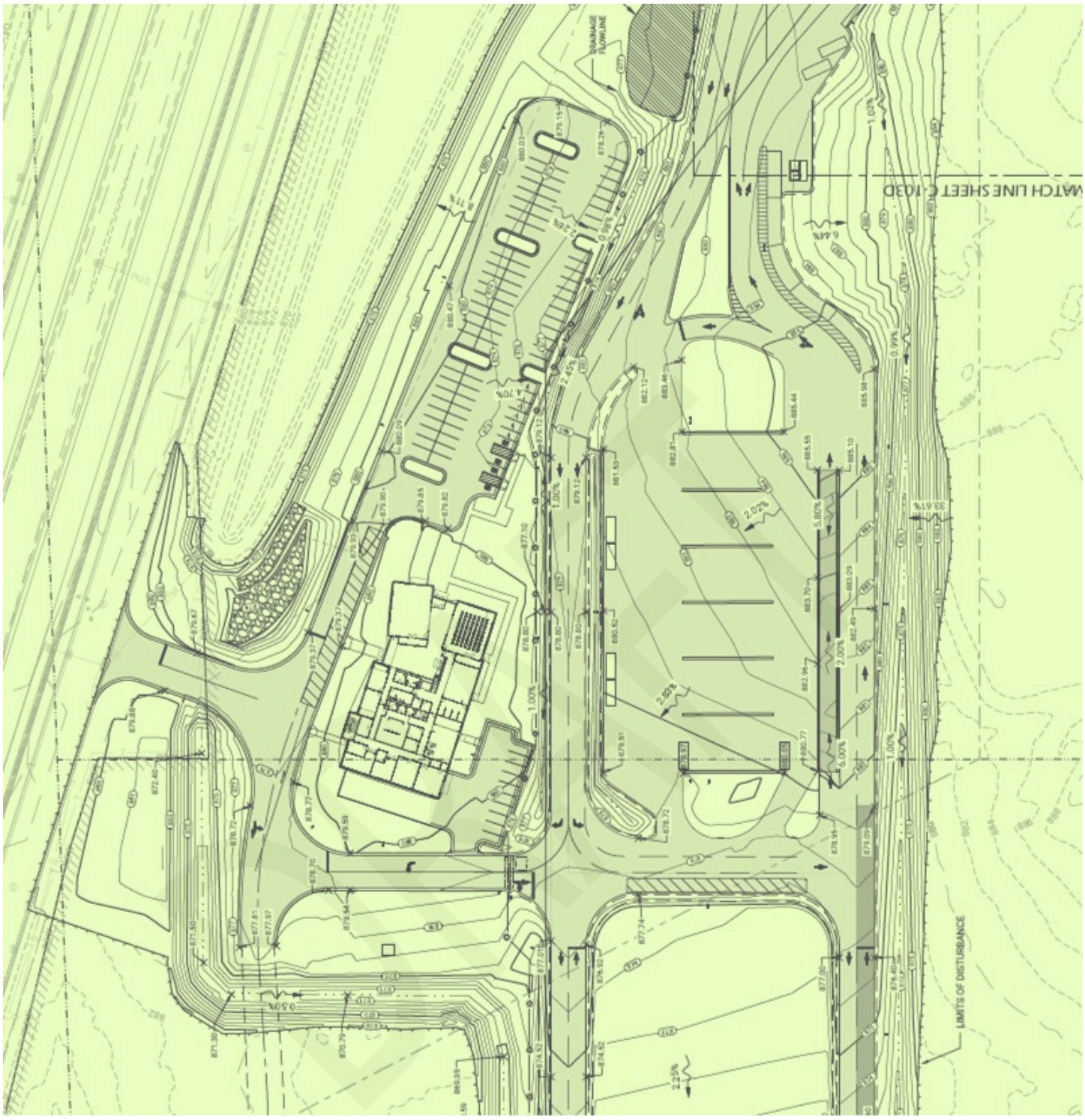

DANE COUNTY SUSTAINABILITY CAMPUS

METRICS REPORT

DANE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
WASTE + RENEWABLES

December 2025

Contents

I. Introduction 2
II. Project Overview 3
III. Request for Information 4
IV. City / County Joint Staff Committee 6
V. Metrics Guidelines 7
VI. Identified Metrics 8
Metric: Waste Diversion 9
Metric: Active Partnerships 10
Metric: GHG Avoided 11
Metric: Public Participation 12
VII. Implementation and Reporting 13
VIII. Defining Success 14
IX. Amendments 16
X. Conclusion 16

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I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

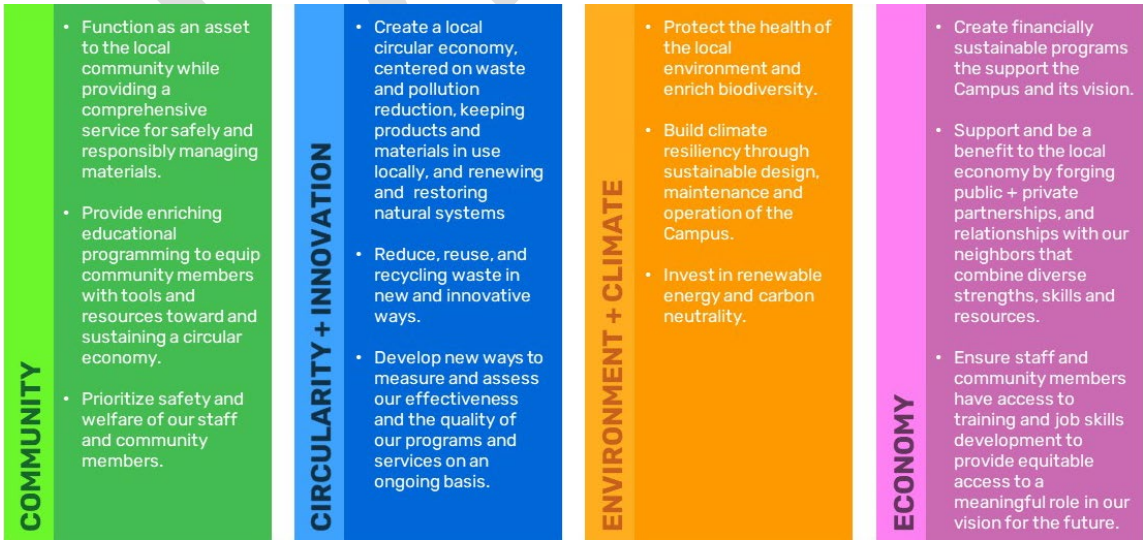
Dane County's Rodefeld Landfill, located on US Highway 12/18 and County Highway AB, has an estimated 3 years of capacity remaining and a new location is needed for the County to continue to provide local waste management services. Dane County (W+R or County) and the City of Madison (City) have mutual interests in managing solid waste locally, which is a more environmentally sustainable and cost-effective approach.

The County and the City have negotiated the purchase of a portion of the Yahara Hills Golf Course, located directly south of the existing landfill across US Highway 12/18. This property provides approximately 232 acres of land to accommodate a Sustainability Campus which will include: a landfill and a sustainable business park. The intent of the Sustainability Campus is to create opportunities for education, reuse, repair, recycling, research and other activities that will ultimately prevent or divert waste from landfill disposal.

As part of the purchase, the County and the City have agreed upon the terms of Agreement #14742: Sustainability Campus and Landfill Development Agreement (Development Agreement), in which the parties will cooperate in the development of the landfill and the Sustainability Campus. Per the Development Agreement, the parties will work jointly in identifying goals of the Sustainability Campus and developing measurable metrics. This resulting report was to be completed no later than December 31, 2025 to establish conditions for the sale of additional lands for future landfill purposes.

This Metrics Report has been jointly-prepared to satisfy the Development Agreement and establish a clear, data-driven framework of measurable metrics that will be used to evaluate the success of the Sustainability Campus. These metrics are designed to track progress across key focus areas, including waste diversion activities, circular economy advancement, sustainable infrastructure development, and public education and research initiatives.

Sustainability Campus Guiding Principles



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II. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Sustainability Campus Development Assistance Project

In March 2023, Dane County entered into a contract with consultants, SCS Engineers and Vandewalle and Associates, to assist with development planning of the Sustainability Campus. To date, the consultants have completed several phases of work to guide the development of the project. The primary phases of the project are outlined below.

Project Phase	Schedule	Description
1. Waste Diversion Report	Summer 2023 - Fall 2024 Final report issued September 10, 2024	Evaluate and recommend opportunities for waste diversion at Rodefeld Landfill to help inform opportunities to advance recycling research, material diversion opportunities, and identify potential feedstock for recycling or reuse efforts. This evaluation will include research into the end uses of diverted material, market of those end uses, and identify potential feedstock for recycling or reuse efforts.
2. Existing County Facility Evaluation	Winter 2023-2024 Final revised report issued December 23, 2024	Outline a comprehensive strategy and list of considerations for the types of businesses, community spaces, and activities that should be located at the Sustainability Campus, at the Rodefeld Landfill site, and at surrounding County-owned properties, or other satellite locations. This will assist Dane County with evaluating the need for additional planning efforts.
3. Request for Information for Potential Campus Tenants	Winter 2024 - Spring 2025	Prepare a Request for Information (RFI) for potential tenants to respond to as identified through the Waste Diversion Report and County Facility Needs and Recommendations Report or other targeted businesses interested in assisting Dane County achieve its waste diversion efforts. This RFI will be used to aid in the development of the Metrics Report.
4. Metrics Report	Spring – Winter 2025	Prepare a Metrics Report that contains measurable and obtainable metrics to gauge the success of the Sustainability Campus. Metrics may be used to measure initiatives related to waste diversion activities, landfill gas utilization, advancing the local circular economy, sustainable infrastructure, or education, research, and outreach.
5. Sustainability Campus Summation Report	Fall - Winter 2025	Synthesize and summarize the major work products highlighting key findings, and provide a roadmap to implement the priority technologies identified through the RFI process.

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III. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Request for Information Process

Based on the work done by the consultants, in Spring of 2025, the County released four requests for information (RFIs) seeking partnerships on the Sustainability Campus. These RFIs were structured to be simple to respond to and open-ended to attract responses that addressed many different material streams, proposed a variety of waste diversion approaches, and promoted educational opportunities.[1] The four RFIs issued were:

- Large-Scale Waste Diversion, Processing, and Recycling (2025-RFI-001)
- Reuse, Retail, and Upcycling (2025-RFI-002)
- Problem Materials, Bulky Waste Streams, and Emerging Materials (2025-RFI-003)
- Research, Education, and Creative Fields (2025-RFI-004)

The RFIs received a resounding response. At the close of the RFI process, W+R received 42 formal responses across categories. Including informal interest (expressed interest, but did not submit a RFI), and interest that emerged after the close of the RFIs, W+R received proposals from more than 50 different organizations and businesses. A brief summary of the formal responses received through the process is below.

RFI Category	Responses	Example Responses
Research, Education, and Art	10	- Waste education and outreach programming - Applied landfill research - Community waste audits
Reuse, Retail, and Upcycling Services	3	- Building material reuse ecosystems - Tree and wood reuse
Problem Materials, Bulky Waste, and Emerging Materials	9	- Mattress recycling - Bicycle repair - AI-enabled lumber reprocessing
Large-Scale Waste Diversion, Processing, and Recycling Services	20	- Mixed waste processing - Anaerobic digestion - Chemical recycling
Total	42	

[1] Specific to the language in the Development Agreement, the RFIs saught companies and organizations that proposed diversion of [more than] four separate waste types that equaled more than 50% of the total incoming waste to the Rodefeld landfill as identified by the WDNR waste sort performed in 2020.

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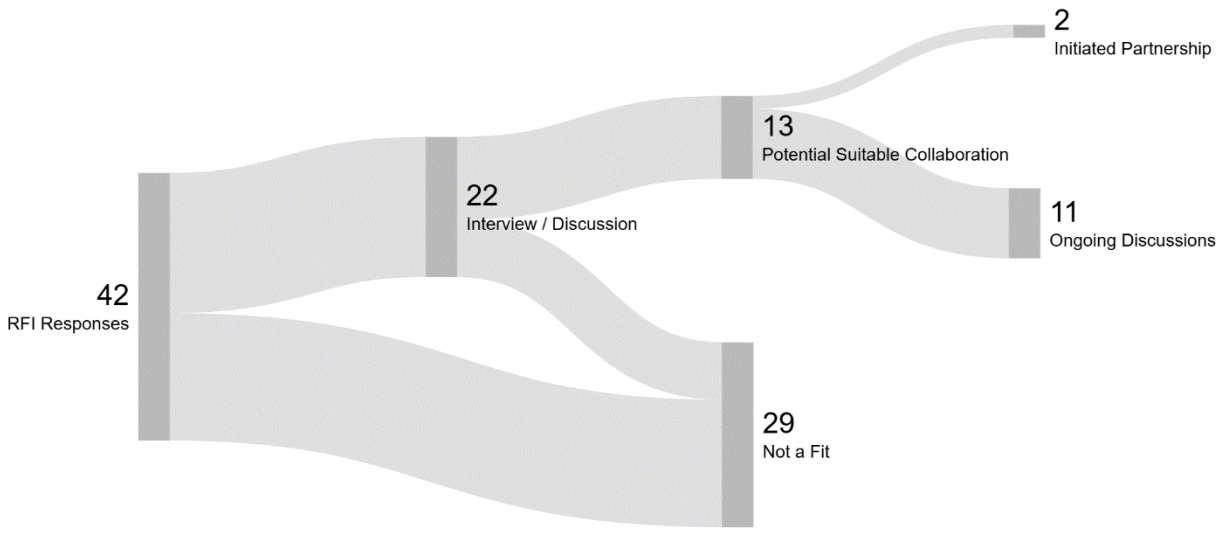

Status of RFI Response Outcomes as of August 2025

As of August 2025, W+R continues to interface with more than 13 potential collaborators that emerged through the RFI process, including two small partnerships that have already begun directly as a result of the effort. Projects were evaluated against the overarching project values, which are: supporting environment and climate, circularity and innovation, economy, and community benefits. The responses still under evaluation include educational outreach, mattress recycling, applied research, and mixed waste processing.

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IV. CITY / COUNTY JOINT STAFF COMMITTEE

City of Madison Metrics Report Involvement

The City's participation has shaped the structure of this Metrics Report. Through a joint City-County staff committee (Committee), the parties have met several times to guide the process. As established within a September 2022 memorandum of understanding (MOU), the City placed up to three (3) concurrent staff on the Committee overseeing the work.[2] As of December 2025, the staff members assigned to the Committee were:

City of Madison

- Bryan Johnson, Recycling Coordinator, City of Madison Streets Division
- Gregg May, Sustainability Program Coordinator, Mayor's Office
- Ruth Rohlich, Business Development Specialist, Economic Development Division

Dane County Waste + Renewables

- John Welch, Director
- Roxanne Wienkes, Deputy Director
- Allison Rathsack, Lead Project Engineer
- Wyeth Augustine-Marceil, Sustainability + Engagement Coordinator

The Joint City/County staff committee met numerous times throughout the course of the development project. Specific to the Metrics Report, the Committee met on the following schedule:

Date	Purpose	Outcome
April 4, 2025	Kick-off meeting	Shaped scope and focus of Metrics Report
July 25, 2025	Update meeting	Clarified scope and reviewed initial list of potential Metrics
September 5, 2025	75% development meeting	Aligned on selected Metrics, reviewed report draft and agreements
November 21, 2025	Report completion meeting	Sharpened final Metrics, aligned on scoring

[2] The City and County will continue to assign staff for the duration of the Metrics evaluation and will replace Committee members as necessary to address turnover.

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V. METRICS GUIDELINES

The City/County Staff Committee has jointly defined metrics to be durable and attempt to capture the impact of the Sustainability Campus. Given this focus, each Metrics must be:

1. **Measurable** - Metrics must be quantifiable using reliable, regularly collectable data to allow for consistent tracking over time.

2. **Attributable to the Project** - Metrics should reflect new or expanded programs, services, or outcomes that would not occur *but for* the Sustainability Campus project.

3. **Integrated with Broader Department Operations** - Metrics do not need to be limited by the geographical footprint of the business park or Campus.

4. **Technology- and Tenant-Agnostic** - Metrics must remain valid regardless of which specific technologies are deployed or which organizations occupy the Campus.

5. **Aligned with Project Values** - Each metric should reflect one or more of the project's core values: environment + climate, circularity + innovation, economic, and community benefits.

Metrics also require baselines to determine improvement or regression from an established measure. Each metric has a unique baseline, but some share commonalities. For example, all metrics have a baseline measure averaged across years 2022-2024, as 2024 is the final year that W+R considers that there were no measurable impacts *but for* the Sustainability Campus project. Additionally, some of these measures include W+R's self-reported material tonnages and MTCO2e estimates, as well as extrapolation from a waste sort performed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) in 2020.

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VI. IDENTIFIED METRICS

The success of the Sustainability Campus hinges on its ability to meaningfully reduce waste sent to the landfill and to promote the recovery, reuse, and recycling of materials across the region. To track progress toward these goals, a set of metrics have been developed that are both measurable and actionable. W+R and the City of Madison collaborated to develop a set of metrics tailored to the anticipated functions and goals of the Sustainability Campus. These metrics are designed to be measurable and relevant to the types of tenants expected to operate within the Campus, while also allowing for operational flexibility as the project evolves. They are not intended to be exhaustive, nor do they capture every performance indicator currently tracked by W+R. Instead, the metrics presented in this report focus specifically on the Sustainability Campus project and are structured to reflect the broader success of the initiative. The nine Metrics are organized into four overarching categories below:

1. **Waste Diversion**
    - **Waste Diversion by Tonnage**
    - **Waste Diversion as a Percent of Incoming Materials**
    - **Waste Diversion in Landfill Airspace Savings**
    - **Number of Material Types Accepted for Waste Diversion**
2. **Active Partnerships**
    - **Partnerships in Waste Diversion**
    - **Partnerships in Education and Outreach**
3. **GHG Avoided**
    - **GHG Avoided Through Waste Diversion**
    - **GHG Avoided Through Renewable Energy Activities**
4. **Public Participation**
    - **Total Public Participation in Education and Outreach Efforts**

See the following pages for more detail on each of the Metrics.

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METRIC: WASTE DIVERSION

Metric:	Waste Diversion (Tonnage, % of incoming, Airspace Savings, Materials)
Description:	Measurement of the total quantity of material diverted from landfill disposal through reuse, recycling, composting, or other recovery methods via the Sustainability Campus project. This measure reflects the overall scale of materials recovered. It captures tonnage and volume from Sustainable Business Park tenants, off-site partnerships, any expansion of current services (e.g., Clean Sweep, C&D, shingles, tires, logs and brush), the Residential Drop-off, the food scrap collection program, and other diversion operations. Diversion measures shall consider quantities diverted for reuse, recycling, beneficial reuse, and residuals measured separately.
Importance/why it is included in this report:	Tracking the quantity and breadth of waste diverted provides a clear indicator of the Sustainability Campus's overall impact on reducing landfill disposal. By measuring physical tonnage and volume diverted, as well as the range of materials accepted, the County can evaluate progress toward waste reduction goals and demonstrate the scale of resources returned to productive use.
Baseline Value:	The baseline will be established using the average baseline diversion figures from baseline years 2022-2024.
Measurement Methodology and Tracking:	Diversion quantities will be recorded annually, based on scale data, operational reporting, and tenant submissions. Materials diverted will be measured in tonnages, airspace savings and a percent of the total incoming materials **Numerical approach**: Total tons of material diverted from landfill disposal in one calendar year. Percent of incoming materials diverted from landfill disposal in one calendar year. Landfill airspace saved through diversion activities in one calendar year. Total number of discrete material streams diverted from landfill in one year.

Connection to Guiding Principles:

Community	Circularity + Innovation	Environment + Climate	Economic
Provide transparent reporting on the scale of local diversion efforts.	Demonstrate capacity to grow diversion through innovative recovery methods.	Reduce landfill use and associated environmental impacts by tracking tons of material recovered.	Support regional reuse, recycling, and processing markets by delivering consistent quantities of material.

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METRIC: ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Metric:	Number of Active Partnerships in Waste Diversion and Education and Outreach
Metric Description:	Measurement of the number of active partnerships directly involved with waste diversion and/or education established between the W+R and external organizations including, but not limited to, nonprofits, academic institutions, private businesses (e.g., downstream recycling vendors), and government agencies as a part of the Sustainability Campus project.
Importance/why it is included in this report:	Strategic partnerships are essential to the success of the Sustainability Campus. Collaborating with outside organizations brings in diverse expertise, expands the reach of sustainability initiatives, and strengthens the Campus's role as a regional hub for innovation and environmental leadership. This metric reflects the Campus's ability to build meaningful relationships that support waste diversion, education, research, and economic development.
Baseline Value:	The baseline will be established using the average number of formal partnerships in place in baseline years 2022-2024.
Measurement Methodology and Tracking:	Each active partnership and non-confidential descriptions of work will be reported annually. Partnerships may support a range of activities, such as research, reuse and recycling programs, workforce development, or public education. Partnership measuring will be split between partnerhsips for waste diversion and partnerships to advance education and outreach. **Numerical approach:** Total number of active diversion partnerships (contracts, MOUs, etc.) in one year. Total number of outreach/educational partnerships (co-delivery of programs, ongoing collaboration, repeat tours, etc.)

Connection to Guiding Principles:

Community	Circularity + Innovation	Environment + Climate	Economic
Extend the reach of resources and educational opportunities through collaboration with additional groups	Advance understanding of emerging technologies and approaches	Aligning efforts with complimentary groups to amplify impact of activities.	Leverage public-private partnerships to create economically-sustainable waste diversion operations

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METRIC: GHG AVOIDED

Metric:	GHG Emissions Avoided Through Waste Diversion and Renewable Energy Activities
Metric Description:	Measurement of the estimated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions avoided or reduced annually through diversion activities, renewable energy production, and other sustainability initiatives via the Sustainability Campus project.
Importance/why it is included in this report:	Reducing GHG emissions is central to the Sustainability Campus's mission to promote environmental stewardship and sustainability. This metric quantifies the environmental benefits of the Campus's operations, including waste diversion, landfill gas capture, composting, and renewable energy generation. It provides a clear indicator of the Campus's contribution to local and regional climate goals and supports transparent reporting of environmental performance.
Baseline Value:	The baseline will be established using 2022-2024 GHG emissions data from W+R's operations.
Measurement Methodology and Tracking:	GHG reductions will be estimated using standardized emissions factors and methodologies (e.g., EPA WARM model or equivalent) applied to diversion tonnages, renewable energy production, and landfill gas utilization. Emissions avoided through composting, recycling, and reuse will be calculated based on material-specific factors. **Numerical approach:** Total metric tons of CO_2-equivalent ($MTCO_2e$) emissions avoided or reduced in one year **through waste diversion**. Total metric tons of CO_2-equivalent ($MTCO_2e$) emissions avoided or reduced in one year **through renewable energy activities**.

Connection to Guiding Principles:

Community	Circularity + Innovation	Environment + Climate	Economic
Reduce landfill use and associated emissions; protect natural resources.	Keep materials in use and develop new strategies for waste reduction.	Improve operational efficiency and support local recovery markets.	Demonstrate environmental leadership and accountability to the public.

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METRIC: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Metric:	Annual Public Participation in in Education and Outreach Efforts
Metric Description:	This metric tracks the reach and impact of waste diversion-related education and outreach activities conducted via the Sustainability Campus project. It includes quantifiable indicators such as the number of public tours, school visits, workshops, community events, and educational partnerships hosted on-site or virtually.
Importance/why it is included in this report:	Education and outreach are essential to building a culture of sustainability and empowering the community to participate in the circular economy. By offering accessible, inclusive, and enriching learning opportunities, the Campus can serve as a regional hub for environmental literacy and community engagement. This metric reflects the Campus's commitment to equipping individuals with the knowledge and tools to reduce waste, conserve resources, and support long-term environmental and economic resilience.
Baseline Value:	The baseline will be established using the average number of participants reached and in baseline years 2022-2024.
Measurement Methodology and Tracking:	The number of participants in waste diversion-related education and outreach activities will be tracked annually. This includes attendees at hosted tours, workshops, school visits, public lectures, and community events. Campus partners and tenants will also report participation in their own outreach efforts. **Numerical approach:** Total number of individuals engaged through education and outreach activities in one year.

Connection to Guiding Principles:

Community	Circularity + Innovation	Environment + Climate	Economic
Provide educational programming to equip community members with tools and resources for moving toward a circular economy.	Develop new ways to measure and assess effectiveness and the quality of programs and services on an ongoing basis.	Build climate resiliency through education that promotes sustainable practices.	Support sustainability initiatives in other industries through educational partnerships and programming.

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VII. IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING

It is the responsibility of Dane County to collect, compile, and report data for each Metric identified in this document. Data will be gathered from County operations, Sustainability Campus tenants, and partner organizations, as applicable. **Each metric will be reported on an annual basis and published by May 31st of each year for the previous calendar year** (e.g., May 31, 2026 for Metrics covering 2025). These reports may also include additional measures of performance beyond the identified Metrics, as the Sustainability Campus evolves.

Data Collection and Management

Data from programs directly managed by Dane County (e.g., food scrap collection, Clean Sweep, landfill gas utilization) will be collected and recorded by W+R staff.

Each Sustainability Campus tenant or partner organization engaged in diversion, reuse, or outreach activities will be required to provide annual data submissions, including tonnage, units, participation counts, or other relevant metrics, as defined in their operating agreements.

Reporting Structure

Metrics results will be reported a period of 15 years beginning in 2026, and concluding with a final report in 2040, which roughly coincides with the end of the permit period for the planned Dane County landfill. Annual Metrics reports will be posted on the W+R website and shared with the City-County Committee members via email.

Use of Results

Metrics reporting will serve several purposes:

- Track and communicate the environmental, economic, and community benefits of the Sustainability Campus.
- Inform decision-making for future programs, partnerships, and investments.
- Provide accountability to the public, City, and County stakeholders.

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VIII. DEFINING SUCCESS

The purpose of this Metrics Report is to establish a clear framework for evaluating the success and long-term trajectory of the Sustainability Campus in meeting its goals: advancing waste diversion, strengthening the circular economy, and expanding public education. Measuring success for a project of this scale is inherently complex. New programs take time and resources to develop; Dane County's growing population will likely continue to increase the total volume of waste generated; and evolving materials, technologies, and market conditions will present opportunities and challenges over time.

Despite these uncertainties, Dane County and the City of Madison remain committed to continuous improvement across the identified Metrics. For the purpose of this report, **a weighted point system has been devised to summarize the progress of the Campus over each Review Period.**

Metric	Points
Waste Diversion	
Waste Diversion by Tonnage	**1pt**
Waste Diversion as a Percent of Incoming Materials	**1pt**
Waste Diversion in Landfill Airspace Savings	**1pt**
Number of Material Types Accepted for Waste Diversion	**1pt**
Partnerships	
Partnerships in Waste Diversion	**1pt**
Partnerships in Education and Outreach	**1pt**
GHG Avoided	
GHG Avoided Through Waste Diversion	**1pt**
GHG Avoided Through Renewable Energy Activities	**1pt**
Public Participation	
Public Participation in Education and Outreach Efforts*	**1pt**
Total	**9pts**

Following the scoring table above, each Metric will receive 1 point if there has been measurable improvement over the course of the Review Period. A Review Period will be considered successful if five or more metrics show improvement. Evaluations will make reasonable accommodations for factors outside the County's control - such as major storm events, facility closures, lack of municipal participation, or policy changes - that could skew Metrics.

**City and County agree that indefinitely increasing numbers of public participation in education and outreach efforts may prove impractical, and instead, maintaining baseline levels may be considered successful.*

Review Year: The calendar year in which data for Metrics is collected (e.g., 2026).

Review Period: The three-year span between joint City-County evaluations (e.g., 2025-2027).

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Progress will be **reviewed jointly by the City-County Committee every three years over a 15-year period (2025–2039)**, concluding with a final evaluation in 2040, which roughly aligns with the end of the planned landfill's permit period. Each evaluation will consider the Metrics averaged across the preceding three-year review period as compared to the previous review period, external conditions, and future plans. Joint evaluations to be held:

- 2028: review years 2025-2027[3]
- 2031: review years 2028-2030
- 2034: review years 2031-2033[4]
- 2037: review years 2034-2036
- 2040: review years 2037-2039

Success Criteria for Each Metric	
Waste Diversion	
Waste Diversion by Tonnage	On average, W+R diverts more tonnage of material in the review period than recorded in the previous review period.
Waste Diversion as a Percent of Incoming Materials	On average, W+R diverts a higher proportion of incoming material in the review period than recorded in the previous review period.
Waste Diversion in Landfill Airspace Savings	On average, W+R conserves more landfill airspace in the review period than recorded in the previous review period.
Number of Material Types Accepted for Waste Diversion	On average, W+R accepts more discrete material types for diversion in review period than in the previous review period.
Partnerships	
Partnerships in Waste Diversion	On average, W+R has more active diversion partnerships in review perior than in the previous review period.
Partnerships in Education and Outreach	On average, W+R has more active education/outreach partnerships in review perior than in the previous review period.
GHG Avoided	
GHG Avoided Through Waste Diversion	On average, W+R avoids more emissions through waste diversion in review period than in the previous review period.
GHG Avoided Through Renewable Energy Activities	On average, W+R avoids more emissions through renewable energy activities in review period than in the previous review period.
Public Participation	
Annual Public Participation in Outreach Programs	On average, W+R engages the same or more members of the public in review period than in the previous review period.

[3] The first evaluation (2028) will compare 2025-2027 against the baseline years 2022-2024.

[4] Discussions about future land sales likely need to begin around this time. Permitting can take as long as five years depending on complexity, and thus need long lead times.

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IX. AMENDMENTS

As the County continues work on the Sustainability Campus project and Parties continue to monitor and review the progress of the effort, the Parties will amend the original Development Agreement, as necessary, to incorporate additional details, terms, and conditions. The Parties may amend this Report, including but not limited to extending any deadlines, modifying any Metrics, or adding/removing Metrics, as necessary, only by a written document agreed to by the Parties.

X. CONCLUSION

The Sustainability Campus represents a long-term investment in Dane County's ability to manage waste locally, recover valuable resources, and build new opportunities for education, research, and community engagement. This Metrics Report provides the framework to track that progress in a clear and accountable way. While the path forward will adapt to new challenges, technologies, and community needs, the County and City are committed to using these metrics as a shared guide for decision-making.

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