

City of Madison Sustainability Plan **Executive Summary**



Executive Summary

The Madison Sustainability Plan provides a path to make our community more environmentally sustainable and resilient for current and future Madisonians. A healthy environment is essential to our wellbeing, economy, and quality of life.

Madison is Wisconsin's fastest-growing city. Sustainability must be at the heart of how we grow and adapt to ensure all Madisonians can thrive now and in the future. We must add housing, transportation, and other amenities in ways that cut carbon pollution, keep our air and water clean, and ensure our lands and waters are healthy for both people and nature.

Like many communities across the U.S. and the globe, Madison is already feeling the impacts of climate

change, legacy pollution, and new environmental challenges. Recent decades were Wisconsin's warmest and wettest on record, and we're experiencing more severe storms, flooding, and hazardous air pollution. We must responsibly manage and clean up hazardous materials, chemicals and other pollutants that could impact our water, soil, and air. These climate and environmental hazards are threat multipliers that amplify existing health, social, and economic inequities. The risks and impacts of these hazards are not equally or fairly distributed across people and communities.

This Sustainability Plan is a continuation of City of Madison's dedication and ongoing efforts to provide a healthy, safe, and thriving environment. The City's first formal sustainability plan was released in 2004, and the most recent plan was adopted in 2011. This plan builds on this legacy and the environmental sustainability and climate actions included in the many current City plans and initiatives. All plans and reports referenced in this plan are listed in Appendix B. It is the result of over three years of work led by the Sustainable Madison Committee and the City's Sustainability and Resilience Program and reflects input from City staff, local experts and partners, and the Madison community. Community engagement included an online survey, pop-up events, focus groups, a social media campaign, and meetings with community groups. More than 2,200 people shared their vision and priorities for a more sustainable Madison.

The 24 goals in this Sustainability Plan advance these priorities. They are organized into eight elements of a sustainable city. Each element includes a set of goals, actions, and metrics to help track our progress. Goals and actions were developed with four guiding values – equity, justice, education, and public health – to ensure our work to advance sustainability provides multiple benefits to our community. Appendix A shows all the goals and actions in a single table, and they are summarized on the following pages.



Elements of the Sustainability Plan

1) Quality, Affordable Housing

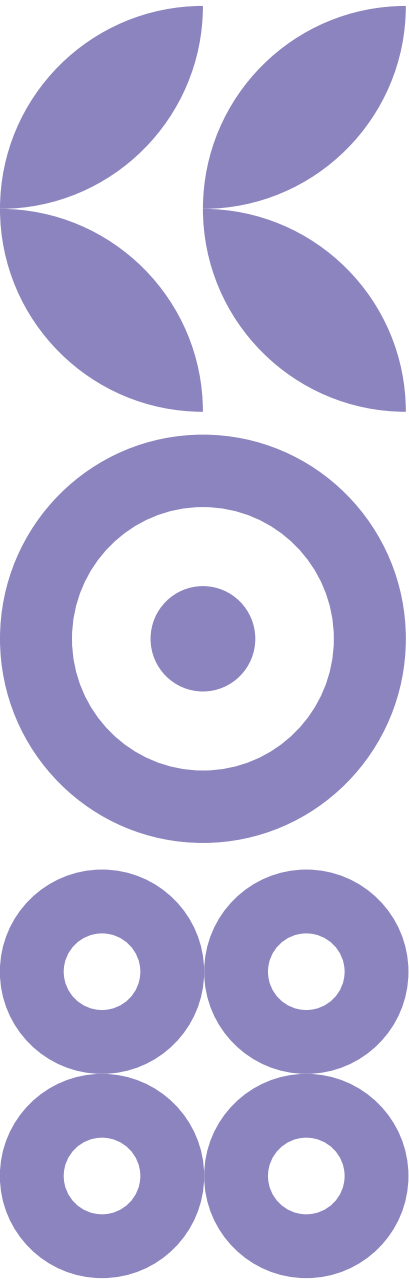
All members of our community deserve access to healthy, sustainable, and affordable housing. We need to build new residential buildings, convert existing buildings into residential spaces through adaptive reuse, and improve the quality of our existing housing. Quality, Affordable Housing goals aim to increase the quantity and condition of housing for all Madisonians with a focus on housing for people with low income.

2) Resilient City Design & Infrastructure

Madison's built environment – the design and spatial arrangement of our buildings, streets, parks, and green spaces – shapes our lives. The City is working to make sure our roads, stormwater systems, buildings, and other community assets are climate-friendly—meaning they both minimize climate pollution and help protect against flooding, heat waves, and poor air quality. These goals aim to help our city grow in ways that enhance the health and wellbeing of our community and our environment while improving our resilience to the impacts of climate change.

3) Renewable Energy & Decarbonization

How we produce and use energy has big impacts on our environment and our health. Transitioning to clean, renewable energy to power buildings and vehicles and reducing energy waste are critical strategies for reducing climate pollution. Renewable Energy and Decarbonization goals aim to cut greenhouse gas emissions by supporting renewable energy, efficient buildings, and clean transportation.



4) Sustainable Transportation

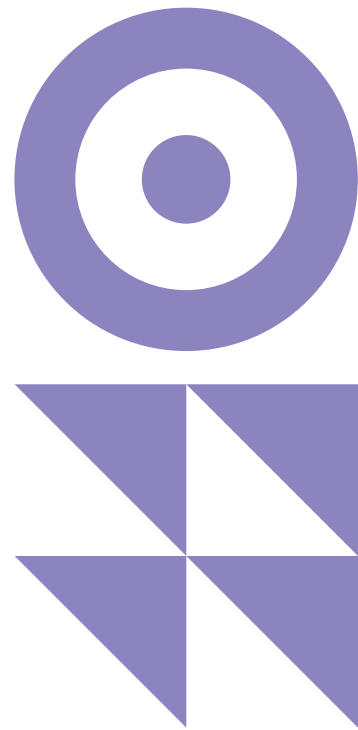
Transportation is essential to our daily lives. To meet the needs of our growing community, the City is building a sustainable transportation system while improving safety and equity. This includes growing Madison’s already extensive pedestrian and bike path network and rolling out Madison Metro’s new, all-electric bus rapid transit (BRT) system. Sustainable Transportation goals aim to expand access to public transit and active transportation, including walking, biking, and rolling.

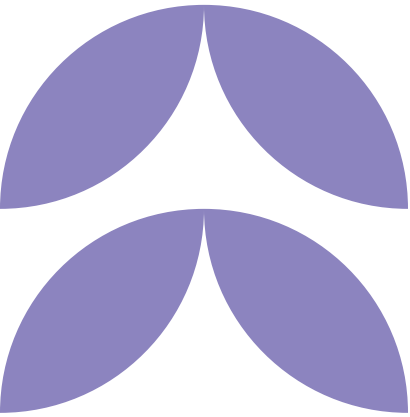
5) Clean, Abundant Water

Water is a defining feature of Madison. Five lakes - Mendota, Monona, Waubesa, Kegonsa, and Wingra - shape our city and offer ample opportunities for Madisonians to enjoy the outdoors. The City strives to be a good steward of water resources, to protect and improve water quality, support water conservation, and create welcoming public spaces along the waterfront. Clean, Abundant Water goals aim to create a water system that protects community health, improves water quality, and advances climate resilience.

6) Zero Waste

Many products and materials are only used once before they end up in a landfill. A circular economy aims to change this system by keeping materials and products in use for as long as possible. The City is working with partners across our region to help grow a circular economy, support recycling, invest in business and research, and deliver programs to end food waste. The Zero Waste goal aims to build a local circular economy and reduce the amount of materials Madison sends to the landfill.





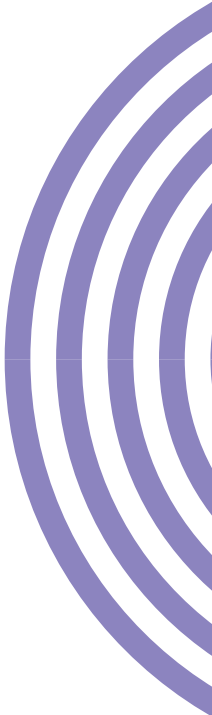
7) Healthy Ecosystems

Madison's parks, open space, and other urban green areas are essential parts of our community's fabric. They are places where people can enjoy the outdoors and where plants and animals thrive. Our urban ecosystems also provide clean air and water, air temperature regulation, carbon sequestration, noise reduction, and stormwater management. These goals aim to preserve our extensive system of natural areas, implement more sustainable methods of land management, and expand our urban tree canopy.

8) Vibrant, Green Economy

A vibrant local economy means good jobs, thriving businesses, and resilient community assets for all Madisonians. Growing Madison's green economy means increasing the number of businesses and jobs that work to improve the environment and address climate change. Vibrant, Green Economy goals aim to grow Madison's green economy by driving the market for sustainable goods and services, supporting local businesses, and developing a green workforce.

Creating this plan is only one step toward making Madison a more sustainable and resilient community. It has been crafted to include actions to cut climate pollution, prepare for and minimize the impacts of climate change, improve environmental quality, and ensure the health and wellbeing of all Madisonians. Successful implementation will require ongoing leadership, collaboration, and participation of everyone in our community. This plan is a reflection of our current priorities and available solutions. It will need to be a living document, adaptive to new technologies and data, responsive to changing circumstances, and grounded in partnership. *Our community must travel this path together.*





**CITY OF MADISON
SUSTAINABILITY**

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