

Strategy 6

Facilitate compact growth to reduce the development of farmland.

Actions:

- a. Continue to update peripheral neighborhood development plans to increase allowable development intensity and create density minimums.
- b. Steer peripheral growth towards mapped priority areas, with a focus on land already served by utilities.
- c. Accommodate a majority of growth through infill and redevelopment.

Dane County contains some of Wisconsin's most productive farmland. Feedback through the Imagine Madison process highlighted the importance of infill/redevelopment and compact edge growth to reduce the loss of farmland. The City of Madison strives to accommodate a large share of Dane County's growth within a small geographic area. For example, about 50% of the new housing units constructed in Madison over the last decade were infill/redevelopment projects (primarily multifamily residential projects). This compact growth pattern reduces the demand for development of farmland within the county. Even City of Madison edge development that converts farmland to housing and employment uses is an improvement over spreading the same amount of housing and employment development over a much larger rural area. The impacts of low density rural development are particularly acute when they are located in isolated areas and interrupt larger tracts of farmland and efficient farming operations.

The community preference for infill and redevelopment should not be taken as a demand for eliminating edge growth. Recognizing the importance of creating well-designed and complete neighborhoods, regardless of where they are located, the City should continue to reexamine peripheral neighborhood development plans and update them, seeking opportunities to allow for more efficient land use and to reduce the rate at which farmland is developed. Such changes should be accompanied by increased street, bicycle, and pedestrian connectivity to shorten trips, facilitate future transit service, and

encourage more healthy transportation options such as walking and biking to nearby jobs and mixed-use activity centers. The City should continue to preserve options for urban growth by exercising its extraterritorial jurisdiction and by working with nearby communities on intergovernmental agreements that limit low density, low-value, high (municipal service) cost development in potential future city expansion areas.

This Strategy and the accompanying Actions are closely related to Strategy 5 on the preceding pages.

a. Update Neighborhood Development Plans

Many of the City's peripheral neighborhood development plans (NDPs) were originally adopted in the late 1990s and early to mid-2000s. While they included some forward-thinking aspects, the layouts and mix of land uses tended to be disconnected, car-oriented, and low intensity, and significantly under-valued agricultural land for food production. NDPs should be revised to boost development intensity where appropriate and to enhance the mix of land uses, which in turn will decrease City expenses for service provision and increase property tax revenue. Modifications should be accompanied by additional street and sidewalk connectivity to disperse traffic on a network of gridded streets and encourage biking, walking, and transit use. Such improvements will help mitigate potential increases in car traffic that may otherwise accompany more intense development and encourage healthy transportation options, such as walking and biking.

b. Priority Growth Areas

Peripheral growth should first occur in areas already served by utilities, followed by other areas already within the Central Urban Service Area (CUSA). Leapfrog development should be minimized, though it is sometimes unavoidable if certain landowners do not choose to develop their

“Make housing affordable in the city so people don't have to build farther out.”
— online participant



properties. Growth should be guided through careful planning of utility extensions and phasing plans included within updated Neighborhood Development Plans. There is currently a significant amount of undeveloped land in the CUSA. Amendments to add land to the CUSA should be consistent with adopted City plans and should include consideration of variables including the amount of farmland that would be lost and the amount of development that would be accommodated. See the Growth Priority Areas Map on page 16 for priority peripheral growth areas and Activity Centers.

c. Redevelopment and Infill Growth

Accommodation of a significant amount of growth within infill and redevelopment areas is one method to reduce the demand for the development of farmland. Redevelopment should be integrated into corridors and established and transitioning Activity Centers identified on the Growth Priority Areas map, consistent with this Plan and adopted sub-area plans. It should be noted that while not making land available for redevelopment forces growth to occur elsewhere, simply having land available for redevelopment does not mean that it will happen instead of edge development. Demographic and market forces can have as much, or more, influence on where people want to live as availability of land. Implementation of this Action will require implementation of other Actions within this Plan, including improvements to the transit system and the preparation of plans to transition auto-oriented commercial areas into mixed-use Activity Centers.

Strategy 8

Ensure access to food that is affordable, nutritious, and culturally specific.

Actions:

- Continue initiatives to support the introduction of neighborhood-serving grocery stores into underserved established neighborhoods.
- Identify public and private spaces suitable for community gardens and explore expansion of existing gardens to meet demand.
- Improve access to fresh foods by encouraging and facilitating the equitable distribution of farmers markets and farm stands.
- Encourage initiatives that support the emergency food system and facilitate donation of near-expired, but high-quality, foods.

Access to healthy food is one of the most basic life-sustaining Strategies of the Comprehensive Plan. There are several areas of the city where residents, especially low-income residents and those without cars, face significant barriers to purchasing affordable nutritious food. The Food Access Improvement Areas Map on page 60 identifies these areas. Beyond being healthful, available food must be affordable, meaning people with lower incomes are able to regularly purchase it without falling back on cheaper processed foods. It must be nutritious, meaning that it should be part of a healthful and balanced diet. Lastly, culturally specific food that reflects the cultural norms of the people eating it should be available. This is especially needed in the racially and ethnically diverse areas of the city. Many partners will participate in achieving this Strategy. For instance, Meadowridge Library has a kitchen and provides food and cooking classes to neighborhood children and adults.

a. Retail Access

Some areas in Madison are “food deserts,” regions without easy access to grocery stores or other outlets for healthful food. These areas may not be totally devoid of food outlets, but may only be served by convenience stores or other establishments that generally sell unhealthy processed

foods, often at high prices. The Healthy Retail Access Program, Double Dollars, Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program, and SEED Grants are existing programs that should be continued and expanded to combat food insecurity and create more opportunities for people to purchase affordable, healthful food.

b. Gardens

Open space throughout neighborhoods should be considered for conversion into community gardens. These areas can evolve into neighborhood centers that include food production space, parks, plazas, meeting spaces, spaces for food sale or distribution, and paths or transit stops for greater access. Community gardens were strongly supported by Resident Panels and other Imagine Madison participants. Gardens can be located in a variety of both public and private spaces. Identifying locations for additional community gardens and urban agriculture should be undertaken in a future citywide planning effort.

“Those from low-income neighborhoods do not have access to affordable healthy foods. There are food deserts in Madison & we need to address this!”
— Community Meeting participant



Strategy 7

Support efforts for businesses and consumers to produce and buy local food, products, and services.

Actions:

- Foster a Northside Food Innovation District.
- Continue implementation of the Madison Public Market and MarketReady program.
- Expand the Street Vending program.

In the 1980s, big box stores started acquiring a significant share of retail spending, sending profits to company headquarters and shareholders rather than keeping them in the local economy. The rise of Amazon and e-commerce in the 2000s continued this trend. When goods and services are bought from local businesses, however, it is estimated that every dollar spent has a multiplier effect and is returned to the local economy three times.

As the climate changes, access to food grown in other states and countries becomes less certain. Dependence on other sources of food can be reduced by producing more local food. This also provides economic benefits to growers, suppliers, distributors, and retailers in the food system. A growing food sector can also benefit residents that face barriers to employment. Many jobs in the food industry do not require college degrees but some offer opportunities for advancement.

a. Food Innovation Districts

Madison is positioned to develop strong local and regional food-related infrastructure. The City and partners should seek opportunities to cluster and incentivize the growth of aggregation, processing, and distribution facilities. The

“Support incubators that foster an environment for small business/start-ups.” — Community Meeting participant

developing Public Market will anchor a food innovation district connected to the north side, linking the FEED Kitchens (shown in the photo below), Madison College’s culinary school, and the former Oscar Mayer plant site. There will be similar opportunities in south Madison, and elsewhere in the city. Having food-related businesses cluster in close proximity provides benefits from sharing ideas, talent, vendors, and infrastructure. Food innovation districts in Madison will, in turn, support growers, processors and buyers in Dane County and the region.

b. Public Market and MarketReady

The City of Madison is in the process of developing the Madison Public Market. The core mission of this project is to create a platform for diverse small businesses to reach customers for their products in a low-cost space. As part of the planning for the Public Market, the City is implementing the MarketReady program, which is a training, technical assistance, coaching, and micro-grant program focused on a cohort of 30 prospective Public Market merchants. The City should continue to focus on diverse entrepreneurship in the planning and implementation of the Public Market

project, and explore funding and implementing future cohorts of the MarketReady Program.

c. Street Vending

The City’s Street Vending program adds to Madison’s vitality and provides a low-cost startup business opportunity for diverse entrepreneurs. For example, City staff estimate that 75% of Madison’s licensed food carts are owned and operated by immigrants or people of color. Food carts often serve as a launchpad to creating a larger business. Some vendors have added second or third carts, moved into brick-and-mortar restaurants, started catering companies, and expanded into producing value-added food products.

While being mindful of the competitiveness of this industry and monitoring potential over-saturation, the City should find ways to continue to grow and support street vending as an entrepreneurial opportunity. This includes connecting food carts with more vending opportunities throughout Madison, such as large events or employment locations, and supporting programming to help vendors connect with resources and training programs.



Strategy 3

Create safe and affirming community spaces that bring people together and provide social outlets for underrepresented groups.

Actions:

- Identify existing underutilized spaces, both public and private, and help facilitate their increased usage and activation.
- Design a wide variety of new parks and public spaces in developing parts of the city for enjoyment by a broad range of users.
- Engage artists and talent to find positive ways for the City to improve its support of concerts, events, and gatherings, including encouraging music venues for a wider range of audiences.

Opportunity for social interaction is a major factor that attracts and connects people to cities. Whether it's interacting with others they identify with or experiencing different cultures, traditions, and lifestyles, cities provide natural opportunities for people to interact, share, and learn. It is important for residents and visitors alike to feel welcome. Providing an array of quality public spaces is not a luxury, but a necessity for community wellbeing. Successful cities recognize this and make it a priority to provide an array of spaces that bring social, physical, health, and economic benefits to the larger population.

Public spaces knit a community together and come in many forms, including parks, streets, sidewalks, and just about any public space where people interact. They also often include a range of facilities, such as community centers, libraries, and schools. Vibrant, engaging places can be one of the community's most valuable assets. Poorly designed and uninviting spaces often go unused, or are misused, deaden the surrounding area, and can be a drain on City resources.

Madison has a reputation for providing a wider range of cultural, artistic, and entertainment offerings than many cities of its size. However, as Madison welcomes new residents, its cultural offerings must continue to grow and

become more reflective of its population to ensure that everyone feels welcome and safe. This includes providing culturally appropriate venues for events, family gatherings, food, traditions, music, and exhibits.

a. Existing Spaces

Creating safe and affirming spaces doesn't have to mean creating new spaces. There are countless opportunities to improve on existing under used, or unused, spaces across the city. Working with the community to inventory these spaces and evaluating their potential could get residents talking to each other about creative ways these spaces could help address needs in their neighborhood. Simply ensuring these spaces are welcoming and accessible for informal gatherings is often all that is needed for them to serve as cultural hubs.

b. New Spaces

As Madison continues to grow, it is important to consider the needs of future residents in new neighborhoods on the edges of the city. These suburban areas are sometimes criticized as being dull and generic, but incorporating a variety of places that can be used by a wide range of residents should be a goal of neighborhood development plans. The City should specifically review proposals for new subdivisions and development projects to ensure they are providing and designing inclusive community spaces.

"When members of Madison's Hmong community go to the park, they may host a gathering of 30 or 40 people, which is complicated by the fact that many parks have isolated picnic tables or grills. Something as simple as putting grills or tables closer together would make the community more willing to use Madison parks."

— Peng Her (Cap Times, March 1, 2018)

c. City Support of Events

Madison offers many events that appeal to a wide range of residents and visitors. The City supports these events in multiple ways, and new events are continually being proposed. As with any new event or venue, it can take some time to fully understand the needs of those putting on the events as well as those attending them. In addition to event organizers, the City should engage artists and talent to discuss issues surrounding permitting, policing, transportation, and other matters so they can be addressed in a comprehensive manner. A current example of this is the City's Task Force on Equity in Music and Entertainment and their work on hip hop in Madison.



Strategy 9

Support sustainable farming and gardening practices that protect the ecosystem and public health.

Actions:

- Work with partners to continue to support community gardens and associated infrastructure.
- Identify opportunities to support local food production within the city.
- Establish guidelines for sustainable agricultural best practices.

Sustainable farming and gardening practices enable farmers and residents to produce local, healthful food using techniques that do not come at the expense of public or environmental health. Some common practices include minimizing water use, reducing runoff, and using natural soil amendments such as compost.

a. Support Community Gardens

Community gardens play a vital role in supplying residents with locally grown food. The City and partners should explore two measures to sustain and expand the use of community gardens. The leases of community gardens on City-owned property should be evaluated for extension. In addition, community partners should collaborate on identifying opportunities for new facilities in areas that would require little infrastructure to provide water and access to gardens.

b. Food Production within the City

As Madison continues to grow it will be necessary to balance development with the use of land or buildings for urban agriculture and food production. Food security is enhanced through the preservation of agricultural lands and expanded support for local and regional food production. Properties owned by the City, currently undeveloped properties, or properties in commercial and industrial areas have potential to increase local, sustainable food production and encourage neighborhood interaction and increase social capital. A map of existing agricultural operations should be developed, followed by a prioritization

of properties where food production as a future land use could be encouraged.

The City should also identify locations that would be suitable for agrihoods, where development is integrated with a working farm. Troy Gardens on Madison's north side is a good example. Agrihoods could be developed at a variety of scales, but may be most appropriate on the edge of the city where they could serve as a transition to existing rural uses.

c. Establish Guidelines

Madison must work to reduce the use of harmful fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. Pesticides have negative environmental and health impacts. Fertilizers contain high levels of phosphorus which negatively affects the lakes and waterways. Guidelines should be established for urban agriculture to promote best practices that support the natural environment and public health in the community.

Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture involves the production of food for personal consumption, market sale, donation, or education, within cities and suburbs. Urban agriculture exists in multiple forms, including market farms, community gardens, school gardens, full-year vegetable production in greenhouses, orchards, rooftop gardens, and the raising of chickens, fish, and bees.

Madison has supported a recent growth in urban agriculture through its Zoning Code, and other City ordinances permitting community gardens, fruit and nut trees, bee-hives, and backyard chickens. The Zoning Code allows the creation of Urban Agriculture Districts to encourage small-scale farming within the city, one example being the 4.5-acre Troy Community Farm on Madison's north side. A joint city/county resident work group has also been formed to develop supportive policies for urban farms and community gardens across Madison and Dane County.



Strategy 1

Pursue regional solutions to regional issues.

Actions:

- Strengthen the capacity of regional agencies to foster collaboration and consensus.
- Work with Dane County and adjacent communities to improve the quality of area lakes and preserve other natural resources and facilities.
- Work with Dane County and other municipalities to develop a regional food systems plan.

Dane County is comprised of 61 cities, villages, and towns. While intergovernmental collaboration is important for a number of issues, the number of municipalities in the county can make collaboration difficult. Some issues, such as transportation, water quality, and urban growth are best addressed at the regional level. The City should continue to work with regional entities to address issues that require sustained efforts by multiple jurisdictions.

a. Collaboration and Consensus

Madison works with various agencies to address regional issues. One of the City's key partners in addressing water quality and urban growth issues is the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC). CARPC provides many services to area communities, including review of amendments to urban service areas and region-wide land use planning. The City should continue to work closely with CARPC on key regional issues such as water quality and loss of farmland. The City and Dane County should work together to address various issues including affordable housing, social services, clean air, green space, transit, and economic development.

Finding regional solutions continues to increase in importance as the region itself grows. Issues of affordable housing, homelessness, transportation, and water quality are best addressed through collaboration at a regional level. With nearly half of the county's population, the City has the opportunity to contribute to collaborative efforts with not only CARPC, but also the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board, Dane County, and the Madison Region

Economic Partnership (MadREP). The City should also take a leadership role in consensus building on transit.

b. Lake Water Quality and other Natural Features

The water quality of Madison's lakes is very important to the City and other municipalities in the region. Challenges to lake quality include agricultural runoff and discharge of urban storm water. The 359 square mile Yahara River watershed contains dozens of governmental units, necessitating a regional approach to improve the quality of Madison's lakes. In addition to working with other local governments, Madison should also collaborate with the variety of community groups working on water quality issues.

c. Regional Food Systems

Dane County has some of the most productive agricultural land in the world, as well as a strong food economy. The City should support Dane County and other entities in developing a regional food systems plan that identifies key improvements to the regional food supply chain. Strengthening the local supply chain will bring additional food security to the region, job opportunities for residents with a wide range of backgrounds, and support preservation of agricultural land.

