Healthy Ecosystems

Madison's parks, open space, and other urban green areas are important parts of our community's fabric. They are places where people can enjoy the outdoors and where plants and animals thrive. Our urban ecosystems help clean our air and water, regulate air temperature, store carbon, reduce noise, and prevent flooding. Protecting and enhancing our urban ecosystems is good for the health and wellbeing of our environment and our community.

The Green and Resilient section of the City's Comprehensive Plan details the strategies the City is pursuing to preserve our significant natural features and offers spaces for recreation and bringing residents together. The City of Madison Parks Division, Engineering Division, and Forestry section of the Streets Division work together to care for public lands in our community. The Parks Division manages over 270 parks and is responsible for over 6,000 acres of public land. 95% of Madisonians live within a 10-minute walk of a park. Madison ranks number 13 nationally in the Trust For Public Land's ParkScore rating system. This system compares the U.S.'s most populous cities' parks according to equity, access, money spent, and size. The City's Parks and Open Space Plan guides the growth, management, and programming for Madison's parks.

The Engineering Division oversees the stormwater management system. This system has more than 1,500 acres of stormwater land, mostly in the form of ponds and greenways. The main goal for the stormwater system is to efficiently carry, store, or soak up stormwater to prevent flooding. The Engineering Division works to establish native plants and pollinator habitat on both its stormwater greenways and other public lands such as bike paths and street terraces.

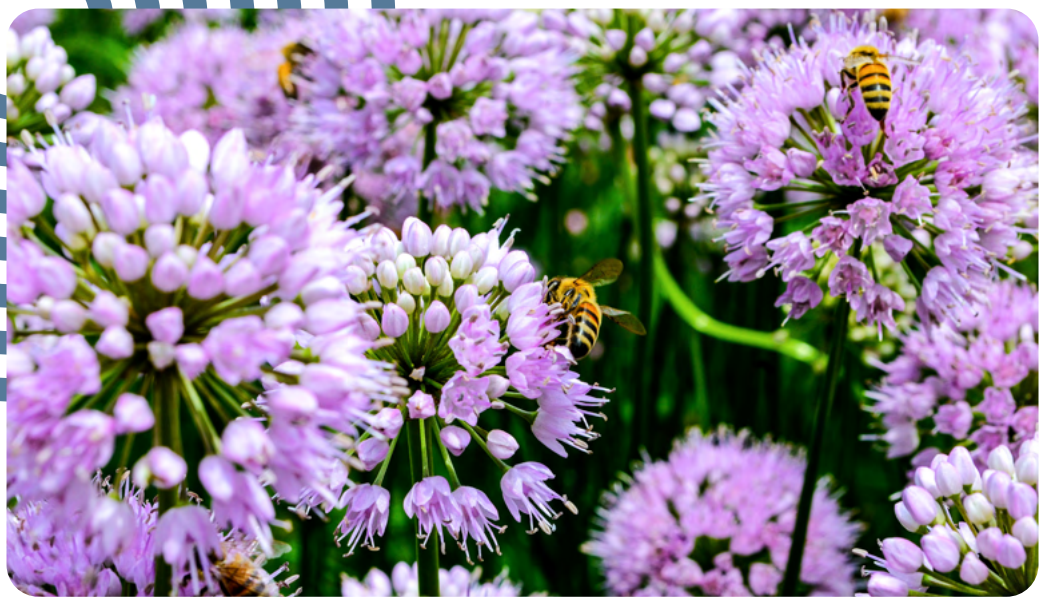
The Forestry Section of the Streets Division plants and cares for almost 100,000 trees along more than 700 miles of Madison's streets. The Urban Forestry Task Force Report sets goals and makes recommendations for planning, design, outreach, education, tree canopy coverage, operations, and public lands.

Public lands are only part of the picture. The majority of Madison's landscape is owned and cared for by individuals, businesses, and other public entities like the University of Wisconsin and Dane County. Therefore, protecting, restoring, and managing our urban ecosystems is a community effort. Olbrich Botanical Garden, City libraries, and the Engineering Division provide education and resources, like the Seed Library, to help grow and sustain native ecosystems, vegetation, and pollinator habitat on private lands, which benefits our whole community.

The following goals and actions aim to preserve our system of natural areas, use more sustainable methods of land management, and expand our urban tree canopy.

Greenways and Prairie Plantings

The City of Madison Stormwater Utility is responsible for designing, building, operating and maintaining the City's stormwater system. One part of this system is greenways. A greenway is a corridor of protected open space that is maintained for stormwater management. Greenways are planted with native seeds to provide habitat for pollinators and other animals, improve water quality, and minimize the potential for flooding.



Air Quality Monitoring Project

The City of Madison is leading a new collaborative project to install a citywide network of air quality sensors to help understand air pollution in our community. These sensors will measure particulate matter pollution—tiny pieces of dust, dirt, and other materials in the air that can cause heart and breathing problems. These sensors will provide real-time air quality information and help inform new strategies to reduce pollution and protect community health.

Healthy Ecosystems | Goals & Actions	
GOAL 17	**Preserve and restore urban natural areas, with a focus on providing equitable access for residents.**
METRICS	Area of natural areas protected and restored Number of plants and pounds of seed distributed Number of outreach events, classes, tours held and Number of attendees
ACTION 17.1	Prioritize preservation and restoration of urban natural areas in City planning, zoning, and management policies and practices.
ACTION 17.2	Jointly plan for preservation of open spaces and woodlands with neighboring communities, Dane County, and regional planning bodies.
ACTION 17.3	Link parks, greenways, multi-use paths and open spaces to enhance environmental corridors and expand trail recreation, physical activity, and nature study opportunities.
ACTION 17.4	Secure resources, including financial and volunteer, to complete and implement habitat management plans for Conservation Parks, natural areas within parks, and greenways.
ACTION 17.5	Prioritize native habitat on new stormwater facilities and other City property where possible to provide essential wetland habitat, water quality, and infiltration services.

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Healthy Ecosystems | Goals & Actions	
ACTION 17.6	Adjust management practices within City parklands, golf courses and greenways to support and promote species diversity and ecosystem services.
ACTION 17.7	Increase access to native plants, pollinator-friendly plants and curated plant collections through garden sales at Olbrich Botanical Gardens and donations of pollinator plants to residents through collaboration with Little Libraries throughout the City of Madison.
ACTION 17.8	Increase outreach activities and events for residents to learn about environmentally impactful land management practices that can be utilized on private property and gardens.
GOAL 18	**Implement Integrated Pest Management practices to minimize pesticide use for all City activities and City-owned properties.**
METRICS	Metrics to be defined after IPM Task Force Report complete
ACTION 18.1	Finalize, adopt, and implement recommendations from Madison's Integrated Pest Management Task Force for all City activities.

Healthy Ecosystems | Goals & Actions	
GOAL 19	**Equitably expand urban tree canopy coverage from 23% in 2024 to 40% by 2080.**
METRICS	Percentage of urban tree canopy coverage
ACTION 19.1	Prioritize and implement recommendations from the Urban Forestry Task Force Report in collaboration with neighborhood groups, with particular attention paid to improving canopy coverage on private property in neighborhoods currently lacking canopy cover.
ACTION 19.2	Produce a biennial report tracking progress on the Urban Forestry Task Force recommendations, evaluating their success and prioritizing next steps.