avenue bridge. Completed in summer 2021, the project brought residents together outside, in a socially distanced way, to



Volunteers plant a garden around the new patio during the October 19 Oasis dedication.

create public art and enjoy each other's company after being isolated for many months due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Crawford-Marlborough-Nakoma Neighborhood received a grant in 2020 to create Warwick Way Gardens, with a Pollinator/Butterfly Garden, Rain Garden and seating at Warwick Way and Whenona Drive. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the neighborhood waited until summer 2021 to hold a dedication ceremony for this new gathering place.



Eken Park Neighborhood murals

2021 Utility Boxes

In 2021, the City collaborated with the newly formed FOMAC (Friends of the Madison Arts Commission) to pay for art license and installation costs to wrap city utility boxes in two prominent areas: University Avenue and the Lake Monona Bicycle Loop.

Several pieces of art were chosen directly from the 2020 State Street mural project, and others were chosen from a group of artists whose work and income were greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The result is an amazing collection of diverse art and artists whose work continues to delight and surprise passers-by. 13 new boxes were wrapped in 2021, bringing the total collection to 75 utility boxes wrapped throughout the city.



Terrence Adeyanju and Stephan Matioc



Alice Traore



Tony Catteruccia



Shiloah Coley



Mike Lroy



Screening of short films presented by Wisconsin Film Festival at *Winter is Alive! a cooler world carnival*



Ojars Feldbergs, *Dying Iceberg* (2021) installation in progress on Lake Wingra

Winter is Alive! a cooler world carnival

During the months of February and March, *Winter is Alive! a cooler world carnival* featured outdoor sculptural installations by over 30 local and international artists. The multi-disciplinary event presented by the City of Madison Arts Commission, Garver Events, and Sustain Dane live-streamed performative and narrative events, including open-mics and forums. *Winter is Alive!* brought people together during the late winter months at various locations around Madison. The art festival provided the opportunity to reflect individually and reawaken a positive vision of the future where we collaborate to reduce climate change and create inclusive community between people and nature.

Shift by Julia Schilling

Shift by Julia Schilling activates the gateway between the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus, UW Hospital and Clinics, and the Regent Neighborhood. The interactive major art installation incorporates two 70-foot light sculptures made from perforated weathered steel that covers each side of the Highland Avenue underpass beneath Campus Drive. Punched out patterns create a shifting light mural made from circle packing algorithms and LED lighting.

The project has been in the works since June 30, 2010 when the Regent Neighborhood Association (RNA) held a public design workshop that resulted in a vision for the corridor. The University Avenue Corridor Plan, approved by the Common Council in May 2014, specifically recommends installing public art in this underpass to improve safety, walkability, and aesthetics. Staff from City of Madison Engineering and Planning Divisions worked closely with the artist and the neighborhood for many years to bring the energy and movement-mirroring project to fruition.



Julia Schilling, *Shift* (2021) installation in progress. Photo courtesy the artist.

Annual Grant Program: Unveiling of anti-racist mural

The Madison Arts Commission Annual Grant Program supported the art activism installation *The Machine*, a mural painted by Black, queer artist Simone Lawrence. In response to anti-Black flyers found across their neighborhood in 2020-2021, residents of the Dudgeon-Monroe neighborhoods formed the Monroe Street Anti-Racism Project (MoSAP) that helped lead to the creation of the mural to send a counter message of justice and inclusion in the neighborhood.

The outdoor public work was presented at the Monroe Street Festival in September 2021 and helps stimulate dialogue about the critical need for ongoing action against racism.



Attendees of the presentation of *The Machine*
Photo: Emily Balsley



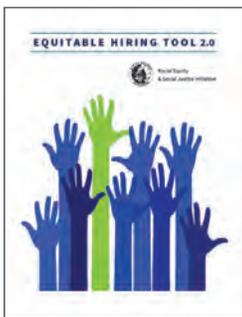
Simone Lawrence, *The Machine* (2021) Photo: Emily Balsley

Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative

Urban planning has a critical role in seeking racial and social justice. Currently, the City of Madison is one of many institutions addressing racial and social inequities following decades of marginalization through urban policy and other institutions. Inclusion and equity is central to reshaping cities and public spaces. The City has a mission to establish racial equity and social justice as core principles in all decisions, policies and functions through its Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative (RESJI), RESJ Department teams, and other work.

The Planning Division is committed to racial and social justice in decision-making processes. In 2021 Planning staff undertook many projects, programs, and hiring process using RESJI tools and frameworks.

Equitable Hiring Practices



The Planning Division welcomed new staff using one of many RESJI tools: the Equitable Hiring Tool. The tool is a guide to ensure each hiring decision for the City of Madison is as equitable as possible. The Equitable Hiring Tool aids staff in being deliberate about position description language, interview questions,

who is on screening and hiring panels, and who might be excluded in the process.

Planning Framework: RESJ Comprehensive Analysis

As part of RESJI, the comprehensive version of the Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Tool is used to facilitate conscious consideration of equity and examine how communities of color and low-income populations will be affected by a proposed decision of the City.

The purpose of the analysis of the Planning Division's Planning Framework was to examine potential inequities in the development of the framework to include thirteen "District Plans" that would cover the entire City. Representatives from the Planning Division, Department of Civil Rights, Madison Public Library, and community took part in this effort. Planning staff gained valuable insight on innovative public engagement strategies to mitigate gaps in access and inclusion in the process. The insights gained helped guide staff to revise the framework while in development.

Greater East Towne Area Plan: RESJ Fast Track Analysis

The Greater East Towne Area Plan undertook a fast track RESJ Analysis. Fast track is an abbreviated version of the comprehensive tool for issues on a short timeline or without a widespread impact. The purpose of the analysis was to guide the Plan in creating equitable business and housing opportunities within the planning area for BIPOC communities and people living with lower incomes. Representatives from the Planning Division, Department of Civil Rights, Community Development Division, Department of Transportation, and Madison Public Library participated. Two of the most discussed unintended consequences during the analysis were increased rent costs for commercial and residential space that typically occur with redevelopment, and the likely possibility of displacement that follows. These consequences, which the planning team tried to address directly in the recommendations, are more likely to have negative impacts on people living with lower incomes and people from BIPOC communities.

Odana Area Plan: RESJ Fast Track Analysis

A fast track RESJ analysis was undertaken on the draft Odana Area Plan in the summer of 2021. Because a significant amount of public outreach had already been done to formulate the draft Plan, including focus groups with the Black Chamber, Latino Chamber, and Hmong Chamber, the analysis was completed by City staff. Representatives from the Planning Division, Department of Civil Rights, Community Development Division, Office of Business Resources, Department of Transportation, and Library participated. The team met twice for a total of about four hours to discuss the draft Plan and how it would benefit/burden individuals, unintended consequences of the draft Plan, and the other aspects of completing the analysis. The discussions resulted in edits to several recommendations and creation of new recommendations, all of which were ultimately approved by the Common Council when the Plan was adopted on September 21, 2021.



Organizers of the Mad Lit Event Series. Photo © Hedi Rudd

Task Force on Equity in Music and Entertainment Report Implementation

The 2019 Task Force on Equity in Music and Entertainment (TFEME) report included 31 recommendations to increase access to all genres of music for both artists and audiences. Implementation started in 2020 to strengthen the City's music ecosystem through an equity lens.

An Economic Impact Analysis was executed in mid-2021, and an action plan is being developed to guide the City in achieving a more inclusive music ecosystem. Additionally, the City has been continuously funding music festivals that support the work of local artists from a wide range of genres to diversify our music audience and performers. Among other recommendations, the City Department of Civil Rights is currently working on developing an anti-bias, bi-cultural and cross-cultural training for all music venues to improve their services and hiring practices.

The Mad Lit Event Series was a tangible way to demonstrate that it is possible to diversify the downtown if there is an intentional effort to engage people of color. Mad Lit gained popularity among music fans and business owners since it helped offset some of the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Town of Madison Attachment Communications Plan Implementation

The Town of Madison Communications Plan is a roadmap to establishing an open dialog about City services with Town residents that will become part of the City in October 2022. Town residents include BIPOC communities and many who speak different languages. A City Communications Team launched the communications campaign in early May 2021. The Team developed many communications avenues, including a website with an interactive map, a hotline, text and email alerts, a digital targeted media campaign, community navigators, and direct communication with property managers and businesses, among others. Most communications are being provided in English, Spanish and Mandarin. Translation has allowed many individuals who do not typically attend in-person or virtual public information meetings to learn about the upcoming absorption of the Town by the City.



Plan Implementation

CDBG Plan Implementation

The Planning Division creates Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) neighborhood plans in areas of the city where there are higher concentrations of BIPOC residents and people living with lower incomes. There is a focus on building relationships and engaging with stakeholders to better understand their needs and priorities and to respond with appropriate plan strategies and actions. Many partners are involved in plan creation and implementation, including City agencies, neighboring municipalities, Neighborhood Resource Teams, the County and State, community organizations, businesses, schools, and others. Highlights of CDBG plan implementation in 2021 include:

Triangle Monona Bay Neighborhood Plan:

Bayview Foundation, Inc. began redeveloping its affordable housing and the Community Development Authority selected a consultant team to redevelop its public housing. The City also installed pedestrian/bike improvements at W. Main Street/Proudfit Street and a Rapid Flashing Beacon on W. Washington Avenue with sensors so that people using wheelchairs, walkers and other mobility assistance do not have to press a button.



Fiddlehead Family of Ferns Planting Day

Darbo-Worthington-Starkweather Neighborhood Plan:

A 2022 City budget allocation to purchase the Salvation Army site in this area will help the neighborhood realize its long-time goal of creating a place for community wealth building and facilities that directly serve nearby residents. Construction of the Garver Path along Starkweather Creek and the Slow Streets project on Darbo Drive will improve pedestrian/bike access. Installation of a plaque honoring Richard Davis, a Jazz Master, activist, and former UW music professor, creates a more welcoming and affirming space for the area's Black community.

Emerson East-Eken Park-Yahara Neighborhood Plan:

Construction of the last segment of the Demetral Park Path connects the Yahara River Parkway Path to Commercial Avenue, improving access between the Isthmus and the North Side.

Arbor Hills – Leopold Neighborhood Plan:

Neighborhood Gathering Area – Continued implementation of this 60-acre gathering area included Phase II of the Family of Ferns Gateway to Leopold School, the Aldo Leopold Park bike pump track, a free six-week Lift Leopold summer series of entertainment and activities, and design of Fitchburg's Hub Community Park and Center.

Post Road Ped/Bike Improvements – Efforts to calm traffic near Aldo Leopold Elementary School continued with pedestrian refuge islands at Traceway Drive, Leopold Way, and Turbot Street, bump-outs at the Cannonball Path, and reduction of the speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph.

Fish Hatchery Road Reconstruction – Neighborhood access improvements included a bridge over Nine Springs Golf Course, a shared use path, pedestrian refuge islands, a traffic circle at the Greenway Cross neighborhood entrance, and shared bus/bike lanes along both sides of the road.



Lift Leopold 6 Week Series at Aldo Leopold Park

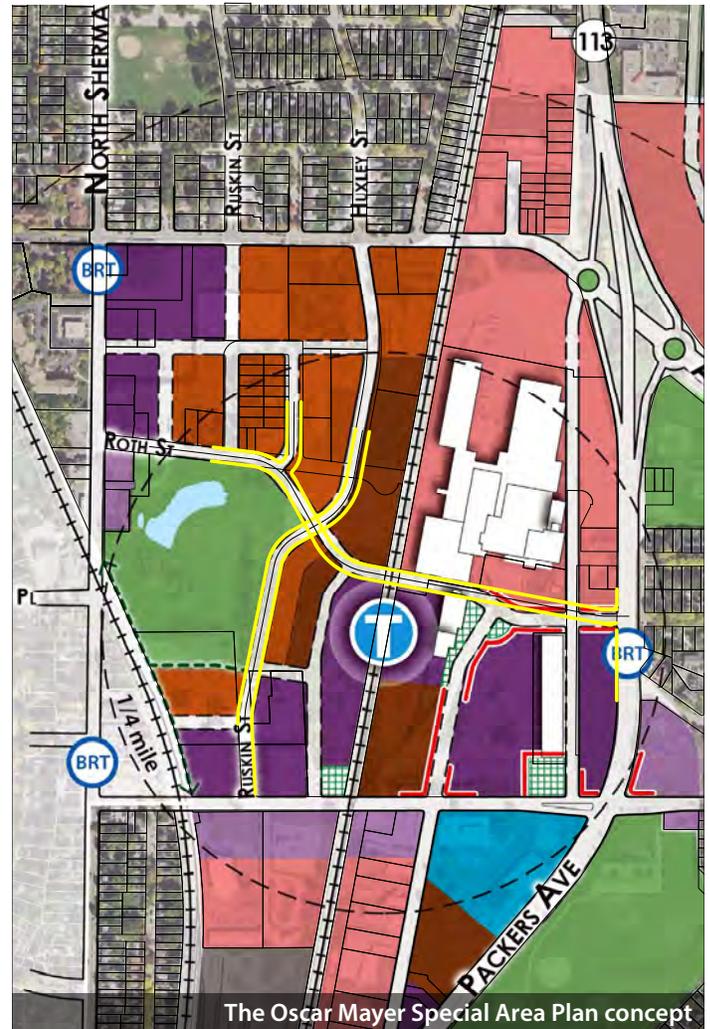


Official Mapping & Proactive Rezoning

The City's effort to use official mapping and proactive rezoning to implement adopted plans continued in 2021, with recent efforts focused on the Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan and the Odana Area Plan. In January, project staff held a neighborhood meeting to discuss why and how official mapping and proactive rezoning could be used to better implement the recommendations in the Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan. Staff presented two scenarios with different zoning options for public review and feedback. Following this meeting, staff held a work session with Plan Commission in April to get feedback on the options and received direction on which strategies should be pursued. Since that meeting, staff worked with Forestry and Traffic Engineering to establish a slightly modified street alignment that ensures trees on Roth Street are preserved and street geometries are consistent with City design standards. A package of rezonings for 168 acres and official mapping of 1.1 miles of critical connecting streets will be introduced for adoption in January 2022.

Understanding staff would likely be asked to pursue proactive rezoning and official mapping for the Odana Area, these recommendations were formulated and presented during that planning process, increasing awareness of the effort. The adopted plan includes recommendations to rezone nearly 320 acres and officially map 2.9 miles of new streets, which are particularly important and needed to establish a street network on blocks currently in excess of 160 acres.

Thus far, each effort related to proactive rezoning and official mapping has been a unique learning experience



for staff and policy-makers alike. In future planning efforts, it will be important to include focused recommendations related to these implementation efforts, and to continue to work collaboratively across agencies to provide clear and thorough information to the boards, committees, and commissions involved in decision-making.



Oscar Mayer closed its Madison plant in 2017



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We thank members of the boards, commissions and committees staffed by the Planning Division:

Plan Commission

Urban Design Commission

Landmarks Commission

Madison Arts Commission

Downtown Coordinating Committee

Joint Campus Area Committee

Ad Hoc Redistricting Committee

Ad Hoc Landmarks Ordinance Review Committee