

From: [Bill Connors](#)
To: [Mayor](#); [All Alders](#)
Subject: Smart Growth's Comments re Goal 4 in Sustainability Plan
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:22:52 AM

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Mayor Rhodes-Conway and Alders:

I am writing to you regarding Goal 4 in the Sustainability Plan, which is item 82 on the agenda for your meeting on Tuesday, August 6, Legistar 83420.

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 wants 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 planning 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.

Bill Connors
Executive Director
Smart Growth Greater Madison, Inc.
608-228-5995 (mobile)
www.smartgrowthgreatermadison.org

25 W Main St - 5th Floor, Suite 33
Madison, WI 53703

From: [Linda](#)
To: [May, Gregg](#)
Cc: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Comment letter attached re draft Sustainability Plan
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 1:17:14 PM
Attachments: [Sustainability Plan.pdf](#)

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