Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

Planning Division

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To: City of Madison Board of Park Commissioners

From: Rebecca Cnare, Jeff Greger - Southeast Area Plan Project Managers

Date: May 13, 2026

Subject: Southeast Area Plan

Background

The Common Council directed Planning Division staff to begin working on the Southeast Area Plan on October 8, 2024 (RES-24-00613). A broad community engagement effort was carried out with a focus on reaching Black, Indigenous, and People of Color residents who are often underrepresented in city processes. The city worked with a public engagement specialist to conduct multiple focus groups that informed the planning process. Additionally, with help from the Parks Division and an approval of the Board of Parks Commissioners, the planning team was able to engage residents from the family shelter on Milwaukee Street and two large apartment complexes during the "Paint and Pack" events at Hiestand and Honeysuckle Parks. Families were able to paint stencils on the basketball courts, partake in a community dinner, and pick out free backpacks and school supplies while giving their input on the plan and their neighborhood.

The Southeast Area Plan was introduced at the May 5, 2026 Common Council meeting and referred to Board of Park Commissioners as part of the review and approval process as found in Legistar File #928978. Introduction follows the previous release of the Draft Recommendations, Maps and public feedback which can be found on Legistar File #88389.

The Board of Park Commissioners reviewed public engagement and draft Green & Resilient Actions and Maps at its December 10, 2025 meeting. The draft Southeast Area Plan and its recommendations are similar to those presented with some revisions. Please see the project website for background material, public feedback summaries, and material from past meetings.

Draft Plan Highlights and Changes

Since the December 2025 update to the Board of Parks Commissioners Planning staff has worked with Parks staff to streamline the Plan actions to better align with adopted Parks plans and ongoing Park planning efforts.

The Southeast Area Plan actions focus on the implementation of the Parks and Open Space Plan, Park Development Plans, and the Capital Improvements Plan. The Area Plan actions also address park land deficiencies in the planning area.

Partnership Recommendations
Initiatives led by partners outside the City, with the City providing support or contributing where appropriate.

1. Work with public and private organizations to develop recreational programs within existing parks or school playgrounds for area seniors and youth. Encourage neighborhood organizations to help activate open spaces through Parks Division approved programming and placemaking events, such as a labyrinth in McGinnis Park, food truck events, and other neighborhood led initiatives
2. Explore burying overhead wires with utility companies during street reconstructions on segments of Milwaukee Street and Cottage Grove Road to facilitate larger street trees.
3. Partner with neighborhood organizations to increase rain gardens.
4. Encourage the creation of community gardens in or near Honeysuckle Park.

Feedback received on Draft Parks Actions

1. Update and revitalize park facilities including more amenities and activities.
2. Park entrances and paths should be more visible and accessible.
3. Stormwater management improvements are needed in the Hiestand Neighborhood.
4. Community Gardens and other resilient open space activities and opportunities should utilize parks and underutilized green spaces.

Request to the Board of Park Commissioners
The Common Council has asked the Board of Park Commissioners for their recommendation on the draft Southeast Area Plan. After reviewing the plan, if the Board recommends revisions to the Final Draft Plan, those revisions should be included in any motion made. Plan Commission, as the lead body, will review these revisions and make a final recommendation to the Common Council.

Legistar File Attachments

1. Southeast Area Plan Final Draft
2. Board of Park Commissioners presentation