

## FARMLAND PRESERVATION TASK FORCE

### PROGRESS REPORT OCTOBER 2024

The [Farmland Preservation Task Force Report](#) was accepted by the Common Council in May of 2023. The report includes:

- Executive Summary describing the Task Force’s establishment and purpose, timeline and process, conclusions and recommendations on pages 1-2.
- General Recommendations narrative on pages 13-14.
- Implementation Matrix for specific Recommendations on pages 15-18.

Since then, Task Force members and colleagues have pursued various recommendations some of which have been Completed, some are currently In Progress, and some have Not Yet Begun. An updated version of the Implementation Matrix with a color coded “Progress Column” and explanatory notes through September 2024 has been created for purpose of updating the Madison Food Policy Council on the work of the Task Force since Spring 2023 and will be attached to the Meeting Minutes of October 16, 2024 in Legistar.

#### COMPLETED

1. **Subdivision Ordinance Revision** (Legistar #71830, August 2023) added “*Encourage the preservation of land for urban agriculture*” to Land Use Section 16.23(1)(g).
2. **Comprehensive Plan Interim Update** (Legistar #80281, November 2023) added community gardens and urban agriculture to the list of appropriate land uses in the Parks & Open Space category on page 25, and a definition of community gardens to the Glossary. It’s worth noting that other updates may have opened certain agricultural areas to low density residential development.
3. **Land Banking Policy Revision** (Legistar #81656, March 2024) amended the Land Banking Fund Policy to add urban agriculture as an appropriate secondary use for properties acquired through the fund.
4. **Ag Leases Resolution** (Legistar #81655, March 2024) directed City Staff to implement recommendations for improving lease language on lands being rented for row crop agriculture offered by the RAFS Work Group in a January 2021 Memo, but no changes were made to leases for the 2024 growing season.
5. **Community Garden Advocacy** during a Parks Division planning process for the Olbrich North Parcel (behind Garver Feed Mill) resulted in a provision for raised bed community gardening on remediated soil in the adopted [plan](#) that will require community collaboration to build. (April 2024)

## IN PROGRESS

1. **Parks & Open Space Plan** is being updated in 2024 for the next 5 years. Suggestions have been made to include urban agriculture goals and plan proactively to preserve appropriate areas on City-owned lands.
2. **Sustainability Plan** is being updated in 2024. Suggestions were made in Land Use Planning Recommendation #6 on pages 15-16 of the report to encourage agri-communities; other revisions prompted by a presentation to the Task Force in February 2023 were shared by email shortly thereafter.
3. **Ag Lease revisions** are being drafted for submittal to Staff by December 2024.
4. **Garver Community Garden** interest, demand and organizer capacity is being surveyed by the Madison Food Policy Council's Community Gardens representative and staff at Rooted.
5. **Urban Hoophouses** are being discussed with City Staff, and current city policies are being assessed to formalize and clarify permitting options.
6. **Community Composting** is also being discussed with City Staff.

## NEXT STEPS

1. Request SEED Grant committee consider guidelines that encourage awards to new farm start-up infrastructure costs, prioritizing Black, Hmong, Indigenous, Latinx, and other historically disadvantaged or marginalized urban farmers.
2. Draft and introduce a Resolution to adopt federal EPA standards for raised bed gardening on contaminated soils in the City.
3. Explore re-convening the Integrated Pest Management Policy Review Task Force. This staff & committee member group had been meeting bi-weekly for over a year, and was in the final stages of producing a draft document and planning for public input sessions, when the pandemic forced its suspension in 2020.

## APPROACHES TO ADVOCACY

### **Planning Processes/Documents** (e.g. Parks and Open Space, Sustainability Plan and Comprehensive Plan Updates)

- Engage early and often throughout the published public input process
- Provide recommendations to Staff in writing
- Attend and speak at official public opportunities
- Follow progress as documents are drafted (see project webpage)
- Attend and speak as drafts are discussed by Boards and Commissions
- Provide written feedback to Boards, Commissions and Common Council
- Attend and speak when Common Council considers adoption

### **Common Council Resolutions** (e.g. Land Banking Policy and Ag Lease revisions)

- Potential Uses:
  - Propose new policies (e.g. adopting EPA gardening guidelines in 2025)
  - Revise/improve language in adopted policies and plans
  - Direct/motivate City Staff to implement existing recommendations
- Process: can take several months, plan ahead and keep checking-in
  - Succinctly summarize the goal in writing
  - Approach Alder(s) for potential support/sponsorship
    - MFPC Alder member(s)
    - Resident members' district Alder(s)
  - Draft Resolution language in proper form
    - Alders can help, potential for review by City Clerk and/or Attorney
  - Alder "introduces" the Resolution at a Common Council meeting
    - No discussion by the Council at this meeting
    - Suggest "referrals" to knowledgeable boards/commissions for their input before Resolution returns to Common Council for consideration
  - Follow progress in Legistar once a File ID number is assigned
  - Attend and support the Resolution at any referral committee discussions
    - See Agenda for input process guidelines
  - Provide written comments in advance when unable to attend meetings
    - See Agenda for input process guidelines
  - When Resolution returns to Common Council for final consideration
    - Encourage supporting Alders to speak in favor
    - Follow Agenda guidelines for public input
    - Provide written comments in advance for the record
    - Attend and speak at the meeting if possible