

## Adopt-A-Median Program

The Adopt-A-Median program is an opportunity for community members to make Madison beautiful and promote the environment by maintaining and modifying medians around the City.

This volunteer program to help care for plantings in medians has four objectives. First, the program will set a baseline of standards for plants in the medians. Second, safety for volunteers working in the right-of-way will be emphasized. Third, inclusion of public rain gardens in the program will raise awareness of rain gardens as a tool to improve Madison's lakes and streams, as the gardens collect and infiltrate water from impervious areas. And fourth, the program will promote a sense of community pride.

## The Issue

The City has 246 medians that are not under City contract for maintenance or mowed by a City agency. These medians are voluntarily maintained to some degree, or not at all.

In 2014, from mid-October through early November, City Engineering staff conducted field inspections of the 246 medians. Five characteristics of each median were rated on a scale of 1-3 (poor; fair; and good, respectively). Rated attributes included: Plant quantity (need for replacement); Weeds; Mulch; and Trash. The fifth category was observing plant height (32" or greater), and if the plants posed a hazard to pedestrians and motorists by obscuring visibility from tip to tip of the median. Plants over 32" high triggered immediate trimming by Engineering Operations crews while the Adopt-A-Median program coordinator simultaneously reached out to the Alder and Neighborhood Association to explain why the action was taken. The Neighborhood Association or individual residents were then invited to participate in the program. For results of the Fall Rating, please see "Attachment A". Going forward, the Engineering Division will inventory the medians not under City contract twice yearly; first in the early spring and again in late fall.

## How to Participate

Information about the Adopt-A-Median program, is available on the City's web site, <http://www.cityofmadison.com/transportation/roadworks/adoptamedian/>. The program is open to interested parties affiliated with neighborhood associations, groups or businesses or volunteers working on an individual basis.

Prospective adopters begin by completing a Request for Application to identify the median(s) they wish to care for. Rain gardens located on publically owned land are also available for adoption. One Terms & Condition form is required to be completed by the individual or group organizer. Signed Waivers are required from all volunteers who will be working on the median. These documents are reviewed and signed by the City Engineer and kept on file with the Engineering Division. The time period for median adoption is two years, but many adopters have provided open-ended dates. The program

coordinator contacts adopters twice a year to see how they are doing and remind participants to complete and submit Waivers.

With approved application and waiver forms, volunteers may receive free mulch (coordinated delivery in the volunteers' neighborhood) and supplies such as safety vests and traffic cones. Some monetary reimbursement for approved plantings (annuals suitable for medians), may also be available from the City Engineering Division.

### Going Forward

Currently, 33 medians (13%) are adopted. Using the fall inspection data to identify priority medians for adoption is the next step. The Adopt-A-Median program proposes to continue to work through neighborhood associations to promote the program, utilize the City's web site and social media to promote the program, as well as identify opportunities for promotion in the local media; and prepare targeted post card mailings to homes near medians.

A median that receives a complaint due to plant height will be monitored for one year by the City while the Adopt-A-Median program works to find an adopter. A temporary sign promoting the program may be placed in the median for up to 30 calendar days. The sign would be placed by the Engineering Division after notifying the Alder and Neighborhood Association of its upcoming placement. The proposed size of the sign is 26" wide by 16" high.

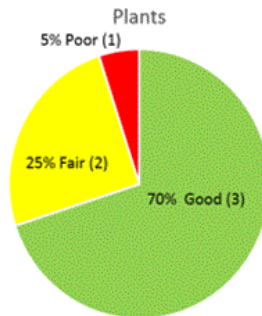
Medians that require Engineering Operations crews to cut down overgrown plants or weeds and are not adopted may be turned over to a low maintenance option, such as low grow sumac, as Engineering crew workload allows. Such action would be taken after notifying the Alder and Neighborhood Association of proposed action.

## Attachment A: 2014 Fall Median Inspection Rating Results

Rating Scale: '1' = Poor (red); '2' = Fair (yellow); '3' = Good (green)

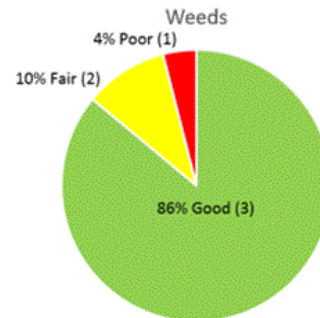
### Plant Replacement

1 = 50% or more require replacement (Poor/red)  
 2 = 25 - 50% of plants need replacement (Fair/yellow)  
 3 = Less than 25% of plants need replacement (Good/green)



### Weeds

1 = Overtaken by weeds (Poor/red)  
 2 = Some weeds (Fair/yellow)  
 3 = Free of weeds (Good/green)



### Mulch

1 = Mulch needs to be replaced/ added (Poor/red)  
 2 = OK for near future (Fair/yellow)  
 3 = Looks new (Good/green)



### Trash

1 = More than 5 items (Poor/red)  
 2 = Between 1 - 5 items (Fair/yellow)  
 3 = Free of trash (Good/green)

