

Legislative Agenda Topic: Demographics

GOAL: Review demographic trends to inform policy decisions

ISSUES: Our country is getting older and more ethnically diverse, and Madison is not immune from those trends. Projections estimate that Dane County will go from 12% of its population being 65 and over to 21% by 2035. According to the 2010 Census, 25% of Dane County households have a member over 60, and perhaps more importantly, 31% of those over 65 are living alone. At the same time, 17% of our 2010 population was under 18. These populations are less likely to drive, more likely to want to live downtown and in safe, pedestrian-friendly environments, more likely to need job training (or re-training) and job search support, likely to access community services of some sort, and could cost the City significantly if not well-served. Looking at City operations through the lens of serving these populations will not only benefit them, but has the potential to benefit everyone.

BACKGROUND: Madison's population is already more diverse than Wisconsin as a whole, and Dane County's non-white population increased by 58% between 2000 and 2010. White students accounted for approximately 80% of the students enrolled in the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) in 1991, while in 2012 white students account for less than 50% of the student body (see attached enrollment graph). In addition, non-white populations are younger on average than the white population, suggesting a greater increase in the future. People of color are more likely to be unemployed, as are young people, than the total population. African-Americans are more likely to be poor, and more likely to have a history with the criminal justice system, than the population as a whole. In addition, racism continues to impact our city and keep our community from reaching its full potential. Existing inequalities are only exacerbated by the demographic trends, making it even more important that the City address them.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES: In the article *Minority Report: America Will Be Defined by These Huge Demographic Shifts*, Kristen Lewis and Sarah Burd-Sharps make the case that future of cities will depend on how well they prepare themselves for aging and increasingly diverse populations.¹ They argue that finding ways to minimize economic disparities is critical to avoid detrimental income and opportunity gaps; gaps that are "damaging to competitiveness, bad for community stability, and expensive for society as a whole."

The next two decades will see the number of older adults grow three times as fast as the population as a whole. How will different metropolitan areas organize themselves to meet the needs of this population as well as to take advantage of their tremendous, and often undervalued, talents?

¹ Lewis, Kristen and Burd-Sharps, Sarah. *Minority Report: America Will Be Defined by These Huge Demographic Shifts*. Business Insider June 29, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.businessinsider.com/america-will-be-defined-by-huge-demographic-shifts-2012-6>

The rising generation of majority-minority Americans will seek an inclusive, diverse civic life, opting for social solidarity rather than divisiveness. The inexorable march of gentrification and sorting of neighborhoods by income apparent in too many major cities crowds out many of the things that make city living exciting and fun. The best cities to live in twenty years from now will be those that invest in and make room for all the people living there today—because the real wealth of cities is people.

STRATEGIES: If chosen, this topic would require research on demographic trends, a review of current services for these populations, a review of city functions and services with the needs of these populations in mind, and research on best practices and innovations from other communities. Next steps could include public input, discussions with partners and stakeholders, and development of a policy agenda. Of particular importance is collaboration with MMSD.

MOVING FORWARD:

Relevant City Departments and Committees:

Affirmative Action Commission	
City-County Liaison Committee	
Committee on Aging	
Commission on People with Disabilities	• Assessor's Office
Common Council Organizational	• City Clerk
Committee	• City Engineering
Early Childhood Care & Education	• Finance Department
Committee	• Fire Department
Education Committee	• Information Technology
Board of Health for Madison & Dane	• Library
County	• Parks Division
Long Range Transportation Planning	• Planning & Community & Economic
Committee	Development
Madison Arts Commission	• Police Department
Madison Public Library	• Public Health Madison & Dane County
Board of Park Commissioners	• Madison School District
Parking Council for People with	• Senior Center
Disabilities	• Traffic Engineering
Pedestrian/Bicycle/Motor Vehicle	• Madison Metro
Commission	
Plan Commission	
Public Safety Review Committee	
Transit & Parking Commission	
Zoning Board of Appeals	

External Partners:

Madison Metropolitan School District
Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups
Urban League
Centro Hispano
YWCA
University of Wisconsin – The Applied Population Laboratory
Wisconsin Department of Administration – Demographic Services

Timeline:

Several months of research and issuing a report
Identifying priority actions to address concerns
Implementing actions years 2 -10

Milestones/Tracking Progress:

Milestones would have to be developed based on specific policy objectives.



