



February 7, 2022

## **Sustain Dane Annual Progress Report 2021**

### **Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Collaboration and the Funding of Certain Programming (2021-2026) between the City of Madison and Sustain Dane.**

Thank you for the strong partnership that is accelerating sustainable actions for community well-being. This document is submitted to you as an annual progress report for the Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Collaboration and the Funding of Certain Programming (2021-2026) between the City of Madison and Sustain Dane. As outlined in the MOU, this report includes a written summary of Sustain Dane's work with area businesses and organizations, insights about areas of opportunity and challenges for community partners to increase their level of sustainability, project plans, milestones, achievements and new areas of collaboration. At the December 1, 2021 monthly check-in meeting, City of Madison Sustainability Coordinator Stacie Reece and Sustain Dane Executive Director Claire Oleksiak agreed to the due date of this report on February 28, 2022 to align with the Sustainable Madison Committee Meeting (SMC). Sustain Dane will present an overview of this information at the SMC February 28, 2022 meeting.

Sustain Dane's programs have grown and evolved to meet the needs of our community. The City of Madison has been a critical partner in this evolution to where we are today, poised to take big steps as a community to meet the City's Sustainability Plan and 100% Renewable Madison goals and actions. Sustain Dane is in a particularly important period of growth for our service delivery to our community. There is noticeable expansion of businesses, organizations and individuals (across industry sectors, race, age, etc.) that want to reduce climate change, increase sustainability, and prepare for resiliency. Businesses, organizations and individuals rely on Sustain Dane to help them gain sustainability knowledge, prioritize and implement climate solutions, and have the connection, inspiration, resources, and support along the way.

The Sustain Dane and City of Madison partnership has allowed for meaningful connections with businesses, organizations and individuals taking on sustainable actions. As a non-profit, Sustain Dane plays an important role in education and one-on-one support for businesses. As a trusted non-profit, working in collaboration with Madison businesses and organizations, Sustain Dane is uniquely poised to assist the City of Madison in working to achieve the City's Sustainability Plan and 100% Renewable Madison goals and actions. The focus of Sustain Dane's work, as outlined in our MOU, includes:

- Businesses and organizations forming green teams/sustainability committees and taking sustainable actions.
- Promotion of energy and water efficiency, expansion of solar and other renewables, waste reduction, recycling improvement, sustainable food systems, alternative transportation, and equity and wellness.
- Increase of racial and social equity.
- Economic development and financial benefits from sustainability.
- Expansion of alternative transportation, including the use of electric vehicles.



- Intersection of climate, health, and equity.
- Expansion of solar and other renewables in the community.
- Increasing education about sustainability research, framework plans, climate change, successful case studies, innovative actions and community well-being.

The City of Madison partnership contributes to funding a portion of Sustain Dane programs that are also supported by additional grants, contracts, membership, and other sources.

## 2021 Key Takeaways

Sustain Dane's approach of holistic sustainability - the interconnection of environmental health, social well-being & equity, and a just economy, is important to and resonates with the Madison community.

Key takeaways from the 2021 programs include:

- High level of **engagement & participation** in 2021 Sustain Dane programs. In a difficult year for many people, engagement with Sustain Dane and working on sustainability remained important and/or grew in importance.
- **Accelerate Sustainability Workshop** sessions included 26 participants from 21 organizations. Businesses are still starting, reinvigorating, and working to grow green teams. Combining leadership training and sustainability training is a trend that we see continuing, as the individuals pushing within businesses for sustainability are acting as critical leaders from within. Equity and well-being were subjects that this year's cohort gravitated towards. 100% of participants responded that they would recommend the workshop to a colleague
- **Sustainable Breakfast Series** themes included Resiliency & Equity in Urban Water Systems, Sustainability in Food Systems, Pathways to Carbon Neutrality and Net-Zero, and Youth in the Climate Movement. The meetings were recorded, shared, and rewatched.
- The new **Master Recycler course** in coordination with the City of Madison Streets Division had 524 participants in the program, many of whom completed outreach projects that reached an estimated 44,532 local people with recycling knowledge.
- **Eight+ new collaborations & partnerships** including: research on reducing vehicles miles traveled with remote work options with the MPO, a bilingual energy leadership academy with the Latino Academy of Workforce Development, electrification & cold climate air source heat pump opportunities with Elevate, and climate, health & equity interconnection with YWCA and Ho-Chunk Gaming Madison.
- **2022 brings new projects and program areas** including community composting, water steward education, school recycling, and environmental justice around air quality. We will continue to effectively educate and assist with implementation of sustainability project actions so that the business sector aligns with the City of Madison's Sustainability Plan and the 100% Renewable Madison goals and actions.



## Work with Area Businesses and Organizations

Below is an expansion of information about opportunities and challenges working with area businesses and organizations to increase sustainability, such as project plans, milestones, and achievements.

### 1. Accelerate Sustainability Workshops

Our Accelerate Sustainability Workshop (ASW) is a professional development opportunity designed to help start sustainability initiatives at businesses and organizations. Grounded in current sustainability plans and research, this workshop presents best practices, local case studies, and changemaking strategies. Participants leave with an action plan for projects to make change at their organizations. The program is an evolution of the MPower program.

The 2021 ASW sessions included 26 participants from 21 organizations. Each organization committed to completing a project in the category of energy efficiency (6), renewable energy (2), food (1), transportation (1), waste (4), water (1), and equity & wellness (3). These 21 organizations were primarily new to our programs. In post-workshop feedback, 100% of participants responded that they would recommend the workshop to a colleague. Participating organizations in 2021 include:

- Affiliated Engineers, Inc
- Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin
- CG Schmidt
- DC Engineering
- Destination Madison
- Extreme Engineering Solutions
- First United Methodist Church
- Habitat ReStore of Dane County
- Ho-Chunk Gaming Madison
- Kahler Slater
- Mad City Dream Homes
- Mead & Hunt
- Middleton Sustainability Committee
- Movin-Out inc
- National Decision Support Company
- Nowak Eco Properties
- REAP Food Group
- Reynolds Transfer & Storage
- TDS Telecom
- The Digital Ring
- Wingra School

This year, there was strong interest in creating the building blocks of a workplace sustainability program, such as starting a green team or sustainability committee. We assisted the groups in aligning a



sustainability committee to the mission and vision of their organization, identifying executive leadership and potential participants from various areas of a business. Three businesses had a green team and were now in need of help for the next step to write a formalized sustainability plan or commitment for their work. Only one of the businesses had an individual with sustainability formally in their title and job description. This is noteworthy because it means sustainability work is still often an additional, often voluntary part of work. One organization saw a lot of turnover prior to joining the workshop and sought help reinvigorating their team with a new group of people.

There were 17 new businesses and four returning. Of the returning organizations, we saw a theme of new staff having joined the business and a desire for re-focusing on sustainability projects at their office. Lastly, there was a desire to achieve success and have trackable results before sharing information widely with others. The businesses did not want to be seen as greenwashing or as not 'walking the talk.' This can be both an opportunity and a challenge. There is a strong desire to complete a project; however, there is hesitancy to share information before completing a project. To take a project from an idea into implementation takes time and has successes and setbacks that are important for others to hear about. People gain inspiration from understanding that bringing sustainability into a business is a journey. In addition, increasing conversations and dialogues about sustainability and climate change is positive overall. Businesses and organizations value the support we provide.

Equity and well-being were subjects that this year's cohort gravitated towards. We saw participants finding ways to include equity in their projects. For example, an organization planning a solar energy project incorporated into their fundraising efforts a donation to nonprofit organizations working for human rights in the mining industry. Another organization set up a Lunch and Learn on environmental justice for their employees.

We also saw organizations opt for longer-term projects that will span years. One group is working towards making a future rental housing development meet a sustainability certification standard that prioritizes well-being. Another is working on an edible garden that will provide food for a school lunch program. Although these organizations didn't see the final outcomes from these projects in 2021, they are setting themselves up for an impactful future. We anticipate that Sustain Dane will remain involved in supporting the projects, similar to how we continue to work with 2020 ASW participants.

The classic and crucial projects that we frequently see through our programs were also present this year. These include energy projects like setting up an energy audit to prioritize efficiency upgrades, and educating employees on efficiency for the office and at home. With many organizations offering remote work options, there was a connection between working with employees on efficiency at the office and at home. One organization set up a searchable energy database developed with energy savings offers, energy audits, and other energy benefits. Some waste reduction projects included performing a waste audit, centralizing trash bins, composting, recycling signage & education, and organizing a waste system to reduce recycling contamination.



The 2022 Accelerate Sustainability Workshops are scheduled for Wednesday, February 16 and Wednesday, March 16 (group one), and Thursday, May 12, and Thursday, June 9 (group two). Group one has 22 people registered currently and we are conducting pre-workshop interviews with them. We are also working on a mentorship component this year, pairing new participants with prior participants based on similar project categories.

“They [Sustain Dane] are uplifting and I always learn something.”—March 2021 ASW Participant

## **2. Sustainable Business Network**

In addition to the ASW workshops, our educational opportunities include the Sustainable Breakfast Series (SBS), Lunch & Learns, and Networking. The themes for the quarterly SBS’s included Resiliency & Equity in Urban Water Systems, Sustainability in Food Systems, Pathways to Carbon Neutrality and Net-Zero, and Youth in the Climate Movement. Lunch & Learns included topics of Home Office Energy Efficiency and Teleworking. Networking provided a welcoming and supportive place for connection and learning among individuals. We also organized volunteer opportunities such as trash clean-up around Garver Feed Mill & Starkweather Creek and garden/trail clean-up at the Farley Center which brought together the community to give back.

In particular, at the Pathways to Carbon Neutrality and Net-Zero Carbon SBS, City of Madison Deputy Mayor Christie Baumel talked about the City of Madison’s goals and actions for 100% Renewable Energy by 2030 on it’s own municipal facilities and fleet, and to be net carbon neutral by 2050 community-wide. She emphasized how essential community partnerships are to achieve those goals. Baumel moderated a panel conversation with three other local businesses on stories of carbon goals and achievements.

Some of the themes from the SBS meetings are encapsulated in the quotes from the speakers below. The SBS’s are recorded, making them a resource for businesses interested in the topics in the future. For instance, a large local company started working on Net Zero in early 2022 and the July SBS is a resource for them. Sustain Dane also creates a written blog summary of the presentations and shares that on the website and in the newsletter. Quote and summary information is shared on social media networks. Through all of these channels approximately 5,000 receive education from each SBS.

### January 2021

“[Behavior change] is really helping folks understand the why. How will this actually benefit them, their community, and the bottom line. So, I think the why is important, but also why not? What if we don't do it? If we don't address institutional racism within our own institutions, what will happen? If we don't change our policies in a way where we're actually protecting these communities because they keep on flooding—what if we don't do it? So I think often asking the question of why not, and then making sure



that you take just little steps to try.”

—Jalonne L. White-Newsome, Senior Program Officer at The Kresge Foundation

#### April 2021

“Seeds are sleeping, but they're alive. When you put them in the ground and nurture them, they fulfill their destiny. That's the way we look at it, they're able to do what they were meant to do which is provide that nourishment.”

—Elena Terry, Executive Chef & Founder of Wild Bearies focused on indigenous food knowledge and resilient food systems

#### July 2021

“People are afraid to be first since there are risks, but there are risks in doing nothing.”

—Francisco Sayu, President/Founder of Sustainable Community Partners, LLC

#### October 2021

“If I don't take action, who else will? If someone else was going to do it, it would be done already. Don't be afraid to create your own opportunity.”

—Yvett Sanchez, University of Wisconsin-Madison and Co-president of Re-Wear It Wisco (a student organization promoting sustainable fashion)

### **Master Recycler**

This year we launched our recycling education program in partnership with the City of Madison Streets Division and with support from the Carton Council. In this program, attendees learn about how the recycling system works, how to figure out if an item is or isn't recyclable locally, and how to reduce and reuse before recycling.

Some of the favorite facts Master Recyclers reported learning include that:

- There's no national recycling system, so you have to look to your local guidelines
- Cartons can be recycled
- The way materials navigate the sorting machine matters and determines how we recycle things

After learning together, participants took their knowledge out into the community. Those that completed these projects and reported how many people they engaged with then became certified master recyclers. We had a total of 524 participants in the program, many of whom completed outreach projects that reached an estimated 44,532 local people with recycling knowledge. In-webinar polls showed that a majority of the 524 participants were City of Madison residents.

A popular project we saw from the participants was to include what they learned in their neighborhood and organization newsletters. Some participants created flyers and signs with their favorite recycling tips



to distribute in their community, and others set up information booths at local community events. Many chose to share the information online using virtual events, through social media groups, or series of posts on the neighborhood app nextdoor. Some participants took a different route and started composting, or cleaned out their basement to take to Dane County Clean Sweep. No two projects were exactly the same, which was a wonderful component of the program.

Many participants included their family in their project, including Jean Nordlund, a Madison resident who filmed her two granddaughters performing a waste audit on her recycling. Her granddaughters went through different items and shared whether they were recyclable or not and why. Jean shared the video with her network and got positive feedback and lots of additional recycling questions. Another project that proved successful was a series of posts on the Next Door neighborhood website. Madison resident Mary Powell posted a recycling tip a day for a month, totalling 30 tips that have collected 479 comments and 781 interactions.

“This class was so interesting and I learned a ton even though I consider myself a pretty good recycler. I’m so glad I took this class.”—2021 Master Recycler

A community recycling campaign was supported with Carton Council funding to align with the Master Recycler course. It included two videos (one with the UW Bucky Badger mascot), social media educational series and two billboards themed around ‘Recycle Better.’

Our social media strategy focused on sharing and boosting (through paid posts) recycling education highlights from the Master Recycler course, encouraging the community to recycle cartons, and spreading the videos. The theme of the social media campaign was ‘Recycle Better’ to align with the billboard and connect all the posts as a series. Our Recycle Better Campaign was successful with a total reach of 70,000, impressions of 246,000, and 3,400 engagements, and it is still going.

<b>Reach</b>	70,038
<b>Impressions</b>	246,850
<b>Frequency</b>	3.52
<b>Unique Outbound Clicks</b>	926
<b>Click Through Rate (CTR)</b>	3.12%
<b>Engagements</b>	3,435
<b>Average Cost Per Click</b>	\$0.14

The Recycle Better billboard was displayed from September 6 to October 25 2021 on Regent Street, which included an additional 20 days at no extra cost. Billboard weekly impressions at this location are estimated at 60,581. We secured a second location for the billboard to be reused from November 1 - 29,



2021 at the intersection of Park Street and West Washington. This second billboard has weekly impressions estimated at 238,926 people and was visible during National Recycling Day.

The Master Recycler's program received the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource's Recycling Excellence Award 2021 and the Associated Recyclers of Wisconsin's (AROW) Outstanding Achievement in Education Award 2022.

### **Summit & Climate Commitments**

The 2021 Sustain Dane Summit was held on Thursday, November 18 with over 250 in hybrid attendance in-person at the Monona Terrace and virtually over Zoom. The keynote speaker was Kimberly Nicholas, sustainability scientist and author of UNDER THE SKY WE MAKE: How to be Human in a Warming World. Every registration had the opportunity to receive a copy of the book. Participants made a sustainability commitment in writing at the Summit from six categories. Posters and table tents highlighted project ideas within each category.

At the Summit, we collected 142 commitment cards. Food is a focus for 56 people, energy is a focus for 20 people, transportation is a focus for 32 people, and the remainder focused on investments, ripple effect, and other. There is an online form open for others in the community to join the program who were not at the Summit. From now until Earth Day 2022, we are working with the commitment cohort to support their achievement and inspire others. We are collecting the reflections and stories of people's climate actions for sharing those widely. We are planning on the April 2022 Sustainable Breakfast Series to highlight the accomplishments and impacts of the participants.

### **New Areas of Collaboration & Partnerships**

#### **Reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled**

##### **Funding: Dane County Office of Energy and Climate Change**

This year we partnered with the Greater Madison Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on a scoping study that focused on collaborating with businesses and organizations that are modeling a variety of remote work structures and how/if remote work could connect to reducing vehicle miles traveled. Dane County Climate Action Plan targets a 15% reduction in vehicle miles traveled by 2050. Remote work is here to stay and offering flexible working schedules can benefit both employee well-being as well as offer potential to reduce peak congestion and vehicles miles traveled. We interviewed 11 businesses to discuss the connection to sustainability with remote work and formed a Telework Business Team that met four times during the course of the project. In the interviews we saw that the majority of business leaders were not making a connection between remote working and a potential for reduction in vehicle miles traveled by employees, including they were not tracking this



impact. We created a toolkit for creation of a remote work policy and best practices resources, as well as an overview of current remote work attitudes and practices.

The project also included developing and collecting data from the 2021 Greater Madison Remote Work Survey. A key finding was that 36% of respondents who do not already use an alternate mode when they commute to the office say that the ability to telework part-time is an incentive to use alternative modes of transportation when they do commute to work. When paired with alternative transportation and other programs to drive less, long-term remote work seems to have the potential to reduce vehicle miles traveled and congestion in Dane County as well as improve employee wellbeing.

While telework can be a helpful tool for reducing emissions from vehicle miles traveled, it is important to recognize that teleworking is not a “silver bullet” solution. There are considerations such as who has and does not have the access and ability to telework based on their home situation and job responsibilities, conscious and unconscious bias of co-workers and managers that may be heightened with remote work and even employee promotion opportunities, land-use consequences, and the impact of telework on quality of life, mental health, and overall well-being - both positive and negative.

Our study concluded that there is momentum to build on and room to grow. Many remote work challenges from the 2020 survey, related to uncertainty about technology and virtual communication, mostly resolved in the 2021 survey pointing towards the ability to adapt to changing work conditions.

### **Energy Efficiency Navigator**

**Funding: Elevate, WI Public Service Commission Office of Energy Innovation, Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District, Healthy Babies Bright Futures, Urban Sustainability Directors Network, Dane County Office of Energy & Climate Change**

Sustain Dane and the City of Madison have worked together along with other partners to apply for and receive funding to support work promoting healthy, affordable and sustainable multifamily housing in Madison. Efficiency Navigator program initiatives help small to medium-sized multifamily housing become more efficient, affordable, and resilient while reducing operating costs for owners and energy cost burden for residents. The goals of the program are to address housing resilience, equity, and climate change. Current partnerships include:

- Partnering with Elevate and Northside Planning Council to increase energy efficiency and reducing utility costs in 100 units of affordable housing on Madison’s Northside and Southwest Side with energy assessments, coordination with contractors, and grants of \$10,000 - \$20,000 to support implementation
- Water softener optimization and incentivized replacement in multifamily buildings has been added to Efficiency Navigator offerings with support from the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage
- Evaluating and creating a case study for a program design of integrating assessment of health indicators into the Efficiency Navigator program and analysis of local data around health indicators such as lead and mold in the Madison area



- Solar array implementation at a Common Wealth Development building with Elevate and Renew that provides direct benefit to residents in the multifamily building, instead of only common space
- Electrification scoping study for Dane County with Elevate that included Dane County housing and utility data analysis and 15 interviews around electrification and cold-climate air source heat pumps. The study determined that cold-climate air source heat pump programs should focus on replacing electric resistance heat in single-family homes for the highest carbon and utility savings on a per unit basis. Also, there is a need for a program dedicated to electrifying residential buildings because there exists technical skepticism, lack of contractors, and small incentives.

### **Bilingual Energy Efficiency Leaders with Latino Academy of Workforce Development**

#### **Funding: Dane County Office of Energy and Climate Change**

This program was led by Latino Academy of Workforce Development on training bilingual energy efficiency leaders through its bilingual leadership program. The spread of energy efficiency knowledge and action must be community based to be successful, and led by people who are trusted and culturally relevant, such as the educators through Latino Academy of Workforce Development. The program found it was essential to invest in collaborative partnerships to uplift and compensate leaders to teach and inspire energy efficiency action with their neighbors, friends and family. This pilot proved that equitable, paid partnerships between organizations and individuals from the beginning through implementation is essential for program success. Responses from participants included:

- Very good experience & would recommend - All of the participants (100%) described their overall experience in the program as very good (the highest ranking) and they also all said that they would recommend the program to another person.
- Best parts of the program were noted as increasing leadership, contributing to a better planet, and camaraderie.
- Three of the students replied yes, they would consider studying/pursuing a career in sustainability or energy efficiency and the other two replied maybe and shared the comment, "I liked the class. I would like to continue learning."

### **Climate, Health, & Equity Intersection**

#### **Funding- Dane County Office of Energy and Climate Change**

YWCA - Madison & Ho-Chunk Gaming Madison partnered with Sustain Dane on a study to assess the intersection of climate, health and equity in Dane County and the impact of YTransit shared transit program as a community based climate solution. Project included 72 surveys and interviews. One of the most important themes that emerged is that climate solution projects must be connected to bettering the foundation of people's lives, which was highlighted in this project to be mental health, housing, food, and transportation. The partnership also began conversations with MGE about conducting a fleet analysis around the costs and carbon impact of converting the YTransit fleet to electric vehicles.



## Conclusion & 2022 Ahead

Through partnership with Sustain Dane, the City of Madison demonstrates leadership in working with the community to inspire businesses, organizations and individuals to thrive now and in the future. A thriving future will require forward movement on the City of Madison's Sustainability Plan and the 100% Renewable Madison goals and actions. Madison supports and attracts people and businesses by focusing on the health of our environment and well-being of the community.

As we developed our 2022 programs, we grounded our work in building on past success, while reducing barriers to entry and creating a more robust program offering to meet people where they are on their sustainability journey. The Sustain Dane programming will continue to be an opportunity for people who care about integrating environmental, social, and economic sustainability into their professional and personal lives as we value increased engagement, participation, and diverse inclusion in the sustainability movement.

In 2022, new program work areas include:

- Community composting - Sustain Dane will work with the City of Madison to expand community composting opportunities at farmers markets and conduct a restaurant food waste reduction challenge.
- Water Stewards - The Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District, Madison Water, and MAMSWaP are working in partnership with Sustain Dane on developing a Water Stewards program along the lines of the Master Recycler model
- School Recycling & Food Systems - Sustain Dane is working in ten Madison schools on increasing cafeteria recycling (in particular cartons) and conducting food waste audits. Education about sustainability is also part of this work.
- Environmental Justice - Latino Academy of Workforce Development has received an EPA Environmental Justice grant to focus on air quality education through it's bilingual leadership program. Sustain Dane is a supporting partner on this project.

We will continue to effectively educate and assist with implementation of project actions so that the business sector aligns with the City of Madison's Sustainability Plan and the 100% Renewable Madison goals and actions.

**Thank you for your partnership and for the City of Madison's commitment to sustainability.**

Sincerely,

Claire Oleksiak  
Executive Director  
Sustain Dane