

Date: May 12, 2011

To: Sustainable Design and Energy Committee

From: Board of Health for Madison and Dane County

RE: Suggestions and recommendations for the Madison Sustainability Plan

The Board of Health for Madison and Dane County (Board of Health) has reviewed the current draft of the City of Madison's Sustainability Plan. We applaud the hard work that has gone into creating this comprehensive and well-conceived plan that will help assure that the City of Madison will always be a place where quality of life, health, sustainable growth, and environmental protection are assured.

Board of Health members have reviewed and discussed the plan, and wish to offer the following suggestions:

#### Sustainability Plan Overview (p. 1- 6)

- By definition, a sustainable city must be a healthy city. Health should be an explicit part of the vision of a sustainable city. We suggest that "health" be added to the definition of sustainability on page 1 as one of the four key areas: environment, economics, social equity, and health.

#### Natural systems section (p. 7-14)

- Health is referenced in the beginning paragraph and in the vision, but there is no goal that explicitly mentions health. Consider adding a goal directed toward about improving community health.
- PHMDC has a role in water quality testing and monitoring and should be included in Goal 2 on page 9.
- Under Goal 6, consider adding sidewalks and walking trails to facilitate increasing physical activity.

#### Planning and design (p. 15 – 19)

- On page 19, consider adding community based education on nutrition and nutritious food preparation. This could be supported through public campaigns and incorporated into school based education programs. Dane County Extension, the UW-Madison nutrition sciences, and PHMDC could be involved. Also consider adding policies for creating nutrition standards for food provided through communal meal sites (seniors and low income meal sites), child care centers, and healthy school food policies.
- This section should include improving opportunities for physical activity through sidewalks, signage, safe routes, lighting, and bike paths.

#### Transportation (p. 20 – 26)

- Consider including mandatory bike helmet laws (bicycle and motorcycle) and enforcement.
- Make sure the pictures you use are "healthy" (see page 24 for a bicyclist without a helmet!).

#### Carbon and energy (p. 27 – 34)

- Suggest adding or developing standard metrics for measuring how “green” city and county agencies are now and track improvement into the future. The public sector should lead in this effort.

#### Economic Development (p. 35 – 42)

- On page 41, add increasing local food consumption at communal meal sites (seniors and low income sites) and into nutrition policies for child care centers and schools.
- On page 40, consider adding one or more health metrics to the sustainability index (possibly use the County Health Ranking metrics developed at UW Population Health Institute).
- Add encouraging “healthy workplace policies” and starting an award system for businesses that implement a defined set of policies that promote worker health (incentives for exercise, weight loss, providing mother-friendly environments such as private space for breastfeeding, and smoking cessation supports).

#### Employment and workforce development (p. 43 – 49)

- Add healthy worksite policy development and an award system for businesses that incorporate healthy worksite policies.

#### Education (p. 50-54)

- On page 50, add a goal related to healthy schools.
- On page 51, the plan should promote more than “advocate for nutritious foods.” Consider adding facilitate or support adoption of healthy school nutrition policies, eliminate vending machines, eliminate sugar added beverages from schools, and initiate an award system for schools that adopt healthy food policies.

#### Affordable housing (p. 56 – 62)

- Affordable housing should be sited near parks, playgrounds, or other places to exercise and have solar powered lighting for safety.

#### Health (p. 63 – 70)

- Community assessment and health improvement planning are mandated and essential services provided by local public health departments. We suggest adding specific reference to community assessment and health improvement planning on page 63.
- Add something on supporting physical activity in schools; partnerships with fitness centers for “6<sup>th</sup> period exercise classes for students or access to their facilities at no cost. Open schools to exercise classes for neighborhood residents.
- We suggest the Dane County Health Council is the proper group to look into ways to increase access for health care (Goal 7, page 70) of all types to county residents.
- The health goals are quite comprehensive and will be challenging to meet in light of current economic challenges.
- Issues of health inequity (for example, racial disparities in infant mortality), should be more strongly emphasized as continuing health inequity reflects the general health status of the community.

- PHMDC can promote access to clinical care through partnerships with clinical care providers.

Arts, Design & Culture (p. 71 – 73)

- Extend the definition of “art” to include dance. Support neighborhood dance instruction for kids and adults as a healthy physical activity.

Other general comments:

- Use of evidence based approaches is important for all parts of this plan; where evidence is lacking, the plan could encourage linking with UW-Madison for research to build the evidence base for interventions to improve sustainability.
- A companion document with metrics for measuring and monitoring achieving objectives might be helpful.
- As soon as possible, the sustainability plan should extend to all of Dane County.

In addition to these comments, we concur with the suggestions for the plan made by staff of PHMDC.

Again, we applaud your effort and thank you for the opportunity to comment.

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF HEALTH ON MAY 12, 2011