

## **Engineering Street Name Policy (Current Criteria)**

### **Purpose**

There is continued growth and urbanization in the City of Madison and adjacent thereto and it is necessary and desirable that a policy for street names in and adjacent to the City be established and responsibility for the consistent and singular implementation of such policy be assigned.

The different streets in the City of Madison shall bear the names given on the maps and databases referred to in Sec. 10.34(2) MGO.

The purpose for uniform street addresses (this includes street naming) is to enable emergency vehicles to respond quickly to calls, expedite postal and other delivery services, eliminate confusion, and to locate business places and residences without difficulty or delay. Also, new public and private street names shall be subject to the approval of the City Engineer. (10.34(1) & 10.34(4) MGO)

The City of Madison shall remain unbiased in its choice of approving or changing street names as the City has citizens from many diverse cultural backgrounds. Care should be taken to approve street names that are likely not to offend or deter a substantial number of citizens from living in any portion of the City of Madison.

### **General Policy - Street Name Approval Criteria**

The current policy for approving street names is subject to the following:

1. Chapter 10.34 Street Numbers, of the City of Madison General Ordinances
2. Resolution No. 12,459, File No. 5055-47, adopted 1967, General Policy – Street Names
3. Additional policy and criteria developed by City Engineering

#### **A. Chapter 10.34 MGO:**

Portions of 10.34 of the Madison General Ordinances apply to the approval of street names. Those portions are as follows:

1. 10.34(2) - The City Engineer shall establish and maintain a street address for all parcels in the City of Madison in conformance with this ordinance and in consultation with the U.S. Postal Service Addressing Guidelines. Residential buildings shall take their address off the street upon which they front. Commercial buildings shall take their address off the street from which they gain primary access and primary fire apparatus access to the property. Internal building addresses shall be numeric and approved by the City Engineer in consultation with the Fire Marshal. The City Engineer shall maintain records, including maps and databases, of the street address numbers and street names.
2. 10.34(4) - The different streets in the City of Madison shall bear the names given on the maps referred to in Sec. 10.34(2). New public and private street names shall be subject to the approval of the City Engineer who shall consult with the US Postal Service Standard Addressing Guidelines and generally shall use the following criteria:

- a. New street names shall not duplicate or closely approximate street names already assigned within the City of Madison municipal limits or surrounding areas.
- b. Postal suffixes, prefixes and directionals shall not be used as street names (example: Terrace St, East Ave).
- c. Directionals shall not be used as a suffix (Yellow St East). No post-directionals shall be allowed (Yellow East).
- d. Special characters such as apostrophes, hyphens, decimals, or periods shall not be allowed
- e. Use the most common spelling of a street name (example: "Dakota", not "Dacota"; "Wind", not "Wynd").
- f. New street names shall be no longer than 17 character spaces including the Postal approved abbreviated suffix

**B. Engineering Street Name Policy Criteria:**

The following additional street naming criteria are as follows:

1. Names which have homonyms (other words pronounced similarly but spelled differently) should not be used. (Days / Daze; Air / Heir, Draught/Draft).
2. Two-word names or one-word names that can be confused as two-word names should not be used. This avoids the problem of two words being combined into one word, or vice versa, when entered (Clearlake, Clear Lake, Brookhaven, Baytree). Avoid Compound words.
3. Except where historically significant\* (\*Subjective); Do not use proper names. (Joe Montana Rd, John Smith Ln, Ellie Mae Dr).
4. No corporation names or a business name shall be approved.
5. Wherever possible, use naming themes in subdivisions or even larger geographic areas such as quadrants. Choosing names related to a single theme (e.g., birds, flowers, planets, etc.) is suggested as a means of general identification for streets in a subdivision.
6. To facilitate the display of street names on maps and mapping programs, short road lengths shall have short street names.
7. Names should be pleasant sounding, appropriate, and easy to read and pronounce (so that the public, and children in particular, can read, spell, pronounce, type, or text, the name in an emergency situation).
8. Names that are difficult to pronounce or difficult to spell should be avoided. (Examples: Reign, Poinsettia, Weimaraner, Charcuterie).
9. Where a street maintains the same general direction, except for curvilinear changes for short distances, the same street name shall continue for the entire length of the street. Address numbering difficulties shall also be considered in whether an additional street name is warranted.
10. A street name may be changed for through streets at major street intersections or when required to conform to the proposed or existing address numbering in the area.
11. A street name for an existing street which is planned as, but not currently, a through street due to intermediate undeveloped lands, that street name shall be continued for those portions of that planned street within any proposed land division or dedication.

12. When a street forks into two streets, the fork with the higher traffic volume shall continue the same name.
13. Streets that are reconfigured, realigned, or relocated may require a name change or new street name. Generally, the name retained goes to the street with the larger number of homes, dwellings, or commercial structures in order to minimize the number of people affected.
14. If a portion of an existing street is permanently closed, by barriers or the removal of pavement, two street segments with the same name would result. The street segment with the lesser number of homes, dwellings, or commercial structures should be renamed in order to minimize the number of impacted property owners.
15. Street names shall be assigned so that two intersections shall not have the exact same intersecting street names.

**C. Street Naming Policy Goals:**

The policy seeks to accomplish goals as follows:

1. Making sure emergency services can understand and navigate to an address quickly
2. Street names that fit on street signs
3. Facilitate mail/delivery getting to the correct location.
4. Street names should be easy to spell and pronounce
5. Facilitate mapping of streets
6. Ensure the City is welcoming to all people by using street names that are inclusive and diverse.
7. Provide straightforward instruction to the developers and corporations submitting the names (small number of people in Madison)
8. Maintaining a process to verify that the requirements and criteria are met

**Approval Process**

**A. Submittals**

1. A land division is prepared and/or submitted to City of Madison Planning under the below scenarios.
  1. A Developer / Owner may make contact with the Addressing Coordinator prior to making a submittal for approval of a Certified Survey Map, Preliminary Plat or Final Plat.
  2. A Developer / Owner makes a Preliminary Plat or Certified Survey Map submittal to Planning.
    - a. Proposed street names are typically included on the face of the Preliminary Plat or Certified Survey Map. Although, the Subdivision Ordinance (16.23 MGO) does allow the labeling of the streets with a letter of the alphabet for preliminary plat consideration.
  3. A Developer / Owner makes a Final Plat submittal to Planning.
  4. A Developer / Owner makes a site development / redevelopment submittal (Conditional Use, Rezoning or Permitted use applications) for approval with Planning and/or Zoning. Some sites require named internal private streets/accesses for proper addressing, emergency services and wayfinding.

## B. Street Name Vetting:

1. After any of the above submittals are made, the Address Coordinator begins the review of the proposed Street names for conformance with the City Ordinances and City Engineering street naming policies and criteria. If names are not initially provided as part of the initial submittal, a condition of approval to provide proposed street names for the development project will be required by the Address Coordinator in coordination with other staff in the Land Information section of Engineering.
2. Upon the receipt of all of the proposed street names, the Address Coordinator reviews the proposed street names to determine if they are approvable.
  - a. Do the proposed street names meet the requirements of the Ordinance
  - b. Do the proposed street names meet the criteria of the Street Naming Policy. Some checks and sources used include but not be limited to.
    - Check the character length for USPS conformance
    - Check if there is a duplicate street name with Dane County per Access Dane. <https://accessdane.countyofdane.com/street>
    - Is the name a compound word? Avoidance of having a two word name essentially duplicating a compound word.
    - It is a homonym or does it sound like any other street in Dane County. Words that sound the same do cause confusion per the Madison Police Department
    - Make on line searches using search engines such as Google or similar.
    - Verify that the proposed street name isn't a business.
      - Trademark issues.
      - Is it a local company – possible conflict of interest as the name could be viewed as marketing, promotional or competition?
      - Is it a common business name that is used for various businesses elsewhere?
      - Also search in Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions for business names.  
<https://wdfi.org/apps/corpSearch/Search.aspx>
    - Confirm that the name is not a proper noun.
    - Confirm the definition (if applicable). Typically <https://www.merriam-webster.com> provides adequate definitions. Additional search engine searches will bring up multiple sites for definitions.
    - Confirm if the words in the proposed street name have offensive or controversial meaning(s). Or does it have derogatory alternate meaning(s). Urban Dictionary <https://www.urbandictionary.com>
  - c. Do the proposed street names accomplish the goals of the Street Naming Policy.  
Some items to address:

- If there are concerns, particularly on possible items of confusion that may occur with a proposed street name, contact Dane County 911 for input and thoughts of any issues.
- Also, any emergency services confusion concerns should be reviewed by and coordinated with Madison Fire Department.

**C. Street Name Approval:**

1. After vetting the street name:
  - a. If a street names are approved, notify the Developer/Owner those names can be used on the Final Plat, Certified Survey Map or Development
  - b. If a street name or names are not approved, notify the Developer/Owner and request a new alternative name suggestions.
    - Address coordinator provides the basis of a name not being approved.
    - Coordinate with the Developer/Owner alternate names until all of the names for the development have been approved.
  - c. If the Developer/Owner still wants a street name that was not approved by the Addressing Coordinator, they may request review by the Addressing Coordinator's immediate manager for review.
    - The manager shall approve or not approve the proposed street name. The manager shall notify the Developer / Owner of their decision with an explanation.
    - If the manager does not approve the name, the Developer / Owner may request review by the City Engineer. The decision of approval or non-approval by the City Engineer shall be provided to the Developer / Owner with explanation.
  - d. Upon the final approval of the proposed street names, the Address Coordinator and or Land Information Staff shall check the Final Plat, Certified Survey Map or site plans for the approved names before final sign off of the land division or development.