

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Public Health

FROM: Madison Food Policy Council Comprehensive Plan Work Group
Martin Bailkey, Marcia Caton Campbell, Nan Fey, Kyle Richmond

RE: Potential Revisions to the Draft Comprehensive Plan Document

DATE: May 29, 2018

The Madison Food Policy Council, as the only official policy body with expertise and responsibility for food issues, created a Work Group to provide feedback throughout the Comp Plan process beginning in January of 2017. Since then, we have worked diligently with staff to provide input and feedback during every phase of the process and reviewed a number of draft documents including an “initial draft” that was shared with City Staff for comment in April. We’d like your support on two issues.

Neighborhoods – Strategy 8: “Ensure access to food that is affordable, nutritious, and culturally specific” (page 58) For some reason, a significant sentence was removed from the initial draft of the Comp Plan that read “Access to food is one of the most basic life-sustaining strategies of the Comprehensive Plan” was replaced by the much more limited statement “Access to healthful foods, especially for families with children, has major impacts on quality of life”. The Work Group recommends restoring the original sentence, and adding the word “healthy” so it reads as follows:

“Access to healthy food is one of the most basic life-sustaining strategies of the Comprehensive Plan.”

Green & Resilient – Strategy 9: “Support safe and sustainable farming and gardening practices to protect the ecosystem and public health” (page 97)

We are very pleased to see this strategy included in the Comp Plan, along with the two actions supporting community gardens and food production within the city. This is a very important strategybut the April draft included an third action that has been removed from the May draft. On May 21st, the Sustainable Madison Committee voted to restore it, and we expect the Madison Food Policy Council will do so on June 6th

“Guidelines for Agricultural Best Practices

“We must also work to reduce the amount of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides used, as they have negative environmental and health impacts. Fertilizers contain high levels of phosphorus that negatively affect the lakes and waterways; compost is one natural alternative to provide the soil with

needed nutrients. Guidelines should be established for community gardens and other forms of urban agriculture to promote best practices that support both the natural environment and public health.”

The Work Group suggests clarifying the title of this action to read “Guidelines for *Sustainable Agricultural Practices*” and offers the following definition for the Glossary.

Sustainable Agriculture: Sustainable agricultural systems respond to site-specific conditions by integrating cultural, organic, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity.

Please consider recommending to the Plan Commission and Common Council:

- The original “healthy food as life sustaining” statement be restored to the introductory text of Strategy 8 of the Neighborhoods element (page 58).
- *Guidelines for Sustainable Agricultural Best Practices* action be restored to Strategy 9 in the Green & Resilient element (page 97) and a definition of *sustainable agriculture* be added to the Glossary.

Thank you.