

**City of Madison
Planning Division**

2024 Annual Report



Flock to State (2024) by Taylor McAda
Photo by Ian DeGraff for City of Madison

Letter from Meagan

I joined the Planning Division team in August 2024 – as the City prepared to adopt the first Area Plans under its new citywide planning framework; amidst the third straight year with more than 200 applications for land use and land division requiring staff and commission review; and as the Mayor, Council and City Agencies carefully reviewed all services and programs ahead of a milestone budget referendum in the fall. My welcome to the City at such a time illuminated the incredible breadth of the Division’s contributions to and impact on our community, the care and commitment by the staff to all that they do, and the sustained increase in the pace and complexity of this work as our community grows.

On behalf of the Planning team, I would like to thank the members of the eight boards and commissions that collaborate in the Division’s work throughout the year. In particular, I want to recognize current and past members of the Madison Arts Commission (MAC), who celebrated their 50th anniversary during 2024, for their commitment to support and advance the arts and culture as an essential part of life in Madison. This report highlights some of the most recent contributions of the MAC, as well as the City’s Percent for the Arts Program, the staff team, and many partnerships that enrich the cultural landscape of the city.

Among the most visible aspects of the Planning Division’s work in 2024 was the State Street Pedestrian Mall Experiment. From April to October, thousands heeded the call to #FlocktoState to transform the 400–600 blocks of State Street, experience the adapted space and all that State Street businesses have to offer, and attend events hosted by the Central Business Improvement District and Make Music Madison.

MAC’s anniversary and the State Street experiment are just two examples of the commitment and complexity I’ve observed early on. They also highlight the creativity and opportunity in collaboration among City Agencies, commissions, partner organizations, and the community. I look forward to learning even more about the Division’s and City’s work, and opportunities to advance it collectively in the year ahead.

A huge thank you is owed to long-time principal planner Bill Fruhling, for his leadership this year as Heather Stouder transitioned to a new role with the City and as I made a home in Madison and the Division. Additionally, I am grateful for the warm welcome by Alders, Committee members, City Agencies and community members in my first months in Madison. I look forward to connecting with many others in 2025, and to our work together in service of our community.



Meagan Tuttle, AICP
Director, City of Madison Planning Division

Public Participation Summary

The Planning Division continues to use a mix of in-person and online opportunities for public participation. The Division held 20 engagement events for the four Area Plans that were underway in 2024. For the Southwest and Southeast Area Plans, there was also an online commenting map, pop-up visits at Parks Alive events and other park activities and neighborhood celebrations, presentations for community and neighborhood groups, and engagement with teens from the UW–Madison PEOPLE Program.

Engagement events were also held for special projects like the State Street Experiment and the redevelopment of city-owned property at West Badger Road and South Park Street. For the State Street event, over 600 volunteers spent a day painting the 400–600 blocks with creative stencils and artist designed murals.



Public meeting in Sycamore Park to present a draft of the Northeast Area Plan, May 2024



Meetings

Planning Project Meetings: **25**

Development proposal neighborhood meetings: **27**

Board/Committee/Commission meetings: **102**

(see back cover for list of BCCs)



Project Email Lists

Messages: **44**

Recipients: **1,389**



Online Engagement

Social Media Followers: **3,465**

(X + Instagram + Facebook follows)

Website Visits: **310,061**



By Mail

Public meeting postcards sent: **6,652**



West Area Plan public meeting at High Point Church, June 2024

Ordinance Updates

Planning Division staff were involved in several ordinance changes to allow construction of more housing. These included Zoning Code amendments to encourage Accessory dwelling units and to incentivize affordable student housing in the Downtown:

Accessory Dwelling Units

Previously, an accessory dwelling unit could be constructed as a permitted use on owner-occupied single-family properties and on owner-occupied single or two-family properties in the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) overlay district. The zoning code amendment removed the owner-occupancy requirement and allowed an

accessory dwelling unit as a permitted use on lots with up to 8 housing units.

Downtown Affordable Student Housing Incentive

The downtown affordable housing incentive was updated with an option for student housing. If a property owner elects to use the incentive they execute a Land Use Restriction Agreement with the City to guarantee a certain amount of below market-rate housing for a specified time in exchange for being able to add more stories to their building. An educational institution then refers college students from households with low to moderate income to the property owner to rent units at below market price.



Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative

Division Equity Team

The Common Council approved a citywide Equity Action Plan in 2024. The Plan included citywide actions and Division actions. The Planning Division staff on the Division Equity Team (DET) worked with the Division to establish three actions. The actions are intended to address inequitable policies, procedures, and programs. This year the Division focused its work on making materials more accessible to the public by:

- Creating a Language Access Guide to help staff create materials and host events that are accessible
- Creating a guide to help staff prioritize existing materials for updates to ensure they include plain language

- Updating webpages with plain language
- Identifying documents for plain language updates
- Creating educational materials about the planning process

The Equity Action Plan also includes three citywide actions, which DET staff helped support:

- Ensure staff attend Prohibited Harassment & Discrimination Policy (APM 3-5) training
- Ensure people with disabilities and people whose preferred language is not English have meaningful access to City programs
- Support equity training and learning

The Southeast and Southwest Area Plans were authorized by the Common Council on October 8th. Before authorization staff gathered background data, prepared background maps, and raised awareness about the upcoming planning processes. The SE and SW plans are the third and fourth plans in the Area Plan sequence, after the West and Northeast Area Plans (see following pages). The Planning Division will focus on reaching traditionally underrepresented communities throughout the processes using a variety of tools like:

- Resident surveys;
- Online commenting maps;
- Business surveys during on-site business walk visits;
- Focus groups with historically underrepresented communities;
- Visiting with UW-Madison PEOPLE Program students at LaFollette High School (NE Plan) and Memorial High School (SW Plan);

The Division hired the nINA Collective to assist with public engagement for groups that are traditionally underrepresented in planning processes. Additional public engagement and planning work will continue throughout 2025. Plan actions drafted later in the processes will reflect community feedback and overarching citywide policies. Both plans are expected to go through the approval process in early 2026.

Southeast Area Plan

The Southeast Area Plan team is coordinating with WisDOT and Madison Transportation staff on the design for Stoughton Road (USH 51). The study is considering lowering the speed limit, adding travel lanes, improving



safety (for cars, bicyclists, and pedestrians), and potentially eliminating frontage roads. Decisions for the configuration of USH 51 will have lasting impact on the Southeast Area for many decades.

The following are emerging themes from the first round of public feedback:

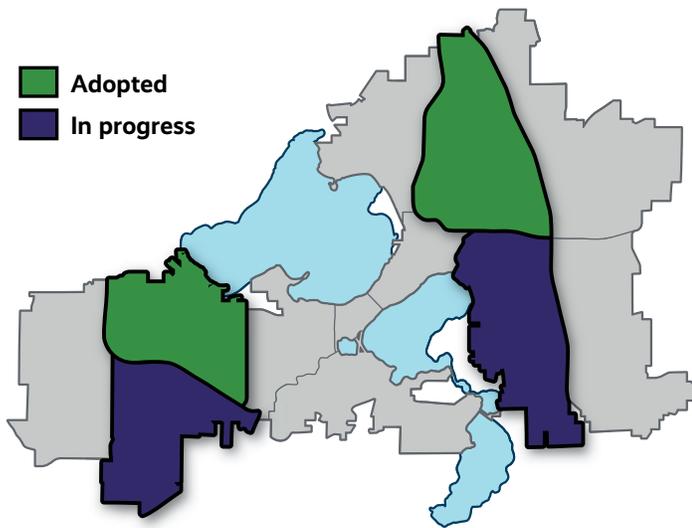
- A need for more mixed-use development along major corridors (Milwaukee Street, Cottage Grove Road, Atwood Avenue) to allow for needed housing and more neighborhood retail and amenities.
- Varied concerns about Hwy 51, including safety for both vehicles and pedestrians, better access for bikes and pedestrians, and a desire for slower speed limits.
- The need to complete missing connections in the pedestrian and bicycle network.
- Safety concerns in the Heistand Neighborhood relating to gun violence and drugs.



Southwest Area Plan

The Division contracted with community partners to assist with outreach to traditionally underrepresented communities in the Southwest Area in addition to the work the nINA Collective is undertaking. The planning process kicked off with three public meetings: an open house and two virtual meetings. The open house featured presenters from Planning, Engineering, Parks, Community Development, Traffic Engineering, and Metro Transit. Attendance between the three meetings totaled approximately 150 people. Much of the feedback received in the initial public meetings and interactive commenting map has focused on transportation-related issues, especially safety/speeding and sidewalk/path/road connectivity in, around, and through the Southwest Area.

Adopted Plans



After an 18-month planning process the city adopted the Northeast Area and West Area Plans in September 2024. These are the first Area Plans adopted using the City's new planning framework. The Northeast Area covers 7,600 acres and the West Area covers 5,500 acres. The Plans provide updated growth and development recommendations, including for areas that had no previous plans and those with outdated plans that do not reflect current community needs.

There were a variety of public participation activities used throughout the planning processes. These included multi-agency open houses, neighborhood walks, public meetings, online commenting maps, and community events in city parks and other public places.

The city also hired community organizations and individuals to reach underrepresented populations for each plan.

For the Northeast Area, there were special visits to the Burke Heights and Sandburg neighborhoods. In the West Area there were pop-up visits at community events, focus groups with people from the Chinese, Latinx and African American communities, and teen engagement at Lussier Community Education Center.

Northeast Area Plan

Northeast Area Plan public participation identified the following priorities:

- A desire for more walkable destinations;
- Concerns about housing affordability;
- Improving the fragmented bike network;
- Concerns about homelessness;
- A need for safety enhancements.

The Plan encourages more intense development along Bus Rapid Transit routes and more missing middle housing throughout the area. It recommends transitioning certain frontage roads into development sites. This could



Sandburg Neighborhood walk and talk for Northeast Area Plan



Community event in Reindahl Park for Northeast Area Plan

increase the amount of housing and improve the character of redevelopment. The Plan includes transportation actions related to WisDOT's Highway 51 and Interstate studies. It also includes actions to improve bike connections in the area. Updates to Urban Design District 5 and other urban design guidelines are included in the Plan.

Three Community Action Strategy areas are in the North-east Area. These areas are eligible for federal Community Development Block Grant funding. Funds are used to support community-directed projects. The Community Action Strategy guides how \$400,000 in federal funds will be spent in the Sandburg and Burke Heights areas. Recommended projects include lighting and safety enhancements, park improvements, and public art.

West Area Plan

West Area Plan public participation identified many different priorities including:

- Better connections and safer road, bike and pedestrian facilities, especially for K-12 students;
- More affordable housing and a variety of housing types;
- Greater business diversity and affordable space for small businesses;



- Preserve the Area's history while making it welcoming to current and new residents;
- Greater cultural diversity, inclusivity, public art and preservation of viewsheds;
- Address the needs of people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities with transportation improvements;
- Maintain current parks, add park space, and improve tree canopy;
- Improve stormwater management and water quality;
- Add community facility space and activities for teenagers.

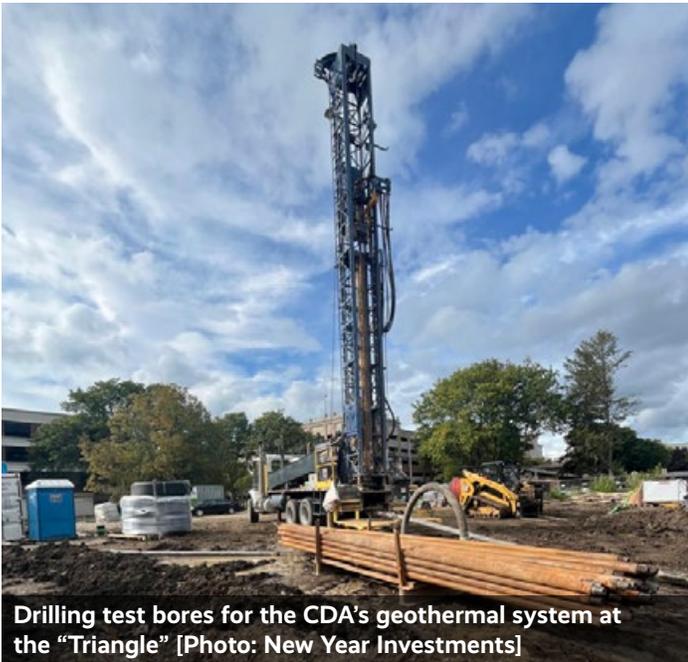
The West Area Plan designates higher intensity mixed-use along major transit corridors like University Avenue and at Activity Centers like University Research Park. It recommends proactively rezoning select properties to help implement land use recommendations. The Plan also calls for transitioning Planned Developments approved under the old (pre-2013) zoning code to conventional zoning districts.

Pedestrian and bicycle safety and connectivity are also emphasized in the Plan. This includes adding improvements near schools like shared-use paths, narrower lanes, and sidewalk connections. There is an east-west shared-use path planned for the Sauk Creek Greenway and a path planned for the Wexford Greenway. Enhanced pedestrian and bicycle crossings along major transportation corridors are shown, as is a new, narrow pedestrian and bike friendly street north of Rennebohm Park if properties north of the park redevelop.



A public meeting on the West Area Plan at High Point Church, June 2024

Plan Implementation



Drilling test bores for the CDA's geothermal system at the "Triangle" [Photo: New Year Investments]

Triangle Monona Bay Neighborhood Plan

The 2019 Triangle Monona Bay Neighborhood Plan is guiding a complete rebuild of the Triangle area. For decades the neighborhood has been home to a diverse community living in multifamily housing provided by Bayview Foundation and the Community Development Authority (CDA). Residents have low incomes, and many CDA residents also have some form of disability. Engagement with the Triangle's residents informed the Plan's land use, density, site layout, transportation, and parks and open space recommendations. Redevelopment designs for Bayview and CDA housing were created under the Plan's guidance.

Bayview completed its redevelopment project in 2024, with 130 new apartments and townhomes and a larger community center. At the same time, the CDA's "Taking Shape" redevelopment team finished designing its first new building along Braxton Place. The building will be the new home for current residents of Brittingham Apartments. Construction is anticipated to be completed in 2026. The Taking Shape team is determining whether a geothermal system could provide renewable heating and cooling.

The CDA's planned redevelopment project will increase the number of homes from 338 to 1,216 units when complete, providing more living opportunities for people with low incomes and disabilities.

South Madison Plan

The 2022 South Madison Plan called for mixed-use redevelopment of the northwest corner of the South Park Street–West Badger Road intersection. The CDA is working with The Alexander Company to redevelop the four acre site. The site includes the former Metro Transit South Transfer Point, the South District Police Station, the Badger Road State Office Building, and the former Centro Hispano building.

The CDA and The Alexander Company created a master plan for the site in 2024. They held two public meetings to gather ideas and feedback from the community. The CDA Board and the Common Council approved the plan in December 2024.

The redevelopment will happen in two phases. Two buildings will be built in Phase one:

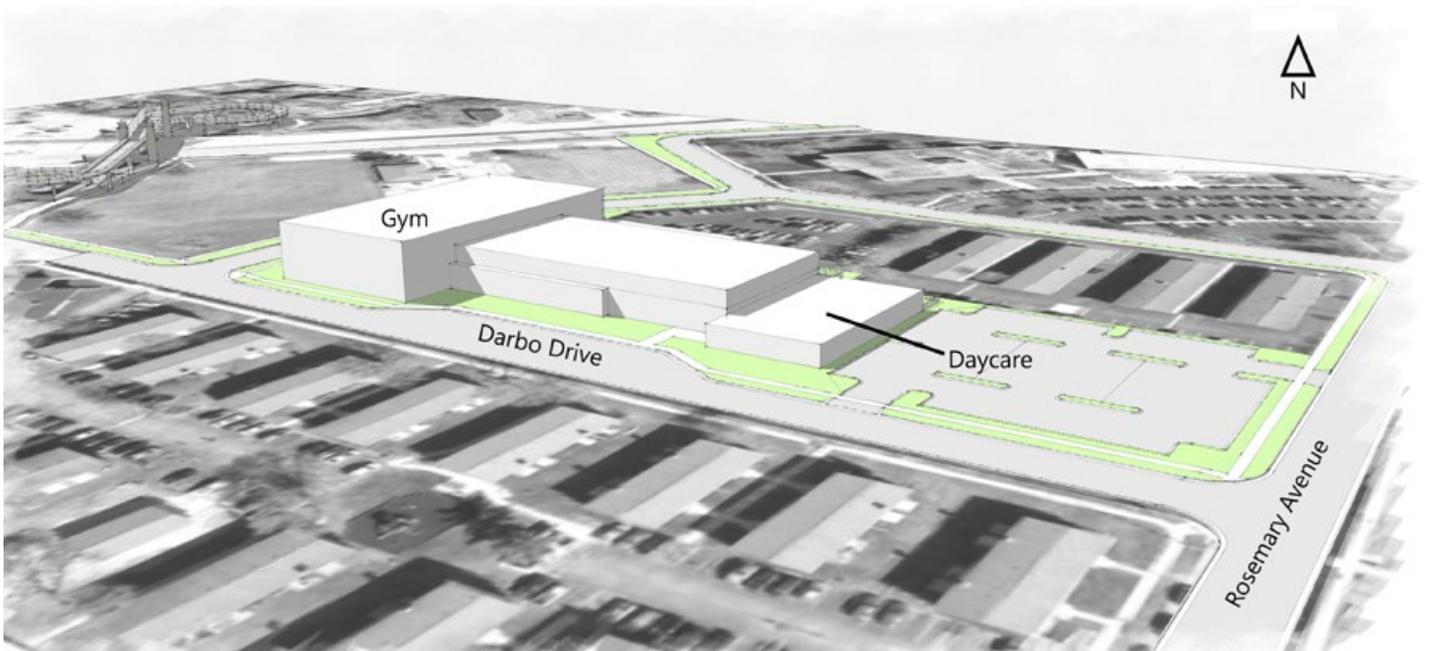
- **Building A**, located at the corner of South Park Street and West Badger Road, will have up to 184 affordable housing units and office/clinic space for Public Health Madison & Dane County (PHMDC).
- **Building B**, to the west of building A, will include Fire Station 6 and up to 60 affordable housing units for seniors.

Phase two will focus on **building C**, which will be built on the current site of the South District Police Station. It will include up to 120 affordable housing units.

Phase one of the project is expected to start construction in early 2026. The entire project, including construction of building C and relocating the police station, should be finished by 2029 or 2030.



The Park Badger redevelopment was approved in December 2024.



Planning Division sketch of the Darbo Dream Center, to be built on the Salvation Army Community Center site

Darbo–Worthington–Starkweather Neighborhood Plan

The Darbo Dream Center was merely an idea decades ago from residents and area community groups wanting to create their own community center in the heart of the Darbo Neighborhood. The 2017 Darbo–Worthington–Starkweather (DWS) Neighborhood Plan brought the center idea forward and set the stage for a group of core partners to come together and put further structure to the community’s ideas. Those partners include Just Dane, Mentoring Positives, and the African Center for Community Development. Their collaborative efforts and fundraising led them to hire Amanda White Consulting in 2024 to lead a capital campaign and BrandNu Design and Ramaker Associates to design the center. The City purchased a property from the Salvation Army in 2024 for the site of the future center. The City will lease the building back to the Salvation Army for three years so that they can continue using the office space during center design and fundraising.

The future center will include uses for core partners like office space, a commercial kitchen, and basketball courts. The design team and core partners are continuing to work with Darbo residents to better understand what they would like the center to include. Through the DWS Neighborhood Plan and more recent engagement, residents have asked for uses like community meeting space,

community gardens, an urban farm, outdoor gathering space, basketball courts, affordable childcare, and community kitchen space. Fundraising will likely take several years. Partners hope to complete the Dream Center sometime in 2029.

Central Urban Service Area (CUSA) Amendments

The City received approval from the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC) to expand the CUSA. This means that sanitary sewer lines can be installed to serve new development. Planning staff worked with other City agencies to submit two proposed amendments to the CUSA. The CUSA amendments included 239 acres to the west of Marty Road on the west side of the city and 77 acres to the southwest of the Felland Road–Burke Road intersection on the east side of the city. Recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan and the Neighborhood Development Plans (NDPs) for those areas supported expanding the CUSA.

Land added to the CUSA in the Reiner NDP area is planned for housing. Land added to the CUSA in the High Point–Raymond NDP include development of a new neighborhood. The project includes 200 apartment units, 151 single-family homes, and an expansion of Elver Park. CUSA expansion along Raymond Road is planned for employment.

Development Review

The development review process guides and improves development proposals. Development Review and Plan Implementation staff review proposals from concept to construction. Staff reviewed over two hundred land use and land division applications for the third year in a row.

This section includes development statistics and a profile of major projects approved in 2024. There were 3,028 multifamily homes approved as part of Land Use Appli-

cations in 2024. This a decrease in the number of units approved in 2020, 2022 and 2023, when over 4,000 units were approved annually. However, it is similar to the number of units approved in 2021. The City approved 161 single family lots and lots for 134 two-family dwellings. In addition, preliminary approval was granted for 558 new single-family lots and lots for 222 two-family dwellings. Final approval and development is anticipated over several years.

Select Project Profiles

702-734

East Washington Avenue

A 15 story mixed-use building with 15,000 square feet of commercial space and 244 units.



306 North Brooks Street

A 15 story multifamily building with 189 units.



519-521 West Main Street

A four story mixed-use building with 850 square feet of commercial space and 30 units.



2150 Marty Road – Midpoint Meadows Plat

The Midpoint Meadows Plat will allow 151 single family homes, 49 duplexes, and multifamily homes to be constructed.



755 Braxton Place

Three five story multifamily buildings with a total of 344 total units.



2001 Londonderry Drive

A four story residential building with 105 units.

Development Review Statistics

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Residential Approvals								
Single family lots	119	1,011	163	111	143	76	250	161
Multifamily units	1,618	1,010	2,351	4,772	3,064	4,374	4,217	3,029
Commercial Retail Approvals								
Commercial/Retail Sq. Ft.	636,736	490,083	639,575	827,068	676,375	432,970	317,897	464,799
Hotel rooms	803	698	491	151	262	264	139	509
Proposals before Plan Commission								
Conditional Uses or CU Alterations	87	98	85	103	88	84	71	77
Zoning Changes	30	24	34	39	26	30	36	33
Plats and CSMs	18	28	19	23	30	40	62	53
Demolitions	43	51	43	58	47	52	39	55
Proposals before Urban Design Commission								
	102	84	90	103	72	72	79	69
Proposals before Landmarks Commission								
	57	62	64	38	46	32	29	25

Note: Some development figures from previous years have been updated. The numbers in this table represent the gross total. For example, the number of approved hotel rooms does not account for any hotel rooms that were demolished or converted to another use.

Historic Resources

While 2023 set the record for the most Certificates of Appropriateness issued by the Preservation Program, 2024 ended with the second most. A great deal of work and re-investment is happening in the city's historic districts and landmark sites. This helps to keep these places an active part of our evolving cityscape. One of the largest projects ever approved by the Landmarks Commission was the proposed infill of a large surface parking lot in the First Settlement local historic district. This was part of the larger proposed redevelopment of the Come Back In/Essen Haus site. The project secured a variance that allowed the new construction to serve as a bridge between the First Settlement and Third Lake Ridge local historic districts.

The Landmarks Commission accepted the Historic District Illustrated Design Guidelines that help property owners and contractors plan their projects. The Landmarks Commission also recommended approval of the Honorary Street Name Program and the new Historic Marker Program. Both programs will draw from the [Underrepresented Communities Historic Resources Survey](#). Staff has been working with the Division Equity Team to make plain language and accessibility edits to the City's website to make the Historic Preservation Program more user-friendly. In addition to its regular virtual meetings the Commission held an in-person special meeting to:

- Undertake training on preservation standards and general meeting processes
- Discuss direction on preservation policy

Historic Preservation Stats:

25 projects reviewed by Landmarks Commission, with **24** approvals

209 staff administrative approvals

80 reviews of proposed demolitions to determine historic value

1 Madison landmark nomination review

1 advisory recommendation to PC and UDC

- Discuss efforts for the 5-year check-in on the Madison Preservation Plan

This year the Landmarks Commission reviewed a proposed boundary amendment for the Wiedenbeck-Dobelin Warehouse, a process that will be complete in 2025 after the Certified Survey Map for the site is finalized.

Finally, staff worked on public education about historic preservation in Madison. The Community & Cultural Resources Planner joined the Preservation Planner to discuss how the City reviews alternative materials at the Wisconsin Local History & Preservation Conference. The Preservation Planner also gave a presentation at the National Alliance of Preservation Commission's FORUM conference, a presentation at the American Planning Association-Wisconsin Chapter conference, and a webinar for the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions.



The proposed redevelopment of the Come Back In/Essen Haus site includes infill construction at 134 150 S. Blair Street



The Madison Arts Commission held their 50th anniversary party during a free family night at the Madison Children’s Museum, with live performances, snacks, and hands on art demonstrations



Madison Arts Commission 50th Anniversary

The Madison Arts Commission (MAC) celebrated its 50th anniversary on January 8, 2025. For half a century, MAC has supported the arts in Madison and fostered a vibrant scene that reflects and enriches the city. MAC sponsored projects and special events throughout the year related to 50 years of supporting arts and culture in Madison. The culminating event was a free disco-themed family night at the Madison Children’s Museum on December 5, 2024.

The Artist at the Urban League Southwest Madison Employment Center

The Madison Arts Commission worked with an artist who goes by the name “The Artist” to reproduce his paintings outdoors. Three of his works were combined in a single design on aluminum panel. *I AM A MAN: The Sanitation Strike Pre-Stages, The Event, and Bloody Sunday: The March*, all depict important moments in civil rights history. The resulting large-scale mural wraps around the building and greets visitors to the Southwest Madison Employment Center.

Atwood Percent for Art Project

The City installed art along the multi-use path on Atwood Avenue as part of the Percent for Art Program. Medallion designs by Daniella Echeveria adorn the shared-use paths. The works ask users to “Leave Space When Passing,” “Take Care, Be Aware,” “Slow Down for Others,” and “Keep Our Paths Clean.” Atwood sidewalks host poems from former City Poet Laureate Angela Trudell Vasquez and former City Youth Poet Laureate Madeleine Bohn. Utility boxes at intersections feature works from Paleoelectronics (Chris Murphy) and Rachel Durfee.

Public Art at the Madison Senior Center

Two public art projects were installed at the Madison Senior Center. Sonia Valle painted a vibrant floral mural on the Senior Center’s terrace. Sonia worked with students to develop the mural, which is visible from the community and craft rooms. Three works by Rita Yanny were reproduced on doors in the courtyard. The works, *How One Lives Life, Beaded Hives, and Enough*, all celebrate the beauty of nature.



Adapted from three works by The Artist, a new mural greets visitors to the Southwest Madison Employment Center

New Poet Laureate

Madison inducted Steven Espada Dawson as the new Poet Laureate. He is a former Ruth Lilly Fellow and Wisconsin Institute for Creative Writing Fellow. He was an editor for the *Copper Nickel* and *Sycamore Review* literary journals. He has taught creative writing at universities, libraries, and prisons across the country. His poems are in *Best New Poets*, *Pushcart Prize*, and Sarabande’s *Another Last Call*.

New Youth Poet Laureate

The City of Madison started the Youth Poet Laureate Program in 2022. The honor recognizes youth under the age of twenty for their literary achievements. During their year of service, they give three public readings and include their poetry in the Poetry in Sidewalk program. They may also apply to be the National Youth Poet Laureate. On September 10, 2024 Justin Festge Russell (stage name Jexizis) was celebrated as the third Youth Poet Laureate. Justin is a local poet, Hip-Hop artist, and producer. He is a student and Hip-Hop & Urban Arts Scholar at UW–Madison, and a member of First Wave. He is pursuing a degree in education and education administration.

New Thurber Artist-in-Residence

MAC and the Bubbler at Madison Public Library launched the Thurber Park Artist Residency in 2019. The Artist-in-Residence has access to a rent-free studio space at Thurber Park for 11 months and receives a stipend. The 2024–2025 Resident is Jennifer Bastian, a photographer and interdisciplinary artist. She was a finalist for the Women’s Forward Fund Forward Art Prize in 2022. Her 2022 work, *I have missed you (Community Care is the Intimacy I Need)*, was included in the 2022 Wisconsin Biennial at the Museum of Wisconsin Art and given an Award of Merit from Wisconsin Visual Artists. Her current bodies of work focus on grief, love, self-discovery, and ritual.

Percent for Arts Program

The Percent for Art ordinance increases investment in public art. Capital projects exceeding \$5,000,000 commit 1% of their budget for art. Current Percent for Art projects are:

- **Parking Garage at the Village on Park:** MAC recommended Michael Ford’s design in 2023. It will be installed in 2025.

- **Madison Public Market:** MAC recommended several projects in 2023. Installation begins in Spring 2025, in time for the market to open in Summer 2025.
- **Metro Transit Maintenance Facility:** MAC recommended Jenie Gao’s design in 2023. Installation is expected in Summer 2026.
- Other ongoing Percent for Art projects relate to:
 - Bartillon Shelter
 - Imagination Center at Reindahl Park
 - State Street Campus Garage
 - Autumn Ridge Bike Path
 - CTH AB Interchange
 - East-West Bus Rapid Transit
 - City-County Building Remodel
 - West Side Public Works campus
 - Park/Badger Redevelopment
 - CDA Housing Redevelopment at the Triangle
 - Madison LakeWay (Lake Monona waterfront along John Nolen Drive)

Municipal Exhibition Space

Everything But the Dinosaur: Art With & About Youth
June 1, 2024 – May 30, 2025

This exhibition at the Madison Municipal Building features a range of mediums, but all the works celebrate youth. Featured artists are:

- Jennika Bastian
- Angela Johnson
- Meghan Johnson



Beaded Hives, one of three works by Rita Yanny reproduced on doors in the Madison Senior Center courtyard



Daniella Echeveria’s medallion designs promote safe and courteous use of our shared use paths

- Poornima Moorthy
- Roberto Torres Mata
- Sonia Valle

2024 Madison Arts Grants

MAC awarded \$101,000 to 57 organizations and individuals through the annual grants program. The program supports projects that enrich the cultural landscape of the City. A grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts supports the program.

Additionally, MAC regrants funds from the Room Tax Commission. In 2024 MAC supported: Dane Dances, Make Music Madison, Urban Community Arts Network, summer concerts, the State Street Experiment, Isthmus Newspaper (to improve their event calendar system), and Greater Madison Music City. Additional funding for Artists at Work supports wages for non-profit arts organizations to hire emerging professionals to enrich and diversify the pipeline of professional arts administrators.

Parks Alive Programming

A generous grant from the Evjue Foundation helped provide supplemental programming for Parks Alive events across the City. Circus artists from the Madison Circus Space ran interactive programming and artists from Café Coda’s CodaMobile performed live music at Parks Alive events.

Community Connections & Partnerships

2024 Neighborhood Grant Program

The Neighborhood Grant Program builds organizational capacity, beautifies public places, and creates community gathering places. The program received 18 applications in 2024. The Common Council awarded 9 grants totaling \$22,339.

The **Allied Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood** used its grant to redesign the organization's website to better promote itself and connect residents with each other and area services. The **West District Family Reading Project** is strengthening neighborhood kids' reading skills. **North Street Neighborhood** (formerly Emerson East and Eken Park Neighborhoods) distributed a community survey which was completed by 50 households. Many respondents expressed happiness about the area's 'good' neighbors, and many said they would like to improve pedestrian safety and slow down traffic.

The **Lake Edge Neighborhood** used its grant to install 224 native plants in the median along Lake Edge Boulevard to provide pollinator habitat. **Neighborhood House** is helping alleviate hunger and promote nutrition by installing a mobile produce cart and Little Free Pantries around the Greenbush Neighborhood. The **Northside Planning Council** gathered folks to share a meal and



Redesigned Allied Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood website

stories of success, project examples, pressing issues and promising practices.

Summit Woods Enrichment Committee is using its grant to host a variety of different social activities and conduct a community survey. The **Carpenter Ridgeway Neighborhood** repaired its Little Free Library and community kiosk in Carpenter Ridgeway Park and its welcome sign on Fair Oaks Avenue.

State Street Experiment

Busses were no longer using the 400–600 blocks of State Street after Metro Transit updated bus routes. This created an opportunity to make the blocks a more pedes-



trian-oriented place. In August 2023 the Common Council directed staff to prepare a pedestrian mall experiment for 2024. Planning staff coordinated with several City departments and held a public meeting in December 2023. Staff created a concept design with the theme of #FlockTo-State. The design included street painting using stencils by Maeve Makielski, and murals by Jessica Gutierrez, Sharon Bjyrd, Rahul Kamath, and Taylor McAda. New benches and planters in the street and flamingo sculptures were installed. Conversations with State Street businesses helped determine pedestrian mall hours.

On April 21st over 600 volunteers helped paint the three blocks of State Street with creative stencils and artist-designed murals. This event added bold splashes of color to the street and brought the community together (see the front and back covers for photos). Concrete benches and planters were added in the following weeks. There was a ceremonial ribbon tying event on May 8th, signifying the street was closed to motor vehicles. Madison's Central Business Improvement District held more than 40 events in the street over the summer and fall. The experiment ended in late October. Planning staff drafted a report about the outcomes and lessons learned from the experiment.

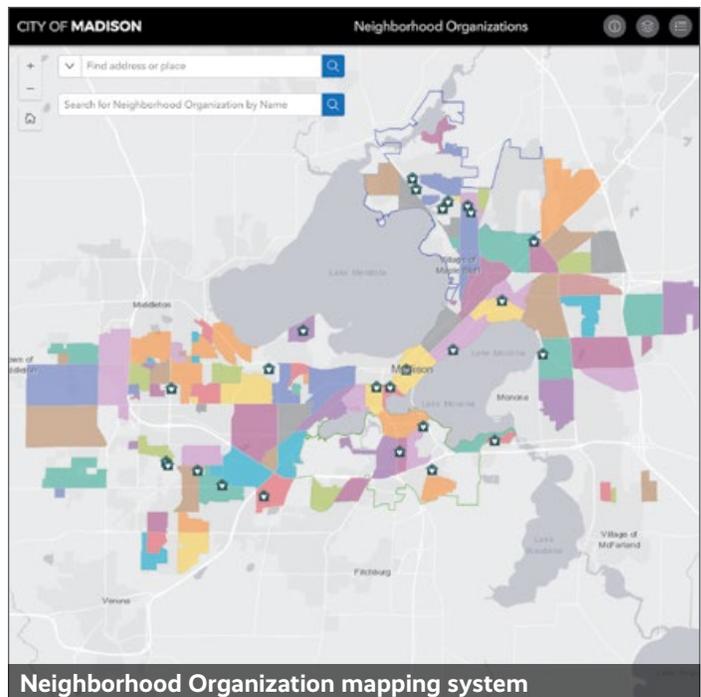
Neighborhood Organization Data & Mapping

The Planning Division updated the system for storage, maintenance, and online display of Madison's Neighborhood Organization data. The old system stored neighborhood profile information on an old desktop computer. Migrating the data to an interactive map allows the Division to make updates more efficiently and enables better online mapping of neighborhoods for the public. The new map added other features, like a search box that allows users to search by organization name.

Transportation

WisDOT Interstate 39–90–94 Study

Planning Division staff, the City Transportation Department, and Engineering Division staff continued to coordinate with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) on its Interstate 39–90–94 study. City staff looked to ensure that City interests are accounted for as WisDOT looks to expand the Interstate from the Beltline to Wisconsin Dells. Planning staff attended a WisDOT



public meeting to answer questions on the City's plans relating to the Interstate and to hear public testimony and feedback. Division staff also contributed to comments compiled by the City Transportation Department for submittal to WisDOT. WisDOT secured approval of the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision in December. The WisDOT documentation addresses some of the City's submitted comments.

Highway 51 Study

Planning Division staff collaborated with the City's Department of Transportation and WisDOT on the State's Highway 51 studies throughout 2024. WisDOT selected its preferred alternative for the North study (north of Highway 30), which reflected many of the City's shared concerns. New intersection designs generally reflect existing conditions, but often add missing pedestrian and bike crossings critical for neighborhoods along the corridor. Additionally, a shared use path is planned for the east side of the highway, with dedicated bike and pedestrian bridges over East Washington Avenue and Highway 51 (at Highway 30 linking to the Marshview and Hiestand paths).

The South study (south of Highway 30) is currently underway, and staff have been equally active in that process. Staff will be exploring highway alternatives to better meet the needs of residents living nearby in conjunction with the Southeast Area Plan.

What is the Greater Madison MPO?

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are federally required to lead transportation planning in urban areas with more than 50,000 people. The Greater Madison MPO does this for our region, working with 36 local communities.

The MPO distributes federal funds to projects that improve roads, public transit, and infrastructure for walking, biking, and rolling—like sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails. These projects support sustainable growth, economic development, and environmental protection while helping build vibrant, connected communities.

The MPO operates under the Planning Division and receives administrative, technology, and HR support from the City. It works closely with Planning, Engineering, and Transportation staff to ensure transportation projects match local development goals and improve how people travel in the region.



Construction of the Autumn Ridge Path overpass crossing STH 30

Project Spotlight: Autumn Ridge Path

The MPO provided over \$2 million in federal funding through the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) – Urban program to help build Madison’s new Autumn Ridge Path.

Completed in 2024, the path runs through Hiestand Park, along Stein Avenue, crosses STH 30 with a new overpass, and connects to Commercial Avenue near Ziegler Road and Sycamore Park. This new route gives pedestrians and

cyclists a safer, more comfortable way to travel between Madison’s east side and downtown.

Supporting Alternatives to Driving Alone with RoundTrip

The MPO’s free RoundTrip program helps Dane County commuters and employers find affordable and sustainable transportation options. These include biking, public transit, carpooling, vanpooling, and walking or rolling. The program aims to reduce traffic congestion, cut transportation costs, and improve air quality while promoting healthier communities.

RoundTrip made notable progress in 2024:

- **Membership Growth:** RoundTrip added 683 new members, doubling its membership. This makes it easier for people to find carpool, bikepool, and vanpool matches.
- **Sustainability Impact:** RoundTrip members logged over 16,000 trips, reducing car travel by 95,000 miles. These efforts prevented more than 35 tons of CO₂ emissions—the equivalent of the carbon absorbed by 35 acres of U.S. forests in one year.

Supporting Metro Transit’s Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) System

Metro Transit launched its new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in 2024—bringing faster, more reliable public transportation to the region. The MPO supported the rollout by:

- Distributing Fast Fare cards at local libraries
- Assisting riders as BRT Ambassadors to help people navigate the new system

BRT provides quicker travel times and better connections to jobs, schools, and services—making travel more convenient.

Advancing Regional Transportation Planning

The MPO worked with partners to complete several plans to help enhance mobility, safety, and sustainability:

Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Plan

Adopted in March 2024, this plan helps local governments prepare for the increasing use of electric vehicles, expected to make up 31% of Wisconsin’s fleet by 2050.



The MPO promotes their RoundTrip program during Madison Bike Week

The plan was key to helping Dane County secure \$13.2 million in federal funding to install EV charging stations. The focus is on rural areas, transportation hubs, and apartment complexes where charging at home isn't always possible.

Regional Safety Action Plan

The MPO is working toward a goal of zero traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2040. Adopted in July 2024, the Regional Safety Action Plan uses data to identify high-risk areas, recommend infrastructure improvements, and guide safety-focused outreach and policies.

This plan helped the MPO secure \$1 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program. The funding will support Dane County and four local communities in developing targeted safety plans that move the region closer to eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan

Adopted in November 2024, the 2024–2028 Coordinated Public Transit–Human Services Transportation Plan focuses on improving transportation options for older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income residents. The plan identifies service gaps and recommends solutions to help more people reach jobs, healthcare, and essential services.

Transit Development Plan (TDP)

The MPO worked with Metro Transit and other partners to develop the TDP throughout 2024. This five-year plan aims to improve transit service, accessibility, and efficiency to meet the needs of the region's growing population.

Adoption is expected in early 2025. Final recommendations will be completed later in the year to guide future improvements and ensure the transit system keeps up with the community's changing needs.



Five cities in Dane County adopted proclamations or resolutions in support of National Week Without Driving

National Week Without Driving Comes to Dane County

The MPO joined the National Week Without Driving from October 1–6, raising awareness of the challenges faced by non-drivers. The initiative encouraged elected officials, transportation professionals, and advocates to experience life without driving, highlighting transportation barriers related to cost, disability, age, and other factors.

To kick off the week, the MPO hosted a bus ride with representatives from:

- Fitchburg, Madison, Middleton, Sun Prairie, and Verona
- The Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired
- Access to Independence
- Dane Alliance for Rational Transportation (DART)
- Sierra Club
- Wisconsin Bike Fed.

The ride highlighted the accessibility features of Metro Transit’s BRT Route A and emphasized the importance of providing fair and accessible transportation for all community members.

Enhancing Mobility: NewBridge Madison’s Section 5310 Vehicle

The MPO manages the Section 5310 program, which provides federal funding to help older adults and people with disabilities when regular transportation options don’t meet their needs.

In September 2024, NewBridge Madison, a nonprofit serving older adults, launched its first Section 5310-funded vehicle. The van, featuring the MPO’s logo, helps older adults stay connected to community services and activities.



NewBridge Madison’s new, Section 5310 funded vehicle



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

- Plan Commission
- Urban Design Commission
- Landmarks Commission
- Madison Arts Commission

- Downtown Coordinating Committee
- Joint Campus Area Committee
- Greater Madison MPO Policy Board
- Greater Madison MPO Technical Coordinating Committee