

TO: Common Council

FROM: Nan Fey, Current Member and Former Chair, Madison Food Policy Council

RE: Farmland Lease Template, Legistar #89698, Agenda Item #68

DATE: October 7, 2025

This Updated Master Lease Template for farming on city-owned lands is a response to a request by Mayor Rhodes-Conway for revisions to reflect current best practices and comply with state statutes. A Work Group of the Madison Food Policy Council conducted extensive research and discussions with local experts before making recommendations to City Staff who drafted the revisions. The Updated Lease clarifies expectations of the parties while maintaining flexibility to respond to conditions and future use of each property and respecting the needs of farmers and the land being cultivated. City Staff unfamiliar with technical issues that may arise during negotiations with farmers can call upon the expertise of Dane County Land & Water Department Staff who administer the statutory provisions and programs.

All referral boards and commissions have unanimously recommended Approval without any changes to the document. I regret that I am unable to attend your meeting, but Staff will be present and able to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your attention and your support.