

Term Definitions

Term	Definition	Source (if not City of Madison)
Activity center and Activity node	An intensively developed area that is the visual and/or functional center of neighborhood(s) or a district. Activity centers are typically comprised of high intensity land uses including: residential, commercial, employment, civic, institutional, parks and open space.	
Affordable Housing Fund	A program to provide loans and grants to for-profit and non-profit housing developers for the land or building purchase, construction, and other costs necessary for the creation of new affordable rental and owner-occupied housing.	
Autonomous vehicles	A car that can drive itself using various in-vehicle technologies and sensors.	Gartner
Biodiversity	The variety of life in a particular habitat, including plants, trees, and animals.	Oxford Dictionaries
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)	A high-capacity bus system with features that are similar to a light rail system, such as frequent service, dedicated bus lanes, off-board fare collection, fewer stops, and traffic signal priority.	Institute for Transportation and Development Policy
Capital and operating costs	Capital costs are the expenses associated with purchasing assets, such as land, buildings, construction, and equipment. Operating costs are expenses associated with the maintenance and administration of a business on a day-to-day basis.	Investopedia
Capital budgeting	A plan for what assets (such as land, buildings, construction, and equipment) will be purchased over a year or more time.	
City expansion areas	Portions of the city that are expected to have future development, including housing, businesses, and more.	
City fees	Costs to be paid by users of City services, such as building permits, development review fees, and parkland dedication fees.	
City Home Rehabilitation Loans	Financial incentives to invest in housing units in need of rehabilitation, resulting in an improved housing stock.	
Competitive advantage	When a city, business, or other entity is able to produce a good or service at a lower price or in a more desirable fashion for customers.	Investopedia
Complete neighborhoods	A neighborhood where a mix of residential and non-residential buildings are in close proximity to each other with multiple transportation options. This enables community members to reach destinations needed for daily living (like grocery stores, schools, banks, and more) quickly, conveniently, and safely.	
Connected vehicle	A car or other vehicle that communicates with the internet, infrastructure, and/or other vehicles. This can allow a car to estimate the cost of a trip, be alerted to upcoming road accidents, and many other activities.	Center for Advanced Automotive Technology
Edge development (or "greenfield" development)	Development of vacant, agricultural, or forested land that has not been previously developed (often rural land).	
Equitable Hiring Initiative	A checklist and guide to ensure each hiring decision for the City of Madison is as equitable as possible.	
Equity review	A series of questions to ask to ensure that the impact on all community members are being considered when making decisions.	
Gray water	Wastewater gathered from sinks, bathtubs, and washing machines (but not wastewater from toilets).	APA, A Planners Dictionary
Green infrastructure	A cost-effective, resilient approach to managing wet weather impacts that provides many community benefits.	APA, A Planners Dictionary
Green roofs	A roof covered with soil (or other growing media) and vegetation that enables rainfall infiltration and evaporation of stored water.	EPA

Healthy Retail Access Program	A program created by the City to accomplish the following goals: increase the availability of healthy food, improve access to existing grocery retailers, provide new affordable grocery distribution options, assist in marketing healthy food, and plan for new healthy retail.	
Historic district	An area that has important historical properties and buildings, including landmarks, that contribute to the character of city and are, therefore, protected.	APA, A Planners Dictionary
Historic Preservation Plan	A document with methods to protect important historical assets.	
Infill	Development of vacant or underused lots that are surrounded by developed areas.	
Living wage	A wage that is high enough to maintain a normal standard of living.	Oxford Dictionaries
Master Plan for City Facilities	A document stating goals and actions to maintain and update City buildings and infrastructure.	
Natural soil amendments	Substances used to improve the physical nature of soil by adding nutrients to the soil and helping retain moisture.	Lowes
Neighborhood Police Officers	Police Officers that are assigned to specific areas of the City. The neighborhoods are geographically small, and typically have a high need for police services.	
Neighborhood-scaled schools	Schools that are smaller in size in order to fit in with the surrounding neighborhood.	
Percent for the Arts	A requirement that 1% of public building project costs, that have adopted budgets of \$5 million or more, be used for public art.	
Permanent supportive housing	Housing that has social services and counseling programs to assist people with housing, mental health, drug, or other challenges, in the transition to self-sufficiency through gaining a stable income and other skills.	APA, A Planners Dictionary
Petro-chemical fertilizers	Substances to help plants grow that are created by using a large amount of petroleum and other chemicals.	San Francisco Gate
Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)	Financing for energy improvements that addresses some of the economic barriers that have prevented the widespread adoption of home energy upgrades, including: access to capital and efficient financing mechanisms for upgrades to existing homes.	U.S. Department of Energy
Public housing	Decent and safe rental housing for low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Public housing comes in all sizes and types, from scattered single family houses to high rise apartments for elderly families.	HUD
Recyclopedia	An annual City guide that provides information on trash collection, recycling dos and don'ts, large item collection, and more.	
Redevelopment	Construction of a new building where a building already exists.	
Regional transit authority	An organization created for the purpose of providing organized, effective public transportation across municipal boundaries.	
Report a Problem	A City program and website where community members can provide information on non-emergency issues typically related to public safety, including pothole concerns, snow removal, animal control, and stolen bicycles.	

Step backs

A building design where there are fewer stories closer to the lot line (for example, near sidewalks and adjacent properties) than the rest of the building.

Image: Manhattan Scout



Subdivision ordinance

An ordinance adopted by the City Council to that sets standards for the division of land/property.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

A financing tool used by the City to fund public infrastructure, assist redevelopment projects, encourage employment growth, and expand the tax base.

Tier 1 streets

Streets that: are classified as arterials or collectors, have local bus service, have a high level of school-related pedestrian activity, or streets that provide connections to neighborhood commercial development or community services.

Tuj Lub

A top spinning game played on a court that is popular in the Hmong community.

Zoning code

An ordinance that regulates land use, lot size, building placement, building height, and other aspects of the development of land.