

From: [Bill Connors](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Cc: [Field, Derek](#); [Duncan, John](#); [John Guequierre](#)
Subject: Smart Growth's Comments re Goal 4 in Sustainability Plan
Date: Monday, July 8, 2024 2:07:25 PM

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Chair Zellers and Plan Commission Members:

Smart Growth Greater Madison is concerned about the vagueness of some parts of Goal 4 in the new Madison Sustainability Plan (item 2 on the agenda for your July 8 meeting), which calls on Madison city government to preserve, protect, and increase access to land for urban agriculture, particularly for community members who live in rental housing.

First, Smart Growth has no concern about Action 4.1.

Second, Smart Growth believes Action 4.2 is confusing. This action refers to "the remaining farmland in our community." The use of the word "remaining" makes it appear that this means farmland that is already within the Madison city limits as of the time the new Madison Sustainability Plan is adopted. Is that accurate?

In the future, more farmland will be annexed or attached into the city for the express purpose of developing it, usually for housing. When that farmland comes into the city, will it become part of the "remaining farmland in our community" that the city government will seek to preserve for garden space that the public can access? If so, Action 4.2 should be rewritten to make that intent clear.

Third, in practical terms, what does Action 4.3 about supporting the location and development of market garden opportunities actually mean? Does this mean that if a person or organization has a written option to purchase or has purchased farmland to provide market garden opportunities, the city government will support it? Or does this mean that if a developer proposes to develop farmland already in the city or farmland that would be annexed or attached into the city, a person or organization that want to acquire part of that land for market garden opportunities can expect the city government to attempt to strong-arm the developer into selling the person or organization part of the land at a favorable price? Smart Growth recommends rewriting Action 4.3 to clarify the intent of the action.

Finally, please keep in mind that if the city government forces a substantial part of a large parcel being annexed or attached into the city for development to be preserved for urban agriculture, this will reduce the number of housing units that can be constructed on the parcel, which will cause even more farmland further out to be annexed or attached into Madison for housing development. If the goal is to be friendly to the environment, the land use strategy should be to maximize housing density within the city and in areas immediately outside of the city limits which likely

will be annexed or attached into the city and preserve farmland farther away from the city. Pushing new housing development further out from the city's core will increase miles driven by gasoline-powered vehicles. Encouraging urban sprawl in the name of preserving land for urban agriculture is the opposite of sustainability.

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From: [Grace Hasler](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Plan Commission Agenda Item # 83420
Date: Monday, July 8, 2024 1:21:37 PM

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Members of Plan Commission,

I am writing to speak to Item # 83420 regarding the adoption of the City of Madison Sustainability Plan. I have been following the drafts of this plan and read it several times. I applaud the Mayor's office for its work and for the agencies and departments who are planning well for the future of Madison as it grows and changes. There are two goals that interest me in particular.

Goal #2 speaks to the built environment- "the design and spatial arrangement of our building, stress, parks and green spaces shape our lives"... The goals in this section speak to the importance of enhancing the wellbeing and health of our community as climate warms. Tree canopy and parks and greenspaces should be more vigorously pursued in the Sustainability Plan.

Goal # 7 speaks to Healthy Ecosystems "Madison parks, open space and other urban green areas are essential parts of our community's fabric. It speaks to the need to expand our urban tree canopy.

I would ask the Plan Commission to consider, in particular, whether the Sustainability Plan is ambitious enough regarding our urban environment. Are we giving protection to existing tree canopy? What risks are there to our natural environment and how might we address them more effectively in the plan as it is? In this section one of the goals is to increase tree canopy from 23%-40% by 2080. The heat island effect of our buildings and impermeable surfaces will warm our city as climate warms far earlier than this goal provides.

I encourage you to champion our urban forest and healthier ecosystem than this plan currently contains.

Respectfully,

Grace Hasler
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