

Transportation Chapter
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Transportation and smart land use planning are key to improving Dane County's sustainability. From the quality of our lakes, to Ozone Action days, to Madison's carbon footprint, our mobility choices affect every aspect of sustainability in our region. A robust, heavily-used alternative transportation system dramatically increases Madison's vitality, health, and quality of life.

In Dane County, Transportation is the largest contributor to global warming, contributing over 30% of global warming emissions, mostly from single-occupancy trips. Prioritizing all transportation equally and supporting the growth of alternative transportation choices, will significantly decrease global warming emissions and improve the health of our region.

Now is the time to begin more equal prioritization of our transportation system. In April 2010, Ray LaHood, US Department of Transportation Secretary made this historical declaration:

"Today, I want to announce a sea change. People across America who value bicycling should have a voice when it comes to transportation planning. This is the *end* of favoring motorized transportation at the expense of non-motorized. ... We think livability means giving folks the flexibility to choose their own mobility."

Madison has the strategic plans and many of the systems in place to lead the nation's transition to a more balanced transportation future. The City should seize this moment and lead us toward a smarter, more economical, sustainable transportation system.

Vision for Madison's Sustainable Transportation System

To lead the nation in the promotion and provision of alternatives to driving alone and the reduction of mobile-source emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants. By boasting an unusually high rate of per capita bus ridership for its size, the City will improve on its transit use with the addition of commuter rail and express bus service to outlying communities. This transit spine will be the basis for an increasingly dense and walkable system of urban centers connected by a robust and well-used system of bike paths, lanes, and bikable streets. The Dane County region will be recognized as the North American Bike Capital. With the addition of high speed passenger rail to the Twin Cities, Milwaukee, and Chicago, Madison will be well connected to other major parts of the region and its economy continues to show it. Madison's Sustainable Transportation System will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions while offering convenient, efficient, comfortable, and safe alternative transportation choices for anyone who lives or works in the City.

5 Barriers that affect this vision:

- Lack of a RTA recommended transit plan
- No dedicated city or county alternative transportation funding source
- State vanpool funding has not been increased to meet demand. No option to purchase additional vanpool vehicles are available.
- Minimal walkability in newer, large employment areas. There is no agreed plan or procedures for making large scale improvements in land use and mixed use development.
- No comprehensive bike plan for Madison or Dane County. No clear path for specific improvements to bike infrastructure and neighborhood connection improvements.

Issues that Threaten this vision:

- Lack of systematic, sustainable funding to support alternatives to driving alone
- Land use that focuses on practices that create urban sprawl
- Lack of interest in sharing transportation and participating in the “public” part of transportation
- Rail has to meet stricter standards for safety than automobiles
- Low voter turnout rate among transit-dependent population
- Parking is generally free through Dane County except in certain areas of the downtown area.
- The federal gas tax is the source of federal funding for all types of transportation. Demand for road and transit funding continues to increase while gas supplies and availability decrease, creating a larger gap in federal transportation dollars.

Opportunities that support the vision:

- Climate Change necessitates the need for a decrease in emission-producing activities.
- Rising price of gas greatly spurs demand for transportation options.
- Public transit injury and crash rates are dramatically lower than automobile injury and crash rates, proving the claim that transit is safer than the car.
- The geographic nature of the Isthmus encourages biking, walking, and transit, while discouraging car use.
- Madison has very high population density and walkable, transit-oriented neighborhoods for a city its size.
- Growing awareness of climate change and emission-related health threats.
- The University heavily supports transportation options through financial subsidy, encouragement, and high-density, transit-oriented land use.
- Economic benefits of Transit Oriented Development
- Zoning plan rewrite offers more flexibility for transit oriented development and eases minimum parking requirements.
- Transportation options are supported by the Madison Mayor and County Executive
- Creation of a Regional Transit Authority
- Creation of a federally funded high speed rail program

Goal 1: Implement Existing City, County and Regional Alternative Transportation Plans.

We are fortunate that many citizens, elected officials, and city employees have worked hard to write numerous sustainable transportation plans for the City of Madison. Working towards implementing the plans that already exist will vault our city forward in achieving our vision for a truly sustainable transportation system.

Strong existing plans include:

- Regional Transit Plan (MPO)
- Transport 2020
- UW Long Range Transportation Plan
- High Speed Rail Environmental Impact Statement
- 2000 Dane County Bike Plan
- Madison Platinum Bike Report
- Rails to Trail Case Study for Dane County
- Long Range Metro Transit Planning Committee Report
- WISDOT Smart Growth Transportation Guide
- Transportation Chapter of the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan

The City should focus on identifying the actions necessary to implement these plans. The following recommendations suggest important initial measures that should be initiated in order to make progress on plan implementation.

Recommendations:

- Identify “owners” of current transportation plans
- Establish a progress reporting system for transportation plans that “owners” are responsible for implementing
- Create a realistic timeline, needs assessment, and process for implementation of each plan
- Create an overall funding strategy for each transportation plan

Goal 2: Expand sustainable transportation choices so that mobility without a car is a realistic and viable option for anyone living within the City of Madison.

While Madison has a strong bus and bike system for a city of our size, we are far from creating a sustainable transportation system. For example, while only 3% of commute trips are made by bike, Copenhagen has built a sustainable bicycle and transportation system that now supports an incredible 40% of commute trips made by bike.

Sub-goal 1: Expand Madison Metro to encourage 15% of trips made by bus by 2025.

Recommendations:

- Expand Madison Metro service to offer 24-hour service 7 days a week.
- Establish Bus-Rapid Transit (BRT) and Metro express service
- Complete negotiations for acquiring Madison Google Transit.

Sub-goal 2: Expand Madison’s bicycle system to encourage 20% of trips made by bike by 2025.

Recommendations:

- Allocate more Traffic Engineering, Engineering, and Planning staff time to bicycle infrastructure.
- Work with the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin to implement the “2020 Madison Bike Map”

Sub-goal 3: Bring passenger rail service to Madison.

Recommendations:

- Implement Transport 2020 to bring both commuter rail and BRT to Madison.

Sub-goal 4: Ensure that new developments prioritize all transportation choices equally.

Recommendations:

- Create policies and procedures that require all new developments include a Transportation Demand Management Plan that prioritizes all transportation modes.
- Build sustainable transportation funding options into the beginning stages of new development plans.

Sub-goal 5: Create a comfortable and convenient downtown center for sustainable travel throughout the city and region.

Recommendations:

- Create a downtown municipal multi-modal transit and bike station.

Sub-goal 6: Support innovative transportation solutions

Recommendations:

- Provide free parking spaces to Community Car vehicles in downtown parking ramps.
- Explore the feasibility of a downtown bicycle commuter station.
- Support the growth of alternative vehicles and fuel options.

Goal 3: Increase sustainable transportation funding and incentive programs.

The greatest barrier to implementing our sustainable transportation plans is the current lack of funding options. The current level of staff dedicated to alternative transportation projects is meager. This lack of funding and human resources has created significant barriers for sustainable transportation growth.

Sub-goal 1: Prioritize all transportation options equally.

Recommendations:

- Reallocate highway and road spending to support alternative transportation.
- **Dedicate more staff time and resources across the city to support alternative transportation.**
- **Increase Engineering staff dedicated to bicycle projects. Add at a minimum 1 full-time position under Tony Fernandez.**

Sub-goal 2: Seek innovative, new funding opportunities.

Recommendations:

- Increase sales tax by .5% to support RTA funding.
- Study other cities and regions across the nation and the world to learn how other communities fund their transportation systems.

Sub-goal 3: Create incentive programs for businesses that encourages employee parking use reduction.

Recommendations:

Goal 4: Establish uniform, consistent evaluation methods for understanding sustainable transportation usage and goal achievement.

How can we grow a strong alternative transportation system without fully understanding the progress we have made? It is critical for the city to invest time and resources in creating a standard evaluation system to identify mode-share and other important usage patterns across all transportation options. **Understanding mode share, will allow the City to set realistic mode share and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) goals to work towards.** Setting these goals is critical to achieving success.

Sub-goal 1: Understand current mode share and VMT within Madison.

Recommendations:

- Create a city-wide transportation evaluation plan that establishes methodology and standards for tracking mode-share, VMT and other important transportation data.

Sub-goal 2: Using the transportation evaluation plan data, create goals and targets for increasing alternative transportation use.

Recommendations:

- Establish reduction targets for VMT.
- Establish reduction targets for global warming emissions and particulates.
- Establish mode-share goals for alternative transportation choices.

Goal 5: Fully maximize current alternative transportation infrastructure by implementing TDM marketing strategies.

The city is currently implementing very few strategies for marketing our current sustainable transportation options. Other cities across the country have experienced great success in increasing their citizens alternative transportation use, simply by prioritizing the marketing of their sustainable transportation resources. The City of Portland, OR established a Smart Trips program that used City funding to support an individualized green transportation marketing campaign. **They've experienced huge success in increasing their transportation usage by XX%**

For its size, Madison currently has strong sustainable transportation choices. If the city places a higher priority on marketing these options, many more people will choose to leave their cars at home.

Sub-goal 1: Fund a Smart Trips individualized marketing program

Recommendations:

- Research Portland, OR success model.
- Hire an outside consultant, experienced in marketing transportation, to create the City program and offer guidance on the staffing needs.

Sub-goal 2: Fund a City Sustainability Marketing staff position to market all of the city's sustainability opportunities to individuals, businesses, and organizations.

Recommendations:

- This position would report to the Sustainability Director and would be responsible for marketing sustainability options and the City's investment in sustainability.

Sub-goal 3: Launch a city-wide alternative transportation marketing campaign.

Goal 6: Foster better communication between city transportation departments and agencies.

There is a definite lack of communication between the City's Planning, Engineering, and Traffic Engineering Departments. This disconnect has greatly slowed the progress of alternative transportation growth throughout the city.

Sub-goal 1: Mandate quarterly transportation meetings for all department heads related to transportation, in addition to outside agencies that support sustainable transportation growth.

Sub-goal 2: Put planning, engineering, and traffic engineering offices in the same building in as close proximity as possible.

Sub-goal 3: Create a new overarching staff position that is a communication liaison between all 3 departments.