

Comments on Madison Sustainability Plan dated October 28, 2010

NATURAL SYSTEMS

GOAL 1: Improve air quality

Suggested new Action

- Assure that all industrial sources of particulate matter comply with the air quality standard for PM_{2.5}.

While fine particles are formed on a regional basis, they are also emitted by industrial sources which can create small nonattainment areas which do not comply with the air quality standard for PM_{2.5}. The Wisconsin DNR has yet to identify and clean up with these small nonattainment areas. Any of the industrial sources of particulate matter in Madison is capable of creating these nonattainment areas including the Charter Street Heating Plant, Blount Street Generating Station, Oscar Mayer Foods, and the Madison-Kipp aluminum foundry. In 2007, Mayor Cieslewicz was given a report from the SASY Neighborhood Association showing how the Madison-Kipp foundry was creating a nonattainment area for PM_{2.5} in the surrounding neighborhood. This area has not yet been cleaned up.

SUGGESTED NEW GOAL: Reduce noise pollution

With little city, state or federal regulation, noise in the city is increasing with little incentive to use readily available noise reduction measures. Areas of the city with high noise levels are less healthy and desirable.

Suggested Actions:

- Create a city position responsible for promoting noise abatement.
- Update the city noise ordinance to modern standards. For example the city stationary noise source ordinance allows residents to be exposed to 75 decibels at night; noise ordinances in Milwaukee allow only 45 decibels. For several years, the city has received noise complaints related to stationary noise but has not taken any action.
- Assure that all major highways such as the Beltline and Interstate are equipped with noise reduction barriers.
- Complete train horn quiet zones. Despite requests from city residents, there are areas of the city which still have not received quiet zones so that freight trains continue to blow horns at any time of the day or night. Even with construction of high speed rail, areas of the city will not have quiet zones.
- Provide more oversight of noise reduction by the county airport. The noise control strategy of the county airport is 18 years old. There is no independent regulation or oversight of the airport's noise control methods. While the airport voluntarily sends traffic to the north, over 35% of the air traffic still flies over city residents. Aircraft engine noise disrupts conversations 3 miles from the airport. The city should be more involved in the county airport's noise control strategy such as promoting an update of noise control plan and creation of a noise abatement

program similar to other airports where homes, schools and businesses receive noise insulation improvements. Refer to: <http://www.macnoise.com/sip>

PLANNING AND DESIGN

SUGGESTED NEW GOAL: Encourage relocation of the county airport.

While the rest of Dane County grows, the county airport remains in the city. It removes 7,000 acres from residential use; exposes the east and north sides of Madison to unhealthy and undesirable noise; and promotes the least energy efficient form of transportation. The cities of Austin, Texas and Denver, Colorado have relocated their airports to locations outside the city, then redeveloped the former airports into mixed-use urban villages. Refer to <http://www.muelleraustin.com/> and <http://www.stapletondenver.com/>

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUGGESTED NEW GOAL: Identify alternatives to property taxes

Madison needs a more sustainable form of taxation than property taxes to support city services. The city is home to the UW and government agencies so has an abundance of untaxable property. It provides the infrastructure and services to provide goods and services to the entire county, and to support jobs for non-residents who hold 65% of city jobs. It also has a disproportionate share of low income residents compared to the rest of Dane County. We should identify other means of raising revenue than property taxes to pay for city services. The city should pursue the ability to charge municipal income taxes similar to the states of Michigan and Ohio, or charge fees for non-resident use of the city such as at the county airport.

EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SUGGESTED NEW GOAL: Encourage city jobs to be filled by city residents.

In 2008, the number of non-residents employed in Madison had grown so that 65% of the jobs in Madison were held by non-residents commuting into the city. By encouraging jobs to be filled by residents, we assure the city has the lowest unemployment rate and city residents benefit from the wealth created here. The reduction in commuting traffic will help achieve other sustainability goals.