

# Planning Framework

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### **What is the Planning Framework?**

The Planning Framework is a shift in how Madison approaches planning for areas of the city. The new framework will simplify and standardize the City's [sub-area planning](#) and it is intended to achieve more equitable outcomes by covering the entire city with 13 discrete Area Plan geographies.

### **What are Area Plans?**

The City will create Area Plans for the entire City, update them every 10 years, and use them as the guiding plan for future land use and infrastructure investment. Area Plans will address a consistent set of topics and include higher-level recommendations for land use, transportation, parks and open space, community facilities, and utilities. Area Plan processes will include public outreach and engagement during each phase of the planning process with special emphasis on reaching residents and communities typically underrepresented in City processes.

### **What led to the development of the Planning Framework?**

The City lacks a framework for creating and updating sub-area plans. Additionally, the 2018 [Comprehensive Plan](#) recommended to developing a process to consider outdated sub-area plans for retirement.

### **What are the benefits of the Planning Framework?**

Some primary benefits of the Planning Framework are clear plan recommendations, full city coverage with 13 geographies that do not overlap, frequent scheduled plan updates, consistent plan topics with high-level recommendations, and enhanced coordination on City initiatives.

### **How is the Planning Framework a more equitable sub-area planning approach?**

Some areas of the City do not have a sub-area plan, including areas with higher proportions of residents living with lower incomes and residents of color. Not having a sub-area plan in place can be a disadvantage as plan recommendations can help bring City investment and guide future change. The Planning Framework ensures that every corner of the City will have an Area Plan. Additionally, Area Plans will include a special emphasis on reaching residents and communities typically underrepresented in City processes.

### **How was the Planning Framework created?**

Staff conducted interviews with other cities to gain insights on various approaches to sub-area planning, including cities that have recently implemented a similar planning framework. Planning Division staff coordinated with other City agencies to identify ways this new planning framework can complement their related plans and initiatives. Staff also conducted a Racial Equity and Social Justice analysis with several residents and staff and received guidance from the City's Plan Commission during work sessions in [2020](#), [2021](#), and [2022](#).

## How were the Planning Framework boundaries created?

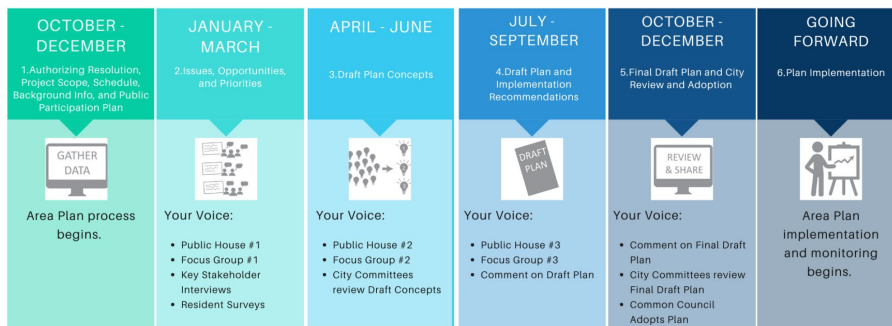
To minimize conflicting plan recommendations on either side of an Area Plan boundary, the proposed boundaries generally follow physical features that separate land uses. This includes highways, rail lines, and natural areas such as the Arboretum and Starkweather Creek. The City’s major commercial and transportation corridors, including the planned Bus Rapid Transit routes, are generally maintained within one Area Plan geography.

The Area Plan geographies are intended to remain consistent over time.

## How long does an Area Plan process take?

Generally, each Area Plan process will be one year.

## Example Area Plan Process, Timeline

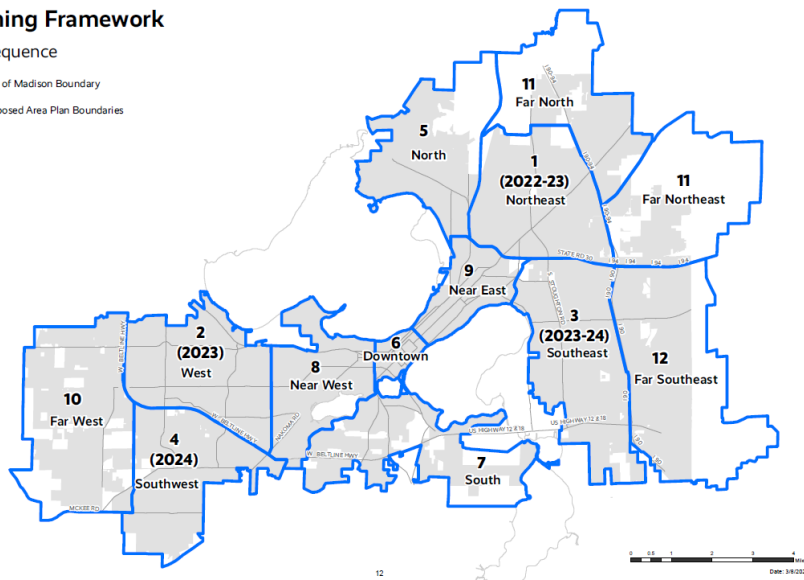


## What is the schedule for Area Plans?

### Planning Framework

#### Plan Sequence

- City of Madison Boundary
- Proposed Area Plan Boundaries



## What topics are covered in Area Plans?

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## Does this affect the Comprehensive Plan?

The Comprehensive Plan—the City’s overarching plan—will help inform Area Plan recommendations. The recommended future land use map developed through each Area Plan process will directly update the Comprehensive Plan’s [Generalized Future Land Use \(GFLU\) Map](#).

## How will the Planning Framework interface with existing sub-area plans?

Recommendations in existing sub-area plans will help inform the Area Plan if they are: 1) within the scope of Area Plan recommendations, 2) consistent with current City policies and 3) relevant to Area Plan communities. Recommendations outside of these parameters will remain in the underlying sub-area plan unless the plan is retired.

## Will there be future sub-area plans?

Going forward, the Planning Division will focus on 13 higher-level “Area Plans” and complementary CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) Plans. If a critical need or opportunity arises, a focused amendment to an Area Plan may be warranted. The City will avoid creating other sub-area plans to avoid overlapping plan recommendations, and confusion for stakeholders.

For more information about the Planning Framework, please view [Legistar File number: 71147](#) and its attachments.