

MEMORANDUM

Date: February 5, 2025
To: Common Council
From: Christie Baumel, Mayor's Office staff
Karen Kapusta Pofahl, Common Council staff
Subject: Ordinance 87044 and Resolution 87066 regarding the BCC Streamlining Project

Legislation Description:

The City of Madison, in an effort to reduce the number of boards, commissions, and committees (BCCs) in its system, is introducing a package of legislation to that end. This includes Ordinance 87044, which helps move closer to that goal by combining some committees and sunsetting or dissolving others, as well as Resolution 87066, which guides steps for additional potential changes in 2025.

Problem Statement and Goals:

Madison highly values its BCCs and the contributions of members, and at the same time has long recognized that it has many more BCCs than its peer cities. This large system is both expansive and also cumbersome to navigate and challenging to adequately support. The unwieldy structure of this system puts burdens on the public, volunteer members, support staff, and elected officials, which diminish its democratic effectiveness and the ability of the City to adequately support it. Reducing the total number of BCCs helps to address these issues and helps to achieve the following goals.

- **Clarity for Residents** – when following legislation, it can be confusing to know how many committees to follow. Fewer committees can help mitigate unnecessary confusion.
- **Enable More Engagement** – free up alder time for engagement in their districts; recognize that engaging through committees is not a style of engagement that most residents prefer.
- **Effective, Efficient Operations** – focus in on where we allocate staff support, alder time, and legislative referrals.
- **Strong, Accountable Committees** – Staff are better able to support committees (e.g. with work plans, member onboarding, etc.) if there are fewer.

Background:

The Madison Common Council has been leading a process to streamline the City's boards, commissions, and committees system for several years, beginning with the Task Force on Government Structure (TFOGS), which issued its final report in 2019. TFOGS found that the current BCC system lacks diversity; can cause a drain on resident, staff, and alder time; lacks accountability; varies in authority and influence; has BCCs that lack a well-defined purpose, have outlived their purpose, or have overlapping

purposes; requires processes that do not facilitate resident participation; and is often inadequately staffed or has inadequate resources. They offered recommendations on ways to improve the BCC organizational structure, training and support, and resident engagement experience, including recommendations to restructure the BCCs and to “eliminate or combine BCCs that are redundant or have outlived their purpose.”

From 2020 to present, two separate subgroups of the Common Council - an Ad Hoc TFOGS Implementation Work Group followed by the Common Council Executive Committee (CCEC) - have worked to further define project goals, conduct additional analysis, and ultimately recommend specific changes to the City’s BCC system. Changes have been made incrementally to select BCCs in parallel to that work. At its December 10, 2024, meeting, CCEC discussed a set of changes to pursue in 2025, and supported staff to pursue informational discussions with each affected BCC in January-February of 2025 to help shape final recommendations. This legislative package is informed by those discussions as well as input from City staff.

Current Legislative Package

The current legislative package of Ordinance 87044 and Resolution 87066 includes the following.

The proposed ordinance would:

- Dissolve the **Downtown Coordinating Committee**. This committee supports urban design and placemaking in the downtown, but is one of numerous entities in Madison that do so. Community engagement related to downtown placemaking is also robust on projects outside of this committee setting. The duties of providing a hearing venue for mall maintenance charges and reviewing the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) budget are tasks that will transfer to another committee. These tasks are not outlined in code, but rather through the City’s agreement with the BID, and will be updated within that document.
- Dissolve the **Public Safety Review Committee**. There is some overlap in scope and activities with the Police Civilian Oversight Board and the Board of Health (violence prevention work). Additionally, the current and previous Common Councils have opted to make public safety policy decisions in other venues, such as with their own regular reports from Police and Fire and through the creation of temporary committees to consider new policies, such as with body-worn cameras.
- Dissolve the **Community Development Conference Committee**. This committee no longer meets. Its last role was to oversee the allocation of funds under the Emerging Opportunities Program, a program that no longer exists.
- Dissolve the **Ho-Chunk City of Madison Coordinating Committee**. This committee has not met since 2012. Conversations with the Ho-Chunk Nation indicate they are supportive of dissolving this committee and continuing to coordinate in other ways.
- Create a new **Community Resources Committee** that combines the current **Committee on Aging**, the **Early Childhood Care and Education Committee**, and the **Community Services Committee**. Scope of duties and membership composition are designed to reflect the combination of these three existing committees. In the current form, members focused on aging or early childhood are segregated off from more general community service-related topics that affect all members of the community, including those who are aging and young children. Bringing these three committees together brings a stronger multi-generational perspective to all of community service topics. It also

better connects the multitude of relevant topics to committee members focused on specific age sectors, making for a more multifaceted consideration of the issues addressing different age groups. Additionally, centralizing staff time to administering one committee instead of three will help create more robust staff support to this committee. Finally, over time as work has changed, the duties of some of these committees have lessened. For example, while committees used to make recommendations on community funding proposals annually, the City now issues years-long contracts for funding and this duty is only in front of the committees every other or every few years (varies by committee). Similarly, childcare accreditation appeals were envisioned as a duty of the Early Childhood Care and Education Committee, but have not occurred in over five years. By bringing these topics together, this proposal reduces fragmentation between topics relevant to all and ensures robust agendas and work programs.

- Updates membership requirements of the **Community Development Block Grant Committee** to add flexibility and make it easier to fill positions. Some positions with detailed membership criteria have been challenging to fill over time and this change intends to make it easier to have a full committee while maintaining the value of diverse perspectives in the work.
- Makes a number of changes to move authority for **urban forestry oversight** from the **Board of Park Commissioners/Habitat Stewardship Subcommittee** to the **Board of Public Works**. Urban Forestry moved from the Parks Division to the Streets Division several years ago in acknowledgement that the majority of urban forestry work occurs in the right-of-way. This committee change completes this transition. With professional arborists in urban forestry, the committee guidance that is needed is not typically related to tree health and ecology. Most often, urban forestry is seeking guidance on how trees interact with other utilities in the right-of-way, and the Board of Public Works is the appropriate venue for these discussions. Parks-related tree issues will continue to be discussed with the Board of Park Commissioners and/or the Habitat Stewardship Subcommittee.

The proposed resolution would direct staff to:

- Propose ordinance language related to combining the **Vending Oversight Committee** and the **Economic Development Committee** to the Common Council no later than August 31, 2025. Combining these two committees would allow a single committee to consider actions and guidance related to the full range of businesses in Madison and create a single committee with a broadened perspective on all City work related to business support, business districts, wealth creation, and more.
- Explore transferring the **Joint Campus Area Committee** responsibilities to the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW) and make recommendations back to the Common Council no later than August 31, 2025. This committee's focus is largely on (a) sharing information on UW projects with the community, the City of Madison, and Village of Shorewood Hills, and (b) making recommendations to the UW Urban Design Board on the specific design of projects included in the UW Campus Master Plan approved by the City under Campus-Institutional zoning. While there is value in this work, it may make sense for UW to staff and manage this committee. This idea will be explored with UW staff.
- Explore transferring the **City, County, Schools Collaborative Committee** to the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) and make recommendation back to the Common Council no later than August 31, 2025. The committee includes multiple jurisdictions focused on issues that

intersect with MMSD. It may make sense for MMSD to staff and manage this committee. This idea will be explored with MMSD and County staff.

- Explore centralizing multiple civil rights award processes into a single committee and make recommendations back to the Common Council no later than August 31, 2025. Currently, the City administers a committee process in conjunction with the County and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Coalition to issue the Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award annually. It also issues the Reverend James C. Wright Human Rights Award through the Equal Opportunities Commission and administers a staff-led process to issue the Alix Olson Award for the Promotion of a Tolerant and Just Community. There may be benefits of considering these awards in a more collaborative and connected process, such as increasing awareness and/or broadening the set of nominees for the awards. This is an idea that may have merit but needs more exploration before a recommendation can be made.