

SMC Survey Feedback & Strategic Direction

Sustainable Madison Committee | Feb 2026



CITY OF MADISON
SUSTAINABILITY

Overview

- Clarify & define SMC's role
- Share key themes from member feedback
- Identify areas of alignment & sustainability vision
- Discuss Priorities/Strategy and Next Steps for 2026



Survey: Quotes from Members



“With 24 goals across 8 elements, there’s a risk of everything being a priority (meaning nothing is). As SMC transitions from plan development to plan implementation, we need greater strategic clarity about our role and impact.”

“I would like to do more than sit in on meetings and ask a few questions here and there. I know there are incredible things happening, and I'd love to be a part of it!”

“SMC is most valuable when it connects the Sustainability Plan to implementation, helping identify where progress is happening, where support is needed, and what partnerships might move things forward.”

“The SMC needs to inject itself into more issues. We need the Alders on the Committee to keep us more informed on potential policies that are related to sustainability.”

“We still lack the kind of deep cultural shift in understanding that creating a sustainable future will truly require.”

Survey: How Members See SMC's Role



Accountability & Implementation Oversight

- Identifying which goals to prioritize or where the city is falling behind
- Holding departments accountable
- Informing city policy
- Being ahead of major policy decisions

Connecting Community Concerns to Outcome-Based Policy

- Public forum for city residents
- Partnerships between city and community
- Educating our community

Long Term Planning - Looking to the Next 20-30 Years



Survey: What Members Enjoyed Last Year

- **Presentations**
 - Data Centers - Clean Wisconsin + Kathy
 - Interested in continued discussions
 - Building Energy Savings Program
 - Sustain Dane
 - Disaster Relief Centers
 - Dane County Waste & Renewables (field trip candidate)
 - Madison Metro
- **Outreach Updates**
 - SPU Implementation Accountability Discussions/Sustainable Champions
- **Onsite facility visits!**



Survey: What Members Want to do This Year

- More On-Site Visits
- Periodic In-Person Meetings
- Accountability and Definition
- Identify targeted Plan Focus Areas
- Partnership Explorations
- More Outreach



Survey: Pressing Sustainability Issues

- **Zero Waste**
- **Energy Use/Renewable Energy**
 - More programs and incentives for companies and residents
- **Transportation & Infrastructure**
 - Less single-occupancy vehicles
 - More frequent service/run times
 - More accessible routes
- **Housing**
 - Affordable, safe, comfortable housing while lowering carbon footprint and keeping energy rates affordable
- **Social Equity/Environmental Justice**
 - Impact and barriers to participation when it comes to energy transition
- **Cultural Shift in prioritizing Sustainability**
 - Sustainability office is still small and under resourced
- **Long Term Planning: 20-30 Years**
 - Madison as an Island of Stability
 - Population increases
 - Managing Water Usage & Sewers & Pollution etc

Survey: Strategy and Next Steps for 2026

Shift from Planning & Updates → Accountability & Implementation Oversight

- Accountability Mandate - Establish ourselves as oversight body for implementation
 - Create formal pathway to Council/Position SMC upstream of major decisions
 - Sustainability Scorecard to grade progress on Sustainability Plan
- Identify ordinances or policy changes that would accelerate goals
- 2-3 high-leverage areas quarterly/annually
- Partnership Exploration
 - Dane County Office of Climate Change
 - UW Madison / Office of Sustainability

Set up SMC Work group

- Potentially second Monday from the meeting



Survey: Tentative Timeline for 2026

- **Q1: Vision for 2026**
 - Formation of Workgroup
 - Identify 2-3 Priority Goals to work on
- **Q2: Create Work Plans for Goals**
 - Establish corresponding baseline metrics for achievement
 - Pathways to Common Council
 - Begin Partnership Exploration
- **Q3: Progress on Strategic Goals**
 - Potentially create Zero Waste Plan First Draft
 - Potentially draft Environmental Justice Statement
- **Q4: Progress Check-In**
 - Report to Common Council on Progress




Survey: Potential Topic Areas for 2026

- **Develop Zero Waste Plan**
 - Food Scraps/Compost
 - Circular Economy
- **Transportation & Infrastructure**
 - Less SOVs
 - Public transport
- **Renewable Energy**
 - MGE MOU Updates
- **Social Equity**
 - Environmental Justice
 - Impact & Accessibility
- **Data Centers**
 - How this will impact our city





Discussion

- Initial Thoughts
 - Methods & Strategy
 - Focus Areas
 - Setting up a Work Group
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