

TO: Sustainable Madison Committee

FROM: Nan Fey, Current Member and Former Chair, Madison Food Policy Council

RE: Farmland Lease Template, Legistar #89698, Agenda Item # 2

DATE: September 15, 2025

This Updated Master Lease Template for farming on city-owned lands responded to a request from Mayor Rhodes-Conway to revise the 2019 lease to reflect more current best practices and comply with state statutes. A Work Group of the Madison Food Policy Council conducted extensive research and discussions with local experts before making recommendations to City Staff who drafted the revisions. The Updated Lease clarifies expectations of the parties, maintains flexibility to respond to conditions and future use of each property while respecting the needs of farmers and the land being cultivated.

Please support this effort by sending a Recommendation of Approval to the Madison Food Policy Council (lead referral committee) and the Common Council. The Madison Food Policy Council will be discussing your recommendation (along with three other referral committees – all of which have approved) at its meeting on Wednesday this week. Please make sure your official recommendation, with any suggestions you may have, is posted to Legistar and shared with Staff so they are available for consideration. The goal is to approve the language in October so that leases with farmers for the 2026 growing season can be signed before the end of the year.

I am unable to attend your meeting, but it's my understanding that Economic Development Staff will be present and able to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your attention and your support.