

# Stormwater Utility Vegetation Management Plan Framework

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# Brief History

- 1970's - open drainage ways conveyed water directly to wetlands or waterways, seeded with turf and grass and mowed
- 1983 - first stormwater ordinance required detention
- 1995 – engineering required ponds and greenways planted with native prairie and wetland species and had varied success
- Mid 90's trees and shrubs were discouraged because they create bare groundlayer
- Prior to 2003 – vegetation maintenance limited to mowing by the Parks Division, and many areas became woody, urban woodlots with aggressive shrubs and trees
- 2003 – Engineering assumed routine maintenance and initiated program to improve overgrown ponds and greenways by removing invasive trees and shrubs with brush clearing and helped return land to mowable conditions
- 2011 – Selective Prairie Management Program to mow only targeted weed areas to preserve prairies and improve invasive control – proved to be cost effective and better option for species preservation
- 2017 – The design philosophy changed and considered including trees within greenway, as well as tree preservation
- 2018 – Greenway Vegetation Coordinator position created to manage all engineering stormwater utility lands
- 2019 – Seasonal trainee positions created for summer work
- 2022 – Conservation Technician position created to help coordinate specialized vegetation work
- 2023 – Mapped all vegetation in GIS maintained by Engineering Stormwater and developed a Tier System as part of a comprehensive analysis of all lands within the stormwater utility and their various levels of health and ecological integrity

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# Why are we doing this?

- Create a transparent framework regarding land management practices and the decision-making process.
- Develop a strategy that protects resources and responds to anticipated increases in storm frequency and intensity related to climate change.
- Evaluate fiscal resources, opportunities and limitations, as well as anticipated growth to better manage our land and develop community priorities while understanding short term and long term fiscal impacts.
- Provide a resource for the public that includes input from outside expertise regarding community concerns.



# Plan Development Components

- Public Engagement
- Advisory Group
- Outside Expertise
  - Focus Topic Workshops with Panel Expert (Call for Proposals)
  - Questionnaire to Professionals in the Field on top concerns/issues
  - Consultant RFP to research best management practices, trends, and science related to top public concerns
- RESJI Toolkit on citywide vegetation maintenance
- Frequent Updates to Board of Public Works



## Public Engagement

Advisory Group  
Outside Expertise  
RESJI Toolkit  
BPW Updates

# Public Engagement

- Inform: Online website, Social media, Listserve for updates, Alder updates, BPW updates
- Public Listening Sessions – Focused on big picture questions, goals, concerns, identifying shared values and priorities. Use feedback to better understand points for further consultant research. In-person on east and west side, and hybrid at MMB for central.
- Community Survey – Similar questions from public listening sessions focusing on big picture questions, goals, concerns and identifying shared values and priorities.
- Focus Topic Workshops - Conversations on top concerns that include a presentation by outside experts

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# Advisory Group

Public Engagement  
**Advisory Group**  
Outside Expertise  
RESJI Toolkit  
BPW Updates

- Includes: City Forester, Staff from Parks, Engineering, Dane County, and Stormwater Engineering from UW Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts Team
- Based on the model from the Dane County Water Resource Management Plan, the Advisory Committee serves to “help gauge local priorities”
- Review public feedback
- Review call for presentations to ensure presentations align with public feedback
- Review consultant proposals to ensure alignment with public feedback

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# Outside Expertise

- Focus Topic Workshops – Based on feedback received in the public listening sessions, issue a call for presenters to speak on specific topics of concern. These presentations are intended to provide education from outside experts on issues identified by the public listening sessions, with follow up questions and thoughts that will be used to guide a consultant RFP process.
- Consultant review of the data, science, and trends related to top public concerns based on feedback from the community visioning sessions, deeper dive workshops, and online survey.
- Technical questionnaire – Issue questionnaire to cast a wider net of experts on specific topics/concerns identified through public engagement process to professionals in land management, water resources, ecology, climate change, and other applicable fields.



# RESJ Toolkit

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**RESJ Toolkit**  
BPW Updates

- Inter-agency Racial Equity and Social Justice Toolkit evaluation on vegetation maintenance on public land in communities of color or low-income populations. This team includes staff from City Parks, City Forestry, City Engineering, Dane County Office of Energy and Climate Change.

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# BPW Updates

- August BPW – Present Public Engagement and Plan Development Framework
- BPW – Present “what we heard”, Racial Equity and Social Justice toolkit, next steps for research from technical experts, and draft chapters
- BPW – Present what we heard from technical experts, and draft chapters
- BPW – Final Plan Adoption

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# STORMWATER UTILITY VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN DRAFT PROCESS

## Concurrent Processes:

- Inter-agency City Racial Equity and Social Justice Evaluation Toolkit on Vegetation Maintenance
- Advisory Group: Help gauge local priorities.



