

AMPLIFYING COMMUNITY VOICES

A Plan for Remote Service Delivery in Madison

MADISON PUBLIC LIBRARY | July 2020

ABSTRACT

Despite achievements in civic innovation and programming, disparities remain in access to city services across Madison. This report pulls together research into opportunities for improved access to government services, particularly in the elimination of barriers to underserved populations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of program options designed to enable remote participation in city government meetings, as well as deliver city services at Madison Public Library locations. In particular, these initiatives seek to eliminate barriers to access for underserved populations. Four program options are considered: civic engagement centers, resource stations, self-service kiosks, and digital applications. Each model is evaluated against the goals of impact, equity, and feasibility, and assessed for how it could be implemented.

Before arriving at these options, library staff engaged in conversations with city staff to discuss remote service delivery. During these conversations three things became clear. First, equity must be the primary driver of this project. To truly improve access, priority must be given to areas that are currently underserved. Next, any significant effort in digital service expansion must be headed by the City Information Technology Department. City-wide digital access requires database and software consistency across agencies at a level that can only be achieved through the IT Department. Finally, the City offers an expansive range of services. Those initially best suited for remote formats have well-defined and straightforward processes.

Of the program models considered in this report, resource stations and civic engagement centers appear best suited to the Library context. Long term, resource stations will serve the greatest number of people and reduce the most significant barriers to access. As the program becomes more established, it will also incorporate the greatest number of services. However, implementing this program will take time and a considerable amount of effort from the IT Department. While the necessary systems are in development, the Library can establish civic engagement centers to increase opportunities for civic participation.

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BACKGROUND

Civic engagement refers to the many ways residents contribute to their community to improve conditions and shape the future. Through its various forms, active civic engagement is essential for a community's ability to make informed decisions and ensure its well-being. Despite this, opportunities for civic participation are not equally available. A myriad of barriers causes unequal access where some people can engage with their government more fully than others.ⁱ Recognizing these barriers, governments have a responsibility to cultivate conditions where every resident can fully engage in the public sphere. Libraries have an opportunity to champion this environment by promoting active engagement in civic life, including engagement with city services. By making services visible and easy to access, libraries can help amplify voices in the civic realm.

Increasingly, digital access has become important in reducing barriers and expanding access to services. Although the City of Madison does have a robust network of online directories and portals many consultations, applications, transactions, and requests must occur in person at specific city offices. Research suggests that citizens not only prefer digital services and interactions with government, but digital options can also empower citizens to engage more fully with government.ⁱⁱ By prioritizing digital access, the City can foster an environment of streamlined, resident-focused government services that are supported by technology.

While researching this project, library staff engaged with staff from across city departments. Overwhelmingly, these conversations reaffirmed the need for digital service access in Madison and the appropriateness of the Library to house the associated programs. Additionally, these conversations highlighted the many ways that COVID-19 has changed services across the city. Many departments, if not all, have altered their work to fit a remote format in a short amount of time. Out of necessity, processes have already been established to hold consultations, share documents, and access services remotely. With this groundwork laid, Madison Public Library (MPL) has an opportunity to harness this momentum to implement programs with powerful implications for access and equity.

The need for improved access is not new. Despite ranking highly in livability and quality of life, Wisconsin and Dane County consistently rank low when considering social disparities and

inequality. These disparities exist at every level, including access to city services. Increasingly, cities have turned to technology as a tool to close gaps in access. This is highlighted in a 2019 Urban Institute report which states, "For marginalized communities, integrating technology into government systems to improve civic engagement can help improve transparency, reduce information gaps, facilitate communication, and foster more efficient service provision."ⁱⁱⁱ While digital tools provide great opportunity, they can also further divides. In the same report, the Institute underscores the importance of strategic implementation of technology, concluding that "Racial and economic inequities in the US are growing, and rapid technology change can either promote inclusion or widen these divides."^{iv} Any initiative pursued by MPL will require a collaborative effort between city agencies, community partners, and residents.

The need for a collaborative approach to service provision is widely acknowledged throughout the city. In fact, the Madison Comprehensive Plan establishes a goal of "...efficient and reliable public utilities, facilities, and services that support all residents," and calls on agencies to "improve accessibility to government agencies and services" and "collaborate with other governmental and non-governmental entities to improve efficiency and achieve shared goals." The plan further encourages the use of technology to expand opportunities for residents to access services in a manner that is convenient for them, recognizing that accessing services can be challenging for people who cannot easily travel to City offices. Most explicitly, the plan calls for exploration of "other opportunities to expand access to the most-used City services..." This report explores initiatives with these objectives in mind: improving access to municipal services, working collaboratively, and harnessing new and innovative technologies.

THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY

As trusted and longstanding establishments, libraries are uniquely situated to provide services in locations people already know, trust, and frequent. By providing a similar service level at a neighborhood library as a downtown municipal building, significant barriers to access will be reduced. Libraries are a strong choice to facilitate expanded services for many reasons: they are trusted, visible, and are well equipped for capacity building with meaningful relationships throughout the community.

Trust

Libraries are among the most publicly trusted institutions. According to the Urban Libraries Council, four in five Americans (78%) trust libraries or librarians as a source of information. This is compared to only twenty percent of Americans who say they trust in government to provide the same.^v MPL's neighborhood libraries have garnered this trust over time, developing deep and long lasting relationships with the community. Not only are these relationships important when thinking about services, but research suggests that trust is an important factor in civic engagement. This is especially true for underrepresented groups.^{vi}

Visibility

Currently, there is a gap in public knowledge of available city services. An important component of service uptake is making these offerings visible to residents. Based on the success of MPL's early voting program, it is reasonable to conclude that when needed services are offered through the library, people will engage with them more fully. By determining which services are most needed in a given area and making them visible in the library, MPL can help educate residents on service availability and encourage overall utilization.

Capacity Building

To best expand access to services and increase opportunities for civic participation, it is important to meet people where they are. While MPL has a strong community presence through its neighborhood library locations, its reach is made stronger through partner organizations. By working with its extensive partner network, MPL can help facilitate crucial programs elsewhere and thereby further increase access.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Given differences in size, capacity, and neighborhood context, there cannot be a one-size fits all model to service provision. In this report, each service model has been assessed with an understanding that implementation will vary by location. Although this report lays the groundwork to begin thinking about the future of remote services, more work remains to engage residents, community organizations, and city staff. Further analysis and community engagement will help determine which services to provide and where. It will also yield insight into how residents would like to engage these services.

PROGRAM GOALS

To adequately assess program alternatives it is necessary to establish common goals. For this report, all programs are considered based on impact, equity, and feasibility. Impact is measured by the number of people reached and breadth of services offered. Equity is measured both by access and accessibility, and feasibility is measured by the cost to implement a program and ease of implementation.

Impact

Before implementing any program, it is necessary to ensure that the investment will be sufficiently impactful. An impactful program will increase the number of residents engaged in city services overall, the frequency with which residents engage with services, and the ease with which residents engage with these services. An impactful program will also maximize uptake of services in areas that are currently most underserved. Finally, impact must also consider the breadth of services that can be supported by each program.

Equity

Inequity leads to unavoidable differences in outcomes for residents across the city and is therefore a focus of this report. Equity will be measured in terms of both access and accessibility. Access is a measure of someone's ability to reach a service, while accessibility examines someone's ability to use a service. A high access program will increase the availability of services in underserved areas, prioritizing areas that are low income, lack adequate transportation, or are limited English speaking. Accessible alternatives will consider physical access, visual usability,

auditory accessibility, process-related disabilities, and language. Additionally, all programs must be approached through a racial equity lens. This means paying particular attention to racial disparities and inequity when analyzing problems, developing solutions, and measuring success. This also means working in tandem with MPL's community partners to better understand the particular barriers that exist for communities of color, and how those barriers should be addressed.

Equity in Access

For a program to be considered equitable, it must look comprehensively at the City of Madison to determine where services are compared to where they are needed most. Equitable programs will prioritize access in Library locations with higher numbers of underserved people who live farther away from the city center. Examining 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates for each neighborhood library location, there is an observable need for services in south Madison where on average families are more likely to live in poverty, lack broadband access, and be cost-burdened renters. Using the same data, an elevated level of need is also visible in north and southwest Madison. These areas also have fewer transportation options for residents to travel downtown, including complete bike paths and public transit, compared to other areas of the city.

Equity in Accessibility

All programs will be considered against five standards of accessibility. *Physical access* refers to how someone interacts with a service. This includes ensuring adequate space, choosing physical elements that are adaptable, and making sure physical processes can be operated in their entirety with a closed fist. *Visual usability* refers to how someone interacts with their environment through sight. This means ensuring that someone with low vision or color blindness can access the service in the most effective way possible. *Auditory accessibility* is how someone engages with their environment through sound. Considerations include text alternatives, volume controls, and sign language interpretation. *Processes* refers to how someone uses a service, requiring use of simple language and intuitive systems. Finally, *language* refers to how a person communicates. The City of Madison Language Access Plan

reaffirms the City's commitment to ensure meaningful access to city services regardless of English proficiency or any disability which limits the ability to communicate in English.

Racial Equity

Racial equity remains at the forefront of MPL decision making. As such, it must be a focus of any program pursued by the Library. An equity lens must be applied both to the location of services and the methods by which these services are administered. While service area profiles and Census data provide a high level overview of service needs, it is essential to fully engage community partners, particularly partners of color, to develop the most impactful programs possible. Regarding racial equity, it is also necessary to note that south Madison has a higher proportion of residents of color than other areas of the city, groups traditionally underrepresented in civic processes. Prioritizing access and engagement in this area is essential to further MPL's commitment to racial equity.

Feasibility

Finally, an effective program will be highly feasible. Feasibility in this analysis is measured by the cost to implement and maintain a program and the ease with which a program can be implemented. A feasible solution will be cost-effective and possess a sustainable funding mechanism. The strongest initiatives will be intuitive, interactive, and build on existing infrastructure and capabilities.

OVERVIEW OF SERVICES

Over the summer of 2020, library staff spoke with representatives from the City of Madison Community Development Authority (CDA), Civil Rights Department, and Information Technology Department (IT). The following section provides an overview of possible services that arose from those conversations. While developing this report, MPL staff were unable to connect with representatives from Development Services, Planning, Parks, or Municipal Court. However, an effort has been made to identify potential services for integration with a remote platform. Further engagement work remains to be completed.

Housing

The CDA Housing Operations Division works with the City of Madison to offer Housing and Urban Development (HUD) low-income subsidized housing. The CDA owns and operates 742 Public Housing units for families, seniors, and people with disabilities, as well as 115 multifamily housing units.^{vii} This division provides services necessary to operate multifamily housing (WHEDA), Project-based Section 8, and Public Housing. Although the division offers many services, four are highlighted below for their potential for remote service delivery.

Housing Applications: To receive CDA housing assistance, applicants must apply for admission to the housing program. Paper applications are not currently accepted, and all must be submitted online in periods when the waitlist is open. Application assistance is available at several community partners including The Beacon, Joining Forces for Families, and the Madison Senior Center. The CDA itself currently meets with 904 people for public housing, and 1700 with vouchers each year.

Meetings with Caseworkers: Through the CDA, program participants are assigned a caseworker to manage their case, enforce policies, and properly document applicant, resident, and landlord interactions. Caseworkers also facilitate communication with their clients and landlords. Currently, Section 8 caseworkers are available through a scheduled, in-person appointment, or during the walk-in schedule on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

Recertification Meetings: To receive housing assistance, families must undergo an annual income certification. These meetings are usually facilitated in-person or through a resident portal. Section 8 participants must meet with their Housing Specialist for verification of income and family size, and to verify that they are current with utilities.

Landlord Assistance: The City contracts with roughly 700 landlords to provide housing assistance to eligible participants. While there is a landlord portal online, personal follow-up is often required for landlord related inquiries and requests.

Civil Rights

The Department of Civil Rights is responsible for ensuring all people's rights are respected, and all people are given an equal opportunity to succeed. This department provides services and pursues policies related to Chapter 39 of the Madison General Ordinances.

Inquiries: During inquiries, Civil Rights staff talk with residents about instances of discrimination to help determine if they have been discriminated against. They then walk through the process of making a complaint and refer residents to resources. The Affirmative Action Division currently accepts inquiries over the phone or during drop-in office hours.

Contracting: The City of Madison prioritizes investment in partners that help advance equity. To ensure projects funded through taxpayer and City of Madison funds align with City policies, Civil Rights conducts contract compliance with contractors. The division works with many vendors to guide them through the process of filing through an online portal.

Business Certification: The Affirmative Action division is responsible for registering small businesses. To register as a small business, the division must review tax returns and insurance documents, which is often done through email.

Municipal Court

The Municipal Court hears roughly 26,000 City Ordinance cases per year. Cases do not involve criminal charges and defendants are not entitled to a free lawyer. Common cases include traffic, parking, first offense drunk driving, disorderly conduct, trespass, truancy, underage alcohol, building code, health code, and animal control violations.^{viii} In response to COVID-19, the Municipal Court is currently implementing a virtual court, scheduled to go live on August 1, 2020. Outreach efforts should be undertaken to determine the successes and challenges of this program. Preliminarily, these are some of the services that appear well suited for a remote format.

Request a Payment Plan or Request More Time to Pay: Residents can request additional time to pay fines or request help establishing a repayment plan by downloading a form from the court website. Forms must then be submitted by email, fax, or in person at the Municipal Court office.

Enter a Plea of Not Guilty: Individuals can enter a plea of not guilty and receive a pretrial date using a form found on the municipal court website. The original form must be filed with the court on or before the initial court appearance date. This can be done by mail, fax, email, or in-person at the City-County Building.

Request to Reopen: The court accepts requests to reopen a case by completing the associated form, available on the court website, and submitting it to the municipal court.

Development Services

The Development Services Center consists of both Building Inspection and Zoning. Building Inspection works with contractors and residents to issue permits related to building code, while zoning receives the majority of development applications to assess whether proposals conform to the zoning code. Currently, Building Inspection and Zoning counter appointments can be made online through the Development Services Center. Appointments are then accepted in-person at the Building Inspection office in downtown Madison. The online center houses a wide range of information and services. So many in fact that library staff heard concerns from IT over the complexities of the online center, fearing the complicated system may advantage larger companies. These companies are more likely to have the time and resources to learn and navigate the development process compared to small businesses that must do the same while simultaneously operating and managing their business. Thus, a remote forum to walk applicants through the development process would benefit both residents and contractors.

Transactional Services

The Library currently provides some transactional services for residents, including appliance and tire disposal stickers which can be purchased from the library help desk. This service could easily be expanded to include other small transactions such as bicycle registrations, and common recreational permits including lake access permits, dog park permits, disk golf permits, and cross-country ski trail permits. Bus passes are also commonly available for purchase at other library systems around the country and could be incorporated into the library

with relative ease. A full list of transactional services offered throughout the City can be found in Appendix A.

POTENTIAL MODELS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

The following section overviews four possible models to improve remote service delivery in Madison: civic engagement centers, resource stations, self-service kiosks, and digital applications.

Civic Engagement Centers

In order for civic engagement to flourish, it is essential to create a system where those most affected by an issue have the agency and power to address it. With high community trust, presence, and established services, libraries have great potential to further support this effort. In this program alternative, MPL locations will house civic engagement centers to solicit resident feedback, thoughts and ideas, and encourage participation in public meetings.

Civic Meetings

Perhaps the most direct way for a resident to engage with government is through participation in civic meetings. Although remote participation requires a change in bylaws, many cities have passed temporary resolutions allowing residents to teleconference into public meetings in response to COVID-19. These newly established procedures demonstrate opportunity for continued remote participation in civic meetings through MPL locations. Programs like this already exist in a number of libraries throughout the country. In Austin, Texas, for example, residents can participate in Common Council meetings via a live video feed in public library locations.

Despite successful programs elsewhere, the Madison Common Council has expressed concern over continuing this virtual format, citing limitations for community outreach and civic engagement. Instead, the Council hopes to meet at different community locations throughout the city. For city-wide meetings like Common Council however, it is unlikely the meeting could move equitably to other locations around the city. If a meeting were held on the east side for example, all west side residents would need to travel further to attend. This approach would be even more difficult when there are agenda items affecting multiple parts of the city. For these city-wide meetings, virtual outposts in neighborhood libraries could help expand access.

The primary challenge of hosting a remote location for Common Council meetings is the timing of regularly scheduled meetings. Common Council meetings are held every first and third

Tuesday of the month beginning at 6:30 pm. Meetings do not have a set end time and often run late into the night. For libraries to facilitate participation, they must consider what will happen if a meeting extends beyond the library's regular operating hours. To minimize the strain on library resources, the library could close at its regular hours and remain open only for meeting attendees.

MPL considered civic engagement opportunities when designing Pinney Library. The library is equipped with audio and visual capabilities for meeting participation, and has the ability for the City Media Team to remote in. While a pilot program could begin at Pinney, it is important to consider how this program could be adapted to work at other locations. In particular, to enfranchise marginalized adults in Madison, a program like this should prioritize expanded access in south Madison. Appendix C provides a list of community and meeting rooms in each MPL location to highlight where these meetings could be held.

Feedback Stations

One way that governments can empower communities is by actively seeking resident feedback. Libraries, for reasons already mentioned, are well equipped to provide additional opportunities for resident engagement. To do this, libraries can implement feedback stations as part of the Civic Engagement Center approach. These feedback stations facilitate civic engagement by creating permanent locations for residents to learn about issues and provide their input. Similar projects have been adopted by libraries across the country. One example is the Idea Box at Oak Park Public Library. This dedicated 19 by 13 foot space features continually changing programming and community displays. It is intended to educate and engage community members through installments and participatory experiences. Feedback stations like this could be as simple as a question on a wall with post-its for residents to provide their thoughts or a permanent interactive kiosk.

Resource Stations

Resource stations are designated computer stations where residents can engage in virtual appointments with city staff. These stations enable face to face virtual communication and document sharing via a dual screen setup. Additionally, scanners allow residents to upload and share documents and a touch screen interface or signature pad enables documents to be completed and approved on the spot. Completed forms or receipts can then be printed directly in the library. Regarding implementation, efforts should be made to allow for privacy and minimize disruptions to other library patrons.

Each MPL location has a combination of study, community, and meeting rooms that could share space with a resource station, except for the Monroe Street Library whose small size makes implementing a private resource station unlikely. A full list of study rooms by location is provided in Appendix B. Study rooms however, are popular amenities that are well utilized by the community. To preserve study room availability, an effort should be made to integrate resource stations into study rooms rather than completely repurpose the space. In response to COVID-19, the Library has already begun reviewing alternative uses for its study rooms. For example, MPL has implemented "family study rooms" for public computing purposes. There have also been conversations about using these rooms for patrons with court cases or doctors' appointments. Although these talks are still in the initial stages, if implemented this program could transition easily to longer-term resource stations. More follow up should be done if the Library decides to use study rooms for this purpose during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. For smaller locations, resource stations may be executed by equipping an existing computer with a signature pad, scanner, headset, and microphone.

Central Library is likely the easiest location in which to implement this program given its large space and abundance of study rooms. Its proximity to downtown and City offices however, offers a more limited impact than locations that are further from existing resources. Instead, implementation should prioritize areas that have the greatest need for services, particularly south and north Madison. Given the differences in library sizes and layout, resource station implementation must look different by location to cater to specific community needs and library capacity. For those locations that integrate resource stations into study rooms, it is necessary to

determine if ADA accessibility could be maintained once a resource station is installed. Most likely, a four or six-person study room would need to be converted to a one or two-person study room.

The computers themselves should be set up to facilitate audio and visual accessibility, where screens can be made larger and color schemes can be changed. Additionally, when selecting equipment priority should be given to devices that enable interfacing with assistive technology like Bluetooth devices and headsets. Finally, consideration must also be made for language access as it relates to remote consultation. The City Language Access Plan provides in-depth resources for ensuring language access, including proper procedures for remote video interpretation. Polycom devices for example, can be used for remote interpreting and are available through the Department of Civil Rights.

Finally, for both accessibility and practicality, there must be a staff person available to assist with technical needs on-site. It is not feasible for a resource station to operate smoothly on its own. There must be someone available to oversee the transition between appointments, troubleshoot technical issues, answer questions about the platform, and assist residents in accessing their appointment.

A cost estimate is provided below for the physical components of resource station setup. This estimate does not include staffing costs and assumes one station per MPL location with two stations at Central Library and none at Monroe Street Library.

Description	Estimated Quantity	Unit Price	Extended Price
Computer	9	\$500	\$4,500
Monitor with webcam	9	\$150	\$1,350
Monitor	9	\$100	\$900
Scanner	9	\$200	\$1,800
Signature Pad	9	\$100	\$900
Total	9	\$1,050	\$9,450

Phasing

Resource stations have significant potential to expand access to services city-wide with varying degrees of service integration. Stations may even serve as physical arms of a 3-1-1 system should it be implemented in Madison. 3-1-1 is a non-emergency phone number for residents to find information about services, make complaints, or report problems. For many cities this service is their central clearinghouse for information. It also allows city agencies to track data and perform analysis of all service requests. This concept was first introduced to the City Finance Committee in January 2018 and a study was done to assess the City's infrastructural capacity for a 3-1-1 system. The project is currently on hold but could be integrated into the resource station project if implemented. Given the nearly limitless potential of resource stations, implementation may benefit from a phased approach as outlined below.

Phase One: Drop-in Hours

Any type of appointment between a resource station user and a partner agency requires a coordinated scheduling system. The Library currently uses Kodiak, a custom software, to facilitate room reservations. This system will need to be updated to work with the partner agency's reservation system or a separate system will need to be adopted. To circumvent the scheduling issue, phase one of resource station implementation could begin by hosting drop-in hours. For example, Housing could host virtual drop-in hours Monday, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from 2 pm to 4 pm. While this does not eliminate barriers to those without the flexibility to come to a library location during a specific window, it allows face to face appointments closer to home. Cross agency coordination would be needed to arrange for a standard time and a designated staff person to facilitate drop-ins.

Phase Two: Scheduled Consultations

Allowing residents to schedule appointments with individual agencies will enable greater access to those who work or are otherwise unable to meet the specific drop-in windows. For scheduled consultations, residents could make a reservation through an online portal and meet with the appropriate department representative. The reservation system, available online or in-person at the library, should collect necessary background information including the individual's name, contact information, and the reason for requesting an appointment. It should also enable

uploading of any relevant documents for staff to review before the appointment slot. A resident could then show up to the Library and check-in for their appointment.

Phase Three: City-Wide Integration

The highest level of remote service delivery requires digital consistency across the city, which has yet to be accomplished in Madison. While the City has made steps to integrate a universal software system through adoption of *CityWorks*, it is not used equally and uniformly across agencies. As a result, many department-specific programs work in isolation from other city systems. This is problematic for several reasons which are outlined below.

Inconsistent Information and Processes

In conversations, agency contacts told the Library about resident frustrations with existing phone and digital services due to inconsistent information. Residents may be told one thing one day and something else the next time they call or when they speak to a different department. Standardizing information will help ensure residents receive high-quality, accurate information. There are also inconsistencies in the formats by which residents can apply for and receive services. For example, when it comes to permitting the City has implemented a single system for plan development, alcohol licenses, and restaurant licenses. Some agencies have adopted the use of this system more than others and to varying degrees. Some will do everything online, while others will only allow renewals, and others still will allow nothing at all.

Lack of Integration

Currently, city systems don't interface consistently with other city systems. This means that the burden is on the applicant to contact every agency that may have information related to their request. Furthermore, it is not always clear who those agencies or contacts are. For example, a resident may contact the City Assessor's office to request their name not be published with their property data. To complete this request, one could not simply contact the City Assessor to have their name removed. They would need to contact every agency that publishes property data. Even then there is not a comprehensive list of agencies with property data, and so the applicant must track down each contact. To solve this issue, the City could implement an overlay software to connect each individual system. Each resident account would be issued a unique identifier used to pull common data across systems.

Data and Evaluation

Centralizing data is an important aspect of identifying disparities and needs across the city. Currently, information is not well tracked across agencies and it is not always clear what data even exists. Centralizing and standardizing data will increase the potential for every agency to make well informed, data-driven decisions.

Self-Service Kiosks

A self-service kiosk is a machine primarily intended to ease access to mainstream transactional services like bills and utility payments. Kiosks are especially beneficial when they accept cash and when located in public spaces where payments can be made at any time. Kiosks are a relatively straightforward system that has been widely implemented across various forms of government. The City of Port Angeles for example, utilizes a *DynaTouch* kiosk as an eGOV Web Portal for city services, utilities, and forms & applications.^{ix} In Chicago, residents can pay parking tickets, vehicle impoundment fees, water and sewer bills, business taxes, and other bills using cash, checks, credit, and debit cards at kiosks located throughout the city.^x

Beyond transactional purposes, kiosks allow for the clear organization of information. Residents can search and navigate while using a kiosk, making it easier to access relevant information or participate in the civic process. To facilitate civic engagement in libraries, kiosks could be set up in each location to provide information on current events and relevant city issues. The navigation should be simple and allow the user to easily toggle between agencies or issue areas. Interactive features then enable residents to leave comments or provide feedback. Around the country, cities have incorporated technology like this into their civic engagement efforts. One example is the *SpeakUp Austin!* forum in Austin, Texas. This online tool allows Austin residents to track local issues, submit feedback, post personal stories publicly, and monitor reports and legislation.^{xi} For example, before the City mandated paid sick leave for non-government employers in 2018, *SpeakUp Austin!* posted questions to the forum like "What should be covered under a policy that requires employers to provide paid sick days?". Although the Austin program was strictly online, this same concept can be executed using a kiosk or similar technology.

Kiosks are relatively easy to implement but incur high initial costs. Below is an estimate of the expenses for informational kiosks as well as self-service transactional kiosks.

Cost Estimates for Informational Kiosks:

Description	Estimated Quantity	Unit Price	Extended Price
Kiosk (median price)	9	\$3,440	\$30,960
Kiosk Software	9	\$400	\$3,600
Management Software (12 months)	9	\$600	\$5,400
Technical Support	9	\$500	\$4,500
Installation & Delivery	9	\$990	\$8,910
Total	9	\$5,930	\$53,370

Cost Estimates for Transactional Kiosks:

Description	Estimated Quantity	Unit Price	Extended Price
Remote Pay Station Kiosks (Base Price)	9	\$8,500	\$76,500
Kiosk Delivery, Setup, and Installation	9	\$990	\$8,910
Onsite technical training	9	\$500	\$4,500
Office staff training (virtual for business portal training, exception handling, and payment research)	9	\$500	\$4,500
Total Upfront	9	\$10,49	\$94,410
Optional			
Check Scanner	9	\$780	\$7,020
Bill Stub Scanner	9	\$430	\$3,870
EMV Card Reader	9	\$950	\$8,550
Pin Pad and Aux Headphone Jack	9	\$400	\$3,600
Total Additional Upfront (optional)	9	\$2,560	\$23,040

Mobile Application Expansion & Open Data

In its most basic form, a mobile application (app) is a software program designed to work on a mobile device such as a smartphone or tablet. Apps are part of a broader trend known as Civic tech, referring to a range of technologies that enable civic participation, improve relationships between people and government, develop citizen engagement, and encourage citizen actions on behalf of the public good.^{xii} Currently, the City of Madison operates a limited number of apps including one for Metro and one for the Streets and Recycling department. MPL also runs an app through *LINKcat*. The expanded availability of applications could better allow residents to book appointments, get answers, pay bills, order services, and stay informed with city news and upcoming events. This alternative has been included after mentions in conversations with several city staff, and for its prominence as a model in other cities. The City of Sparks' app in Sparks, Nevada, is one such example. Their app combines visitor event information with resident services, enabling residents to access city news, request city services, and connect with city officials through the app.

While a city-based app would need to be developed through the IT department, independent citizens and community organizations around the country have used data to build their own community-serving applications. This is possible through the use of freely available government data, or "open data". Prominent organizations such as the Sunlight Foundation uphold open data as "the bedrock for building complete, equitable, and effective government systems and civic participation."^{xiii} While the City of Madison has an open data policy and makes data available on its website, it is unclear how much is done to actively engage and encourage residents to use it.

In 2017, the Sunlight Foundation published a Tactical Data Engagement Framework to help data practitioners encourage public use of open data. The framework moves beyond simply publishing information. Instead, it pushes governments to work actively with residents to use data to solve community challenges. As one example, in 2018 Living Cities, Code for America, and the National Neighborhood Indicators partnership at the Urban Institute facilitated civic tech and data partnerships in three cities across the country. In St. Louis, the team developed a web-based tool designed "to help mitigate the harm from the disparity in warrants for non-

violent traffic offenses between residents of color and white residents.”^{xiv} Given the disparate systems used for ticket tracking across St. Louis Counties' 90 or so jurisdictions, residents were left to track their information through traditional means. This meant manually and individually contacting municipalities in St. Louis County to receive information about their court data and ticket. This process was found to disproportionately affect communities of color and low-income residents. YourSTLCourts consolidated various court data into a digital portal through an application programming interface, allowing residents to access traffic ticket information. This technology created a transparent, centralized way for residents to connect with their court data.^{xv} In conjunction with its efforts to increase the availability of applications, the City of Madison should pursue initiatives that encourage uptake of its open data offerings.

GOALS AND ALTERNATIVES MATRIX

The table below provides a visual comparison of all programs evaluated against the goals of impact, equity, and feasibility.

Goals	Impact Categories	Resource Stations	Service Kiosks	App	Civic Engagement Center
Impact	Number of Residents Served	High	High	High	Moderate
	Range of Services Supported	High	Low	Moderate	Low
Equity	Access	Moderate	Moderate	High	Moderate
	Accessibility	Moderate	Low – Physical components are usually fixed.	High – Depends primarily on the user’s personal device.	Moderate
Feasibility	Cost to Implement	Moderate	High – Significant initial costs, moderate maintenance costs.	Moderate – Ongoing maintenance and development.	Low – Requires expanded library staffing hours during meetings, but much of the infrastructure already exists.
	Ease of Implementation	Low- Requires standardizing city databases.	High	Moderate- Wide variety in the functionality supported.	High – Experience in this format since COVID-19. Many precedents to draw from.

CONCLUSION

It has been well established that technology is a powerful tool to guide the future of government services and civic engagement. Implementing processes for remote and virtual service provision and public participation can help provide equal access across the city. This report has provided a sampling of services that could best fit a distance format and four possible models for implementation. Of the four assessed, resource stations and civic engagement centers have the most significant potential to increase access to resident services when evaluated against the goals of impact, equity, and feasibility. To truly provide access to services through remote means however, there must be a significant change in the City's digital management system. Discordant systems not only make centralizing service near impossible, but also leads to inefficiencies, duplication of efforts, and inconsistencies across agencies.

To improve access to services through digital means, the Library should establish resource stations in MPL locations, prioritizing neighborhood libraries in areas that are most underserved. Resource stations should take a phased approach, beginning with a few targeted services and one partner organization. As the city standardizes its computer systems and develops integrated scheduling systems, appointment-based services should be incorporated. While software is developed for the second and third phase of implementation, the Library should establish civic engagement centers. Although civic engagement centers can pull together a number of strategies including kiosks and apps, they should prioritize expanded access to government meetings.

Finally, although this report attempts to consider the future of remote services in Madison, there is much more work to be done. It is essential that any effort in this area be collaborative in nature. The City, community partners, and residents must be equally involved in order for the City to make steps toward equity. A holistic and inclusive approach will aid in eliminating barriers to access and will serve to improve service delivery systems in a manner that brings the Library closer to realizing its mission.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: City of Madison Transactions and Services

Category	Service	Location	Notes/ Additional Requirements
Ambulance	Pay an Ambulance Bill	Online, City Treasurer Office, by mail	Insurance information
Animals	Cat Registration	Online, by mail, City Treasurer Office (In Person)	Proof of Rabies vaccination, proof of spaying or neutering, check (\$20 if spayed, \$25 if unspayed). Late fees apply
Animals	Chicken Owner Registration	Online, by mail, City Treasurer Office (In Person)	Livestock premises registration, application, \$10 application fee
Animals	Dog Registration	Online, by mail, City Treasurer Office	Proof of Rabies vaccination, proof of spaying or neutering, check (\$20 if spayed, \$25 if unspayed). Late fees apply
Bike	Purchase/Renew Bicycle Registration	Online, City Treasurer Office, any Madison Bike Shop	\$10 registration fee, application
Building Inspection	Rental Property Emergency Contact Registration	Online	
Building Inspection	Door Replacement	Online	
Building Inspection	Roof Replacement	Online	
Building Inspection	Siding Replacement	Online	
Building Inspection	Window Replacement	Online	
Building Inspection	Landlord Resources		
Building Inspection	Tenant Resources		
Building Inspection	Zoning & Signs		
City Clerk	Absentee Voting	By mail, in-person	Additional restrictions
City Clerk	Alcohol Licensing		
City Clerk	Voter Registration		
Civil Rights	Contract Compliance		
Development Services Center	Building Permits		
Development Services Center	Land Development		

Housing	Pay CDA Rent	Online, by mail, by phone, City Treasurer's Office (In person)	\$1000 limit on credit card transactions
Housing	Apply for CDA Housing	Online via the applicant portal	Paper applications allowed only through reasonable accessibility accommodation
Metro Transit	Purchase Bus Pass	Online Mail Order, Sales Outlets, Metro Transit Administration Office (In Person)	\$0.25 online transaction fee
Metro Transit	Pay Commute Card, Ticket Outlet, & Other Invoices	Online	\$0.25 online transaction fee
Municipal Court	Pay a Madison Municipal Court Citation	Online, Madison Municipal Court (In Person)	2.75% convenience fee on credit and debit cards. No fee on checking or savings account transactions
Parking	Renew Residential Parking Permit	Online, Parking Utility Office (In Person)	Must be a registered user to submit applications (free, requires valid email). Requires proof of residence, \$42.00 fee, photo copy of driver's license, current vehicle registration
Parking	Pay a Parking Ticket	Online, Mail, Madison Police Department Locations (In person)	
Parking	Look up parking Ticket(s)	Online, In person, phone	
Parking	Accessible Parking	In person, by phone, by email	
Parking	Contractor Permits	Mail, fax, email	Online Application and fee
Parking	Motorcycle & Moped Permits	In person at City Parking Utility Office	\$225 fee for one rental year
Parks	Cross-Country Ski Trail Permit	Online, on-site kiosk	Fees
Parks	Disc Golf Permit	Online, on-site kiosk	Fees
Parks	Dog Park Permit	Online, on-site kiosk	Dog must be registered, fees
Parks	Lake Access Permit	Online	Fees
Property Taxes	Pay Property Tax	Online, By Mail, City Treasurer's Office (In Person)	2.24% convenience fee on credit card transactions. \$3.95 convenience fee on debit card transactions
Property Taxes	Pay Business Personal Property Taxes	Online, By Mail, City Treasurer's Office (In Person)	2.24% convenience fee on credit card transactions. \$3.95 convenience fee on debit card transactions

Property Taxes	Look up Property Taxes and Tax Payment Receipt	Online, phone, City Assessor's Office	
Safety Town	Safety Town Registration	Online	Registration form and fee
Senior Center	Donate to Senior Center	Online, in person, mail, phone	
Senior Center	Memorials & Tributes	Online, in person	
Streets & Recycling	Appliance Disposal Sticker	Online, by phone, by mail, libraries (in person) City Treasurer (in person)	Fees
Streets & Recycling	Tire Disposal Sticker	Online, by phone, by mail, libraries (in person) City Treasurer (in person)	Fees
Streets & Recycling	Electronics Recycling		
Streets & Recycling	Large Item disposal		
Streets & Recycling	Leaf & Yard Waste		
Traffic Engineering	Street Occupancy Permit	Mail, email, fax, in person	
Vending	Arts & Crafts Vending License	Online, by mail	Vendor License, Insurance requirements, business tax registration
Vending	Camp Randall High Density Vending License	Online, by mail	Street Vendor License, Insurance Requirements, Business Tax Registration
Vending	Langdon Street High Density Vending License	Online, by mail	Street Vendor License, Insurance Requirements, Business Tax Registration
Vending	Late Night Food Vending License	Online, by mail	Street Vendor License, Insurance Requirements, Business Tax Registration
Vending	Mall/Concourse Vending License	Online, by mail	Street Vendor License, Insurance Requirements, Business Tax Registration, Food Cart Review
Vending	Merchant Vending License	Online, by mail	Insurance Requirements, application, fee
Vending	Sidewalk Café License	Online, by mail	Insurance Requirements, Alcohol Licensing when applicable
Vending	Street Vendor License (Basic)	Online, by mail	Insurance Requirements, business tax registration
Water Utility	Water Utility Service		

Appendix B: Study Rooms by MPL Location

Location	Study Room	Capacity	Notes
Central	101	4	
Central	102	4	
Central	203	4	
Central	204	4	
Central	205	4	
Central	206	4	
Central	210	4	
Central	103	6	
Central	201	6	
Central	211	6	
Central	111	6	
Central	201	12	
Central	209	12	
Central	210	4	
Alicia Ashman	1	6	
Goodman South Madison	Aqua	6	
Goodman South Madison	Navy	6	
Goodman South Madison	Green	10	
Hawthorne	1	6	
Lakeview	1	6	
Lakeview	2	4	
Meadowridge	A (Blue)	10	
Meadowridge	B (Yellow)	4	
Sequoia	103	2	Family technology room, includes a desktop computer
Sequoia	104	6	
Sequoia	105	6	
Pinney	109	4	
Pinney	110	4	
Pinney	111	4	
Pinney	112	4	
Pinney	124	4	Family study room

Appendix C: Community and Meeting Spaces by MPL Location

Location	Room	Capacity	Notes
Hawthorne	Community Room	50	
Alicia Ashman	Meeting Room	75	
Lakeview	Combined Community Room	75	
Central	Community Room 301	110	
Central	Community Room 302	140	
Meadowridge	Community Room A	50	*Can be combined with community room B for a total max occupancy of 104
Meadowridge	Community Room B	54	
Pinney	Community Room 114	20	*Can be combined with community room 115 for a total max occupancy of 100
Pinney	Community Room 115	50	
Sequoia	Meeting Room A	40	*Can be combined with meeting room B for a total max occupancy of 80
Sequoia	Meeting Room B	40	
Goodman South Madison	Community Room	50	

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