

SCOPING STUDY
MARCH 2020



IMAGINATION CENTER at Reindahl Park

“I think the “imagination” part people have captured really well with some great ideas. But the “center” part is what I feel like our neighborhood needs a lot. Just a place where all of us can gather.”

— CHAS, Sandburg Neighborhood Resident

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Cover photo and photo to right: Children participate in Wild Rumpus at Reindahl Park, June 2018.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Imagination Center concept was derived from a two year long planning process conducted by Madison Public Library that resulted in *Communities Inspiring Libraries: A Strategic Plan for Eastside Growth*. Within this study, the Library identified northeast Madison as an area in need of a library and expanded library service, but learned that other civic and social services are needed as well. As a result, the concept of the Imagination Center was born, intentionally meant to be opened-ended while additional planning ensued.

Over an additional two years, the Library completed further planning and conversed with a great number of community members. Madison Public Library now seeks to define the Imagination Center and establish a plan for its creation and operation at Reindahl Park in partnership with Madison Parks and the City of Madison's Department of Information Technology.

This report is organized in six sections that together lay the groundwork for the Imagination Center project. The history and background section details Reindahl Park's unique past and a brief history of library service on the east side. The neighborhoods section describes the northeast Madison region including its distinctive characteristics, social centers, and land use patterns.

Demographic indicators of northeast Madison show that the area's residents include significant percentages of immigrants and youth. The Library is excited to serve both populations with the Imagination Center. Finally, an examination of the transportation network in the northeast region is included with a focus on how visitors will be able to reach the Imagination Center. The Center's location within a visible public park and adjacency to a planned Bus Rapid Transit stop will make it a highly accessible destination.

The vision laid out in these pages is derived from numerous conversations shared between Library staff and community members of different ages, experiences, and backgrounds. The engagement section highlights the 112 conversations Madison Public Library shared with 425 community members. Their voices provide unique and valuable perspectives and are central to the Imagination Center's success. In addition, the section shares the process Madison Public Library used to gain an understanding of community members' concerns, hopes, and dreams for their area and the Imagination Center.

The remainder of this document provides recommendations for the Imagination Center and illustrates how they advance Madison Public Library and City of Madison goals. In *Communities Inspiring Libraries*, Madison Public Library identifies five critical roles to fulfill through library service on Madison's east side. The Library organizes the deliberate recommendations found in this report by these roles and ties them to the Imagination Center project.

① Social Forum

The Imagination Center will connect residents to each other in different ways, spontaneously and intentionally. The Center will have meeting rooms, event and gathering space, and a youth and teen area. It will also create space for Anji Play activities, a comprehensive approach to early learning employed by Madison Public Library and Madison Parks.

② Civic Innovator

Madison Public Library is committed to providing opportunities for residents to participate in public life. The Imagination Center will have citizenship and immigration resources and will connect area residents to civic life through voter registration, election participation, and citizen education. The Imagination Center will also promote digital engagement and increase accessibility to local government.

③ Holistic Health Advocate

The Imagination Center's location lends itself well to unique interactions with Reindahl Park, including environmental education and awareness. The Center will also place a special focus on health with the goal of increasing health literacy and health outcomes through community partnerships.

④ Cultural Platform

Northeast Madison currently lacks opportunities for residents to engage in the arts. The Imagination Center will expand the Library's Artist-in-Residence program, which will offer unique opportunities for residents to explore art and cultural heritage through programming offered in partnership with the Madison Public Library and Madison Parks. The Center will offer residents the ability to learn about and create their own media for artistic and civic purposes and will be a home for public art.

⑤ Economic Engine

Madison Public Library discovered that accessing child care is an obstacle for many northeast Madison families. The Imagination Center will address child care challenges and positively influence child care in the region. Madison Public Library will also provide access to broadband internet for Imagination Center visitors, as well as financial empowerment and literacy assistance.

A note about the recommendations:

Some of the recommendations in this report will not be surprising. All Madison Public Library facilities have comprehensive resources and materials collection, trained and knowledgeable staff, meeting spaces, technology, and broadband connected internet. However, recommended services such as child care, food preparation, and health services may feel like more of a departure. It is our belief, based on hours of community conversations, research, and years of embedded work in Madison's neighborhoods, that neighborhood challenges require imaginative solutions. The *City of Madison Comprehensive Plan Imagine Madison: People Powered Planning* has inspired us to develop new ways of providing services to meet the City's priorities, and we have identified ways to do this throughout the report.

The Library has a successful track record of partnering with city departments and community organizations to increase positive outcomes for neighborhood residents. As active partners in all Neighborhood Resource Teams, we've reimaged our existing spaces to better serve partners and residents in large and small ways, from community dinners to the creation of a Dream Bus, which brings needed library service to residents with transportation barriers. In partnership with Madison Parks, through the Wild Rumpus program in city parks, we've collaborated with Anji Play educators to bring a fresh approach to play and family interaction to the United States and public libraries.

The Imagination Center will take our partnership approach a step further. In partnership with the City of Madison Information Technology Department, the Imagination Center will address digital engagement. Creating a media studio and providing advanced communication technology will enable

residents to interact with City staff and elected officials remotely. This will connect residents to government and provide tools to people to share their own experiences and amplify their voices. Partnerships with public and private organizations will bring experts in health, nutrition, financial empowerment, environmental education, and more to the Imagination Center. Finally, a central partnership with Madison Parks will provide countless opportunities to expand the mix of active programming and social gatherings to Reindahl Park and the surrounding region. The co-location of City agencies and resources will respond to the vision within *Imagine Madison* of effective government through improved access and service delivery to our community. As this project moves forward, we anticipate there may be even more opportunities for adding other city services to the facilities.

While sharing conversations with community members during the Imagination Center's planning process, we've heard the question, "Isn't this just a library in a park?" We believe it is more. It is our hope that this project - from the planning stages to the realization of a shared vision - will serve as an example of a new way for City of Madison and our community to collaborate together to address regional challenges. Along the way, we believe this will drive us to collectively seek new ways to offer community services, and provide a model for City agencies to learn from each other and share best practices. We hope that you will imagine these new possibilities with us at the Imagination Center, a place where we can all learn, share and create together.

In 2016, Madison Public Library completed a plan for library service on Madison's eastside called *Communities Inspiring Libraries: A Strategic Plan for Eastside Growth*. The plan guides the Library's growth and makes significant recommendations about the Library's future. *Communities Inspiring Libraries'* central recommendation is the construction of a new public library, Madison's tenth, at Reindahl Park. As the title suggests, the recommendation is an outgrowth of many community conversations shared with the Library. While assembling the plan, Madison Public Library discovered that northeast Madison is in need of expanded library service as well as other civic services and public amenities. The Library identified Reindahl Park as the place to address these services gaps, and the concept of the Imagination Center was created.

This report aims to answer the following questions:

What is the Imagination Center and how will it impact Madison?

Who will be better off because of the Imagination Center?

How will the Imagination Center interact with Reindahl Park?

What does a successful Imagination Center look like?

To answer these questions, Madison Public Library again turned outward and shared conversations with community members across Madison. The goal of this report is not to be prescriptive, but rather to serve as a guide for the Imagination Center's construction and operation. The Imagination Center should draw on ideas presented within, because the vision described in this plan is not a singular vision; it is the community's vision. Madison Public Library is pleased to present the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park.

HISTORY & BACKGROUND

Reindahl Park, as well as northeast Madison, has a singular history that should inform the Imagination Center project. The section that follows presents a brief and selective history of the northeast Madison region, focusing specifically on Reindahl Park and land ownership records. The Library does not intend this to be complete history and recognizes that this is ancestral native land.

Reindahl Park Area and Northeast Madison

The area that now comprises northeast Madison was formerly in the Town of Burke. The Town of Burke has a rich agricultural past, and most of the town consisted of farmland throughout the second half of the 19th century into the first half of the 20th century. From the early 1940s until the late 1960s, the City of Madison and the City of Sun Prairie annexed large portions of the Town of Burke.¹ This land included Truax Field (now Dane County Regional Airport), as well as the land that would become home to Madison College and East Towne Mall. The City of Madison annexed a portion of Reindahl Park in 1956, and the remainder in 1965.

Prior to its use as a public park, the land that is now Reindahl Park was a 100-acre farm run by a succession of owners. Early records show John Catlin, a founding Madisonian, owned and operated the farm until 1856 when he sold it to Bennett Britton and his family. The Brittons subsequently built a stagecoach and inn (the historic “Britton Inn”) on the property and farmed the land from 1856 to 1867. In 1867, A. A. Meredith, Wisconsin superintendent of public property, purchased the farm from the Britton family. He owned the farm for a brief period before

transferring possession to Civil War General Henry Harnden in 1874. General Harnden, the most well-known owner in the farm’s history, commanded the Wisconsin infantry during the Civil War and became a Wisconsin state legislator after the war’s conclusion. During the war, Harnden and his troops famously captured Jefferson Davis, which brought Harnden some fame and considerable local name recognition. After Harnden’s ownership, the farm changed hands twice more until Amund Reindahl purchased the property in 1901.

From 1901 to 1946, Amund Reindahl owned and farmed the property that would eventually bear his name. Reindahl was an alumnus of UW-Madison, and he served as the Dane County register of deeds from 1899 to 1903. For many years after his service as the register of deeds, he worked as the deputy register of deeds.² It appears he mostly leased his farm to tenants, but he was known to have lived on his farm in the second floor of a stone barn. The stone barn still stands in the park today.

In 1927, Amund Reindahl donated 10 acres of his farm to Sunnyside School District for a new primary school. The district built a two-story brick schoolhouse the year prior on his land, which remained in operation until 1968. Sunnyside School primarily served families in the Town of Burke and the far eastside of the City of Madison. The school closed in 1968 and sat vacant until it was razed in 1994. In 2007, Sunnyside East Ltd Partnership redeveloped the former school property and built a shopping center that is on the site today. Although the school has been demolished, it was emblematic of Amund Reindahl’s passion for education, children, and community.³

Amund Reindahl died in 1946 at the age of 77. Before his passing, he willed 90 acres of land to the Town of Burke for a public park, thereafter to be named Reindahl Park.

¹ Allen Ruff and Tracy Will, Forward: *A History of Dane the Capital County* (Milwaukee, WI: Goblin Fern Press, 2000).

² *History of Dane County: Biographical and Genealogical*. Madison, WI: Western Historical Association, 1906.

³ Jen, “Amund Reindahl: The Farmer Who Saved His Land for the Children,” *Madison Sun* (Madison), August 25, 1967.

Reindahl Park

Reindahl Park took years to develop after Amund Reindahl's land donation to the Town of Burke. The Town and Country Garden Club, a local civic organization, spearheaded efforts to convert the farm to parkland. It took over two decades of effort, but on September 13, 1967, the City of Madison opened and dedicated Reindahl Park. Neighbors of the park and other interested parties privately funded most of the original park improvements. Since its opening in 1967 however, the City of Madison has maintained the park.

Today Reindahl Park is a vibrant community park. The park offers many recreational opportunities for visitors including nine soccer fields, eight tennis courts, a basketball court, playground, splash park, and the only public cricket field in Madison. A paved recreational path transects the park from its southwest corner to its eastern boundary at the intersection of Portage Road and Dwight Drive. The path offers opportunities for biking, running, and walking through the park. Reindahl Park also is home to 260 community garden plots. The master plan for Reindahl Park was updated and approved in 2013 to include the splash park and the elimination of the ice rink area. At the time a softball complex was also contemplated, which is shown in the area where the cricket field currently exists.

Reindahl Park has two main structures, a reservable park shelter and the stone barn. The shelter at Reindahl Park was built after the park was dedicated, likely sometime in the 1970s. It is a concrete structure with a maximum capacity for 110 people. Three sides of the building are enclosed with a rear opening facing the interior of the park. There are restrooms on the southeast side of the shelter and running water. The Reindahl

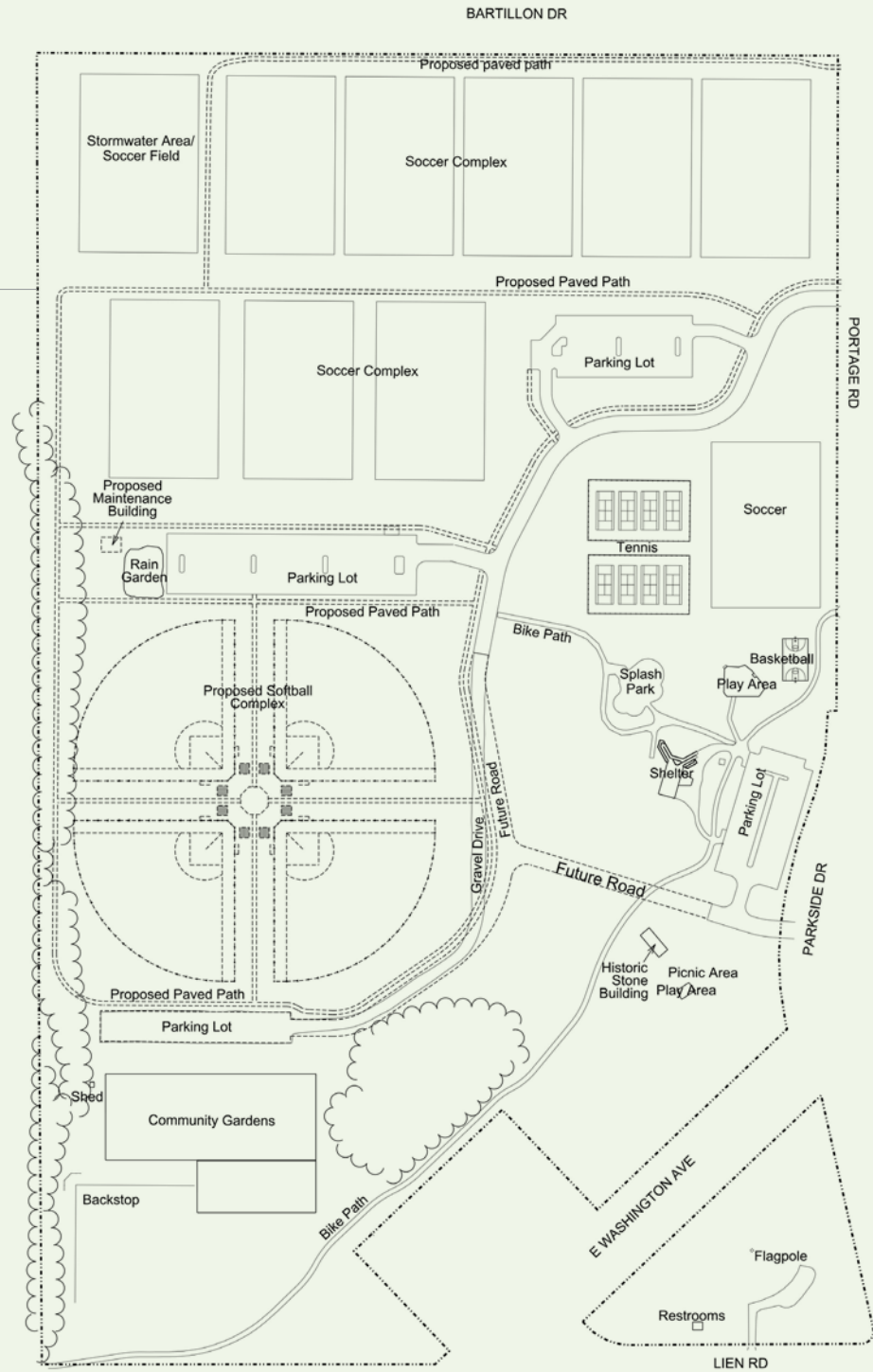
Park shelter is adjacent to a berm on its north side; a staircase and ramp ascend the shelter and provide access to a flat roof that also serves as a scenic overlook.

In recent years, a few community groups have used Reindahl Park extensively. Madison Cricket Association (est. 2011) uses the cricket field for leagues and practices. Two youth soccer clubs practice and play games at Reindahl Park. Madison Football Club (est. 1998) and Capital East Soccer Club (est. 2012) both host activities at the park throughout the spring, summer, and fall seasons. Each club is organized under the Madison Area Youth Soccer Association (MAYSA), and the clubs predominantly serve area youth. The Reindahl Park Gardeners group manages the community garden plots, and garden volunteers handle plot registrations as well as garden rules. The Reindahl Park Gardens are part of the regional Gardens Network, a partnership of Community GroundWorks, UW-Extension - Dane County, and the City of Madison. The park also serves as the site of one of several Parks and Library collaborations, hosting two summers of the Wild Rumpus, an outdoor program focused on the concept of true play, with an emphasis on early learning.

Master plan for Reindahl Park, approved March 2013.



Above: Park shelter and stone barn.



East Side Library Service in Madison

Madison Public Library has a long tradition of expansion to accommodate shifts in population and community needs. The Madison Free Library, established in 1875, soon outgrew its two rooms in Madison's City Hall and by 1906, the library moved to a Carnegie-funded library on Carroll Street. The Library opened a series of satellite library locations in Madison schools, followed by the first library branch on Williamson Street in 1912. Madison Public Library then added the Monroe Street (1944) and Sequoia (1957) libraries on the near west side. The Williamson Street location was subsequently replaced with three new east side libraries that expanded library services at the Hawthorne (1958), Lakeview (1959), and Pinney libraries (1966). In the south and southwest, Madison Public Library opened South Madison (1967) and Meadowridge (1974) libraries, and relocated and expanded the main library to become the Central Library at its present site (1965). Hawthorne and Lakeview Libraries moved several times during this period, often relocating further from the center of the city. The last new library, Alicia Ashman Library, opened in 2000 on the city's far west side.

From 2008 to present, Sequoia, Goodman South Madison, Central, Meadowridge, and Pinney Libraries were remodeled, relocated and/or expanded. In 2016, the *Communities Inspiring Libraries* report called for additional expansion on the east side of the city, resulting in the expansion and relocation of the Pinney Library (2020) and the recommendation for a northeast side library.

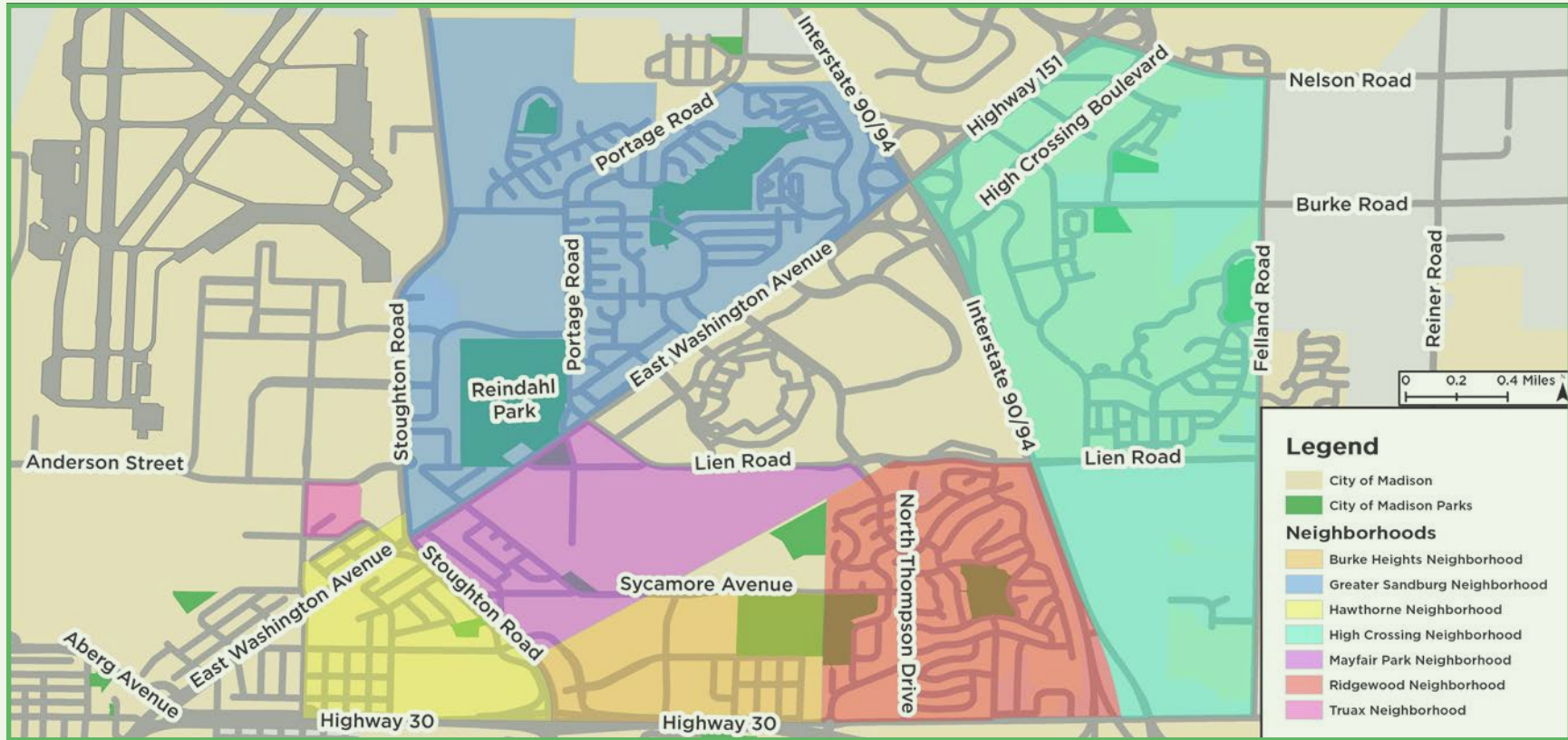
Library service has also expanded through a series of mobile service initiatives including the Bookmobile (1958), the Readmobile, and more recently the Dream Bus (2019). The Dream Bus predominantly serves youth and families in five Madison neighborhoods and provides service at Reindahl Park and other community locations.

Several libraries are now adjacent to community organizations or city departments. These include Hawthorne Library and Public Health of Madison and Dane County, a co-location of the Meadowridge Library and the Meadowood Neighborhood Center, and the adjacency of city and county partners near the Goodman South Madison Library. Two of these libraries - Hawthorne and Meadowridge - share meeting spaces, while the Goodman South Madison Library formerly shared a space with Public Health of Madison and Dane County.

In the last decade, library expansion has incorporated several attributes that feature prominently in recommendations for the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park. These include expanded meeting and event spaces, active and outdoor spaces, a kitchen at the Meadowridge Library, a garden at the Lakeview Library, and an outdoor play and event space at the new Pinney Library.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Northeast Madison is home to a variety of land uses and diverse neighborhoods. For the purposes of this report, northeast Madison or the Reindahl Park area is defined as the area east of the Dane County Regional Airport and Madison College and north of Aberg Avenue/Highway 30. The area is depicted below.



Perhaps most noticeable about northeast Madison is the dominant share of commercial and institutional land uses. The area is home to sprawling land uses such as the Dane County Regional Airport, Madison College, East Towne Mall, UW Health at the American Center, and the American Center Business Park. Highways 51 (Stoughton Road) and 151 (East Washington Avenue) divide the area and have many smaller commercial uses on their frontages. Several hotels, restaurants, and automotive centers are located on East Washington Avenue, and a variety of retail, office, and industrial buildings front Stoughton Road.

In addition to commercial, institutional, and industrial land uses, northeast Madison contains seven residential neighborhoods: Truax, Hawthorne, Mayfair Park, Burke Heights, Ridgewood, High Crossing, and Greater Sandburg. The neighborhoods are diverse and contain different types, densities, and ages of housing. The following section describes each neighborhood in greater detail.

■ Truax

The Truax neighborhood is located north of East Washington Avenue at the intersection of Wright Street and Straubel Street. The neighborhood consists of the Truax Apartment complex and the East Madison Community Center. Truax Apartments is a public housing complex containing 144 dwelling units. The City of Madison Community Development Authority (CDA) owns and operates the Truax Apartment complex, and the apartments are home to over 300 residents. In addition to the CDA, Joining Forces for Families (JFF) has an office at Truax focused on

connecting neighborhood residents with community services. JFF is an effort led by the Dane County Department of Human Services. It is a partnership with several local service providers including law enforcement agencies, public health departments, and school districts. Their goal is to provide accessible and integrated services to residents across Dane County including the Truax neighborhood.

The East Madison Community Center (EMCC) lies in the middle of the Truax community. The Center opened in 1966 as a community meeting place in two Truax apartments. It later moved to its current location with subsequent expansions in 1991, 1997, and 2008. The 2008 expansion greatly expanded the facility and added a commercial kitchen, gym, and locker rooms.⁴ In 2018, the Center received an interior renovation from the “Design for a Difference” charity makeover campaign. The renovation brought new furniture, flooring, painting, and more to the community center.

East Madison Community Center provides social, educational, recreational, and cultural programming to neighborhood residents as well as residents across the east side of Madison. It provides a range of services from nutrition and health to the arts. The Center manages 41 community garden plots, a food pantry, and is a meal site for children during the summer months. It also has an adult fitness room and a full-size gymnasium. The community center offers a variety of educational programming and has after school care for students. The Center also has a neighborhood resource center focused on helping adults obtain job skills and gain access to other service providers. In addition to those services, East Madison Community Center is a place for recreation and social events in the heart of the Truax community.⁵

⁴ Speckhard Pasque, “East Madison Community Center Receives Major Renovation from ‘Design for a Difference’ Movement,” *The Cap Times*. October 15, 2018.

⁵ East Madison Community Center, n.d. <https://eastmadisoncc.org/>.

Hawthorne

The Hawthorne neighborhood is located to the south of the Truax neighborhood. Wright Street bounds the neighborhood to the west, Aberg Avenue to the south, and Stoughton Road to the east. East Washington Avenue divides the neighborhood into two parts, a smaller northern section and a larger southern section.

The northern part of the Hawthorne neighborhood contains mostly single-family homes, which are tucked behind commercial buildings that run along East Washington Avenue. The homes in this area were developed incrementally over the course of five decades, from the 1920s to the early 1970s. Several commercial buildings are located in the neighborhood including the William T. Evjue Access Community Health Clinic.

The southern part of the Hawthorne neighborhood is similar to the northern section. The residences in this area include one and two-family homes that were built in the 1940s and 1950s. Hawthorne Elementary School sits at the center of the neighborhood and recently became a designated community school.⁶ The neighborhood also has a large zone of light industrial activity along Stoughton Road and Aberg Avenue.

Mayfair Park and Burke Heights

The Mayfair Park and Burke Heights neighborhoods are both comparable to the Hawthorne neighborhood. Each neighborhood features an area of concentrated low-density housing and large areas of commercial land use. Many of the homes in the two neighborhoods were built in the 1960s and 1970s as Madison expanded to the east. Housing in the Mayfair Park neighborhood is located near Stoughton Road with commercial activity further to the east. A cluster of three grocery stores is located there including Hy-Vee, ALDI, and Target. Additionally, Madison Fire Department Station #8 is in the neighborhood on Lien Road.

Further to the south in Burke Heights, commercial land uses give way to residential housing from west to east. On the western side of the neighborhood is a UW Credit Union location and a Walmart. Industrial activity, primarily warehousing, bridges the commercial land uses to a residential subdivision that makes up the bulk of the neighborhood to the east. Sycamore Park lies to the north of the subdivision and is a community focal point. The park includes over 71-acres of land and has a large off-leash dog exercise area as well as recreational fields for soccer as well as softball, picnic shelter, playground, and sledding areas.

Ridgewood

The Ridgewood neighborhood is located between Highway 30, I-90/94, and Lien Road. The neighborhood is the second largest neighborhood in the Reindahl Park region. Ridgewood is almost exclusively a residential neighborhood with a variety of single-family and multi-family dwelling units. The neighborhood developed more recently than most of the other neighborhoods in the area, with the majority of houses built in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Although the Ridgewood neighborhood is mostly residential, Glacier Hill Park lies in the middle of the community. It is smaller than Sycamore Park, but Glacier Hill Park still contains about 15-acres of land. Park features include a basketball court, playground, and two open recreation fields. A sun shelter has recently been added to the park, and an accessible path will connect amenities in 2020. The master plan for Glacier Hill Park was approved in 2019.

The Ridgewood neighborhood has a few individual land uses that are not residential. To the south of the neighborhood lie

⁶ Novak, Bill, "Hawthorne, Lakeview Will Become Community Schools; Service and Support the Key," *Wisconsin State Journal*. May 23, 2018.

three places of worship. Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Calvary Gospel Church, and Crosspoint Church of the Nazarene all call the Ridgewood neighborhood home. The City of Madison Streets Division - East Office is located to the west of the neighborhood just north of Sycamore Park. The facility offers a drop-off location for residents hauling brush and yard waste along with items for recycling.

■ High Crossing

Beyond I-90/94 and south of Highway 151 lies the High Crossing Neighborhood. The neighborhood is small but growing. It contains a large commercial presence located just south of Highway 151 that includes several auto dealerships and hotels. High Crossing is also home to Madison Fire Department Station #11.

Residential development lies behind the commercial frontage on Highway 151 and mostly consists of multi-family residential buildings. The area includes both condominium and apartment complexes. It also is home to Meadowmere Madison—an assisted living facility—and the Madison Heights Senior Living Community. The City of Madison is planning for new development further to the south with residential construction unfolding all the way to Lien Road, just east of the Ridgewood neighborhood.

Two neighborhood parks, High Crossing Park and Patriot Park, are located on Congress Avenue. High Crossing Park is a 5.74-acre neighborhood park and includes a basketball court, playground, rectangular athletic field and path system. The master plan for Patriot Park was approved in 2017; similarly sized (5.41-acres), the park will include a paved path and hiking trails; future expansion of the park is planned to include a sun shelter, play area, parking lot, and off-leash dog park.

■ Greater Sandburg

Immediately adjacent to the east side of Reindahl Park is the Greater Sandburg neighborhood. The Greater Sandburg neighborhood is the largest of the seven neighborhoods in the Reindahl Park area. It is located north of Highway 151 and branches off both sides of Portage Road heading to the north. The west side of the neighborhood is predominantly single-family housing. Much of this housing was developed between the 1970s and 1990s. Several multi-family housing complexes are nestled between the west side of the neighborhood and I-90/94 at the eastern boundary of the neighborhood. These include Forest Run, Morningside on the Green, and the Village Green East apartments as well as the Stonebridge Condominiums.

Sandburg Park and Sandburg Woods stands in the middle of the Greater Sandburg neighborhood. The woods is a 34-acre conservation park featuring oak and hickory woodlands. The area is part of a parkway strip that connects Sandburg Elementary School with the eastern part of the neighborhood. Sandburg Park has a recreational trail along its western edge as well as a field with a basketball court to the north and a playground.

Perhaps the social center of the neighborhood is Sandburg Elementary School. The school does not have an official designation as a community school, but it provides many community services beyond the scope of a typical elementary school. The Food for Thought Initiative runs a full-service food pantry at the school. In addition, the school allows community members to use their facility during non-school hours and provides other services such as mental health counseling. Sandburg Elementary is also a dual language immersion school and offers classroom instruction in Spanish and English.

DEMOGRAPHICS

People with different backgrounds, ages, and experiences all call the Reindahl Park area home. While similar in many regards to the rest of Madison, the Reindahl Park area is a unique region of the city with its own distinctive characteristics, which should inform and enlighten the Imagination Center project.

Area Demographics

The Reindahl Park region has a higher percentage of children than the city of Madison as a whole. Approximately 8.0% of northeast Madison residents are children under the age of five, compared to 6.4% living on the eastside, and 5.2% living in the city at large. Even more telling is the amount of children between the ages of five and 18 years old. Close to 25% of the population is under 18 years old, compared to around 20% of east side residents and only 17% of Madison residents. This suggests that in addition to many young children, there are quite a few tweens and teens living near the park. While there is an older adult presence, the percentage of seniors (age 65+) is slightly lower than the eastside and Madison, comprising about 10% of the population.

In addition to skewing younger, the population living near Reindahl Park is more ethnically diverse than that of Madison generally. More immigrants in particular live in the neighborhoods surrounding Reindahl Park. Around 13% of area residents were not born in the U.S., which is notably higher than the percentage of immigrants living on the eastside (8.7%) and living in Madison (11.7%). The vast majority of immigrants residing in the area were born in Latin America, Asia, or Africa. As a result, there

are more limited English speaking households than other areas of Madison's eastside; however, the number of households that speak little English is similar to Madison overall.

The racial makeup of the area is also more diverse than typical in Madison given the high proportion of immigrants. The region has a larger percentage of African-American, Hispanic, and Asian residents than the rest of the city. An estimated 8.0% of area residents identify as African-American, compared with 6.5% of Madison residents. Similarly, Asian-Americans comprise 9.4% of the population in northeast Madison, which is higher than the rate of 8.8% in the city of Madison. Adding to the area's diversity, there is also a significantly higher Latinx population. Approximately 9% of area residents are of Hispanic origin compared to 7% of residents on the eastside and the city of Madison.

Another demographic factor worth consideration is housing affordability in the Reindahl Park area. More specifically, the cost of renting a dwelling unit warrants attention as rents have increased faster in recent years than home values in Madison.⁷ According to the Census Bureau, cost burdened renters are those who spend more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs. Extremely cost burdened renters are those who spend more than 50% of their gross income to secure housing. In the Reindahl Park area, roughly 2 in 5 renters are cost burdened and 1 in 5 renters are extremely cost burdened. While not quite as high as the rate of cost burdened renters in the city of Madison generally, the numbers still merit attention.

Educational attainment is another measurement requiring examination to develop an understanding of northeast Madison residents. Fewer Reindahl Park area residents have completed

⁷ City of Madison Planning Division. *Equitable Development in Madison: An Assessment of Factors Contributing to Displacement and Gentrification*. Madison, WI. August 6, 2019.

a bachelor's or a graduate degree compared to the Madison population as a whole. The region is home to a lower percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree than the city of Madison (27.1% vs. 32.2%), as well as a significantly lower number of residents with a graduate degree (12.6% vs. 24.9%). A higher rate of residents in the Reindahl Park area have received associate's degrees or have attended some college without obtaining a degree. In addition, the region has a higher percentage of residents without a high school diploma than Madison overall (6.9% vs. 4.6%).

One final metric that commands attention is the ability of residents to access the internet in their homes. In northeast Madison, around 14% of residents do not have an internet connection in their home or a mobile data plan allowing them to connect to the internet. Although the rate of residents living in the Reindahl Park area without a data connection is slightly lower than the city of Madison as a whole, it is still substantial, with approximately 1,500 households living near Reindahl Park unable to access the internet at home. Libraries serve internet needs of residents and visitors in all neighborhoods in which they reside and this will be an important service consideration for the Imagination Center's operation.

CULTURE AND CHARACTER

Create safe and affirming community spaces that bring people together and provide social outlets for underrepresented groups.

The Imagination Center's meeting rooms, community space, seating areas, food preparation space, and outdoor space will provide the infrastructure for safe and affirming community spaces. The Center will bring the community together through art, media, civic engagement, and recreation. In addition, immigrants and English learners will be able to access immigration, citizenship, and literacy resources. Reindahl Park will activate in novel and exciting ways with the addition of the Imagination Center.

Northeast Madison Demographics

DEMOGRAPHICS [§]	REINDAHL*	%	EASTSIDE**	%	MADISON	%
Total Population	25,972	10.4%	100,736	40.5%	248,856	100.0%
Population Sample for Poverty Data	25,776	10.9%	99,638	41.9%	237,559	100.0%
Number of Families for Poverty Data	6,278	12.4%	23,295	45.9%	50,806	100.0%
Number of Households	10,748	10.0%	44,350	41.1%	107,890	100.0%
YOUTH POPULATION						
Population under 5	2,067	8.0%	6,438	6.4%	13,033	5.2%
Population under 18	6,431	24.8%	20,102	20.0%	41,499	16.7%
Population 18 and up	19,541	75.2%	80,634	80.0%	207,357	83.3%
Population 25 and up	17,161	66.1%	71,930	71.4%	154,397	62.0%
OLDER ADULT POPULATION						
Population 65 and up	2,644	10.2%	12,240	12.2%	27,564	11.1%
ORIGIN AND LANGUAGE						
Limited English Speaking Households	341	3.2%	1,154	2.6%	3,752	3.5%
Foreign Born	3,396	13.1%	8,724	8.7%	29,049	11.7%
POVERTY						
Families Living in Poverty	416	6.6%	1,722	7.4%	4,014	7.9%
All People Living in Poverty	2,331	9.0%	11,720	11.8%	43,568	18.3%
RACE AND ETHNICITY						
White	19,687	75.8%	81,204	80.6%	196,174	78.8%
Black/African American	2,082	8.0%	8,303	8.2%	16,273	6.5%
Asian	2,435	9.4%	5,682	5.6%	21,836	8.8%
American Indian/Native American	106	0.4%	247	0.2%	947	0.4%
Some other race	891	3.4%	1,650	1.6%	4,802	1.9%
Two or more races	771	3.0%	3,628	3.6%	8,704	3.5%
Hispanic, any race	2,254	8.7%	7,030	7.0%	17,473	7.0%

[§] 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year Estimates

HOUSING AND HOUSING SECURITY	REINDAHL*	%	EASTSIDE**	%	MADISON	%
Cost Burdened Renters	2,069	41.0%	8,942	47.0%	28,084	49.7%
Extremely Cost Burdened Renters	993	19.7%	4,085	21.5%	15,557	27.5%
Total Renters	5,051		19,044		56,500	

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (25 YEARS OLD+)	REINDAHL*	%	EASTSIDE**	%	MADISON	%
No High School Diploma	1,183	6.9%	4,179	5.8%	7,169	4.6%
Some College	3,911	22.8%	14,326	19.9%	24,346	15.8%
Associate's Degree	2,097	12.2%	7,882	11.0%	12,981	8.4%
Bachelor's Degree	4,656	27.1%	20,693	28.8%	49,675	32.2%
Graduate/Post-Bachelor's Education	2169	12.6%	11,247	15.6%	38,420	24.9%

INTERNET ACCESS	REINDAHL*	%	EASTSIDE**	%	MADISON	%
Households without internet access (including mobile data plans)	1,472	13.7%	6,187	14.0%	15,756	14.6%

*Includes Tracts 2500, 2601, 2602, 2603, 11402

**Includes Tracts 2301, 2601, 3100, 2000, 1804, 2700, 2401, 2602, 11402, 2603, 2402, 3002, 1900, 2100, 1802, 2900, 2302, 2200, 2800, 2500, 3001, 11401, 10501

ECONOMY AND OPPORTUNITY

Close the educational opportunity gap.

The Imagination Center will seek to improve access to quality child care and increase programming for youth. In addition, the Center will have services focused on literacy and digital skills development. The Imagination Center will also add a high quality Wi-Fi destination to an area where many do not have public internet access nearby.

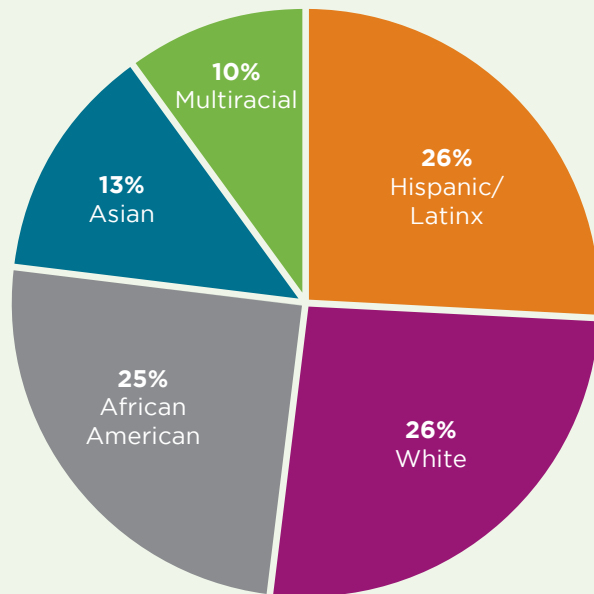
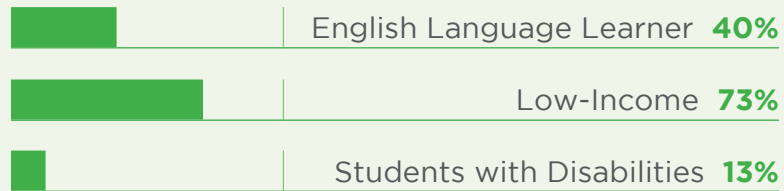
Elementary School Demographics

Although examining area demographics is informative, it deserves mentioning that the demographic profile of youth in northeast Madison is considerably different from the rest of the area's population, especially when considering race. School profiles from the two public elementary schools near Reindahl Park reveal that the area's younger residents are far more diverse. Only 26% of elementary school students at Hawthorne and Sandburg Elementary School are white, compared to almost 76% of area residents as a whole. At Sandburg Elementary, 42% of students identify as Hispanic/Latinx, more than four times higher than the rate of Latinx residents in the region. Both schools also have a much higher percentage of African-American students than is reflected in the rest of the area's population.

Students at the two elementary schools also face barriers to learning. Nearly 40% of students at Hawthorne Elementary are English language learners along with 46% of their peers at Sandburg Elementary. In addition, a majority of students at the two schools are from low-income families. Approximately 66% of the students at Sandburg Elementary and 73% of the students at Hawthorne Elementary come from low-income families. These barriers are significant and the Imagination Center will serve as a resource for these students and their families.

Hawthorne Elementary Demographics

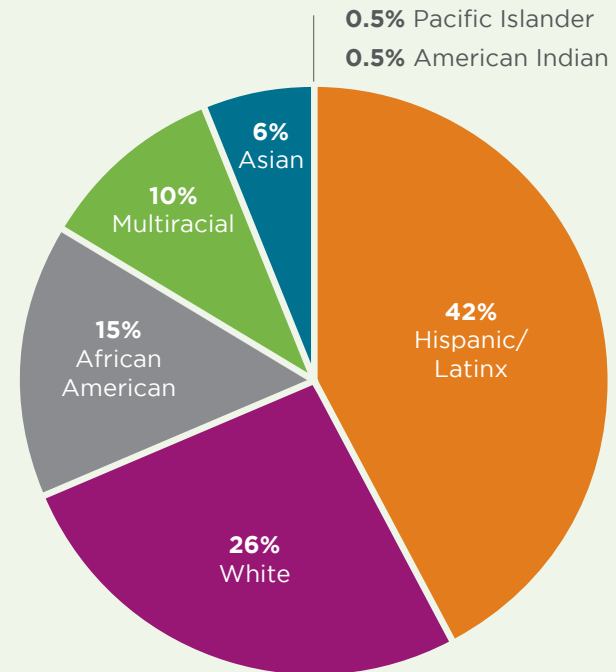
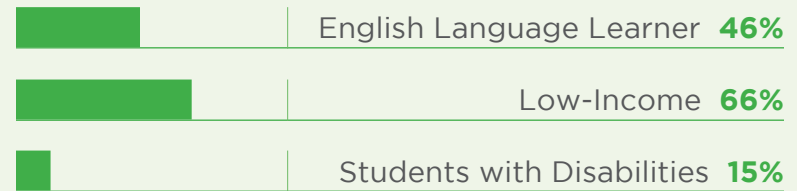
(~400 Students)⁹



⁹Madison Metropolitan School District. "Hawthorne Elementary School Profile." Madison, WI, 2019.

Sandburg Elementary Demographics

(~450 Students)¹⁰



¹⁰Madison Metropolitan School District. "Sandburg Elementary School Profile." Madison, WI, 2019.

TRANSPORTATION

Accessibility is of central importance to the Imagination Center's success. The ways in which the Center fits within the wider transportation network in northeast Madison is key to understanding how visitors can effectively travel to and from the Center. An examination of the region's transportation network and infrastructure follows.

Pedestrian Network

Pedestrian infrastructure in northeast Madison is generally robust. Most streets in the region have sidewalks on each side of the street, providing pedestrians the means to traverse the area safely. The larger residential neighborhoods in particular have an abundance of sidewalks. The Greater Sandburg neighborhood contains sidewalks on almost every street and typically both sides of each street. The Sandburg Woods path also runs through the neighborhood, connecting the east and west sides of the neighborhood and leading to Sandburg School. Similar to the Greater Sandburg neighborhood, the Ridgewood neighborhood also has considerable internal sidewalk connectivity.

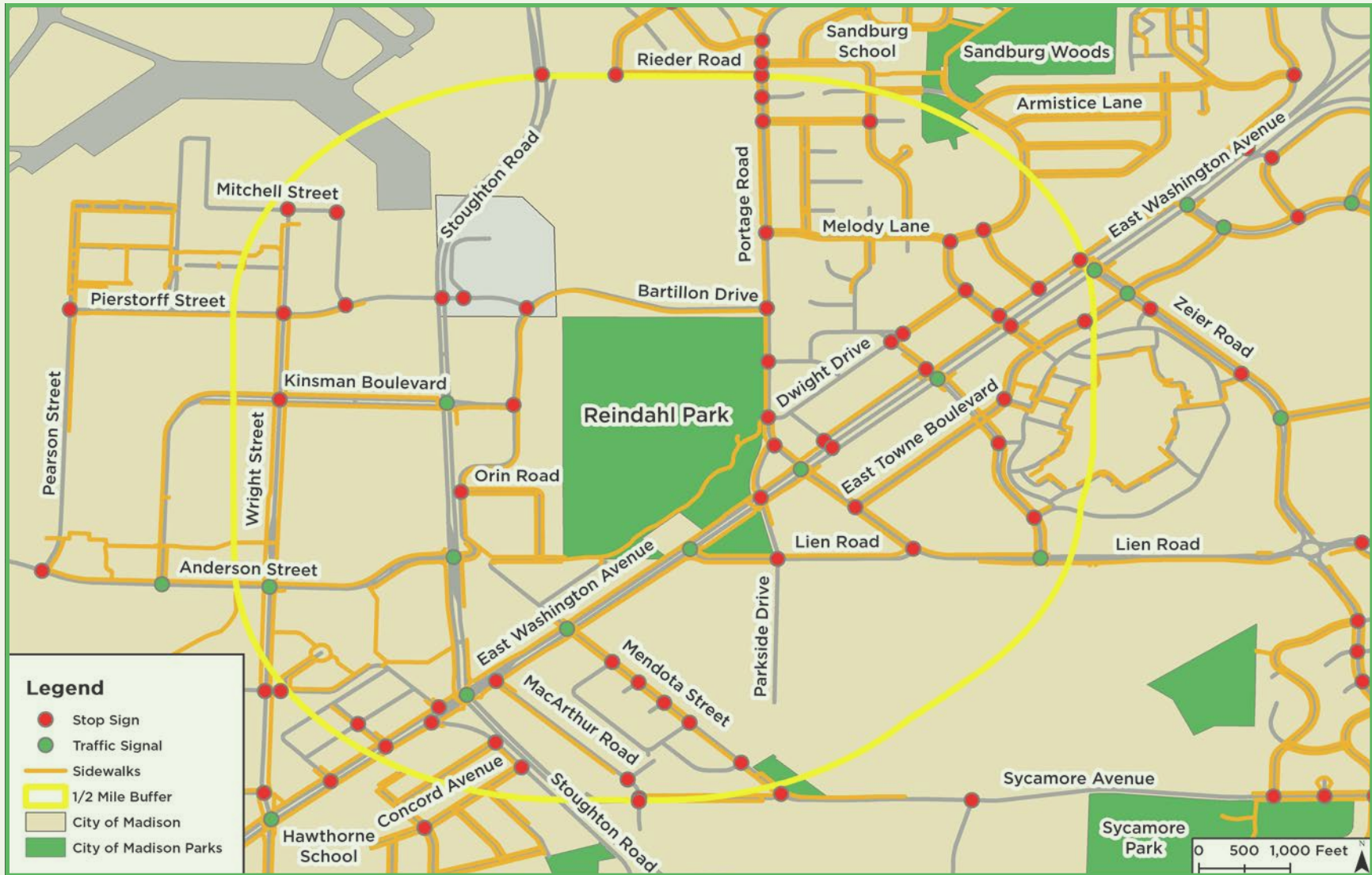
While the larger neighborhoods enjoy high-quality pedestrian infrastructure, smaller neighborhoods in the area do not. The Mayfair Park, Burke Heights, and Hawthorne neighborhoods do not have as robust connectivity. Streets in those neighborhoods have some sidewalks, but the sidewalks are not as systematically connected and have significant gaps. The lack of connectivity could be a barrier to pedestrian travel within these neighborhoods.

More importantly for the purposes of this report, the pedestrian infrastructure in northeast Madison features gaps between the residential neighborhoods and Reindahl Park. Lien Road is the most direct connection between the Ridgewood neighborhood and Reindahl Park. Significant gaps and inconsistencies in sidewalk access means neighbors need to cross streets multiple times for consistent sidewalk access, providing safety and accessibility barriers to reaching the park.

The Greater Sandburg neighborhood has better pedestrian access to Reindahl Park. However, the neighborhood does not have sidewalks on the streets closest to Reindahl Park where the Imagination Center will be located. A similar lack of consistent sidewalk access poses the same barriers to Reindahl Park access for this neighborhood, with Dwight Drive, Duke Street, Sunnyside Crescent, Stuart Court, having no or minimal sidewalks. Portage Road presents a similar situation to that of Lien Road, requiring most pedestrians to have to cross the street once or more to stay on the sidewalk network.

Crossing major corridors poses a significant barrier for pedestrians. Given Reindahl Park's location, many neighborhood residents will have to cross East Washington Avenue, Portage Road, Lien Road, or Stoughton Road to access the Imagination Center on foot. These are all major vehicular thoroughfares with a heavy amount of daily traffic. The table on page 18 shows the Average Weekday Traffic Counts (AWTC) for major roads that pedestrians may cross to reach the Imagination Center.

Existing Pedestrian Network



Traffic counts of major roads in the Reindahl Park region.

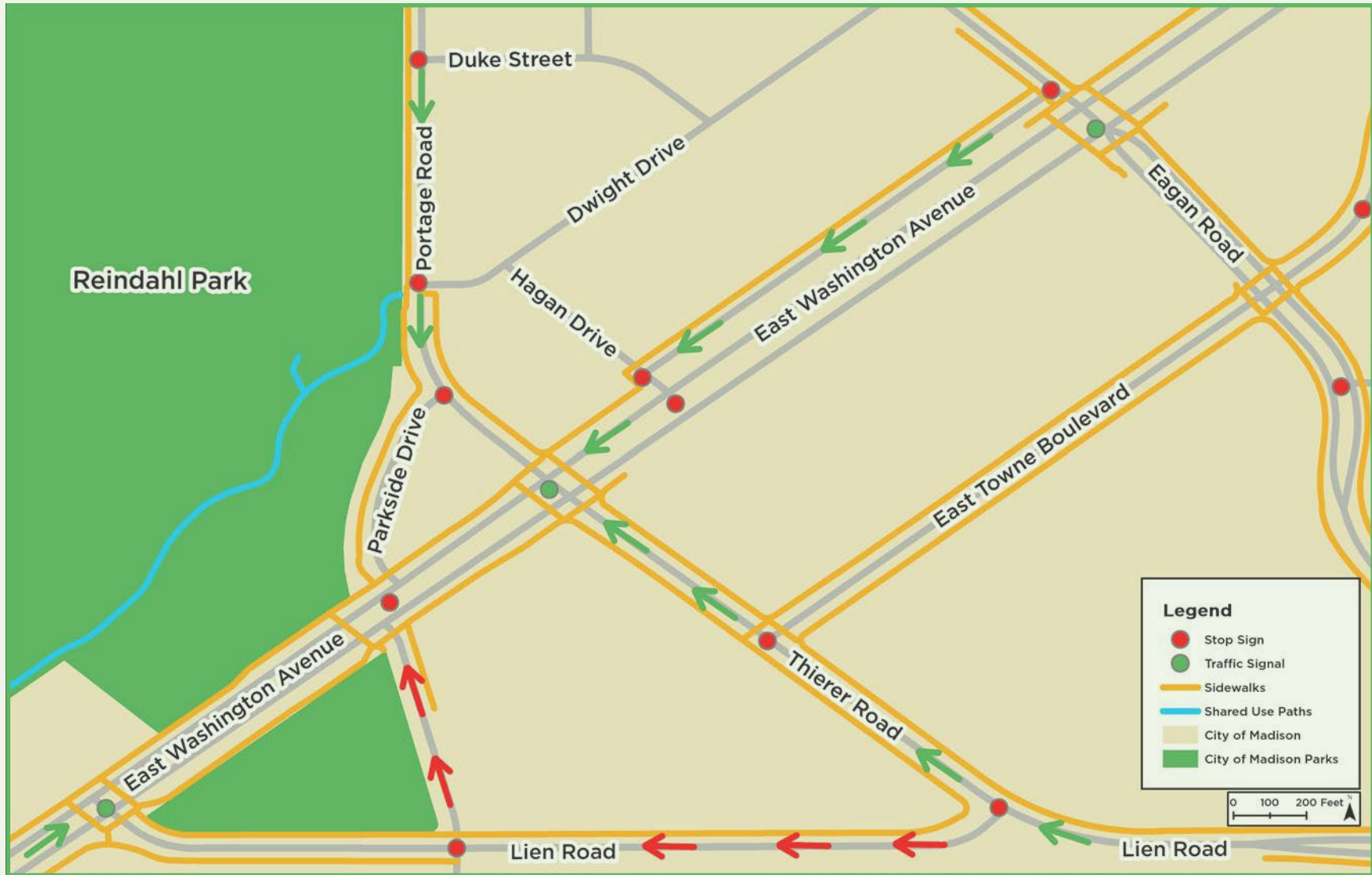
STREET NAME	AVERAGE WEEKLY TRAFFIC COUNT
East Washington Avenue	48,700
Portage Road	7,350
Lien Road	10,550
Stoughton Road	32,100

East Washington Avenue is the arterial street that divides northeast Madison more than any other. The most challenging crossing for pedestrians near Reindahl Park is at East Washington Avenue and Parkside Drive. East Washington Avenue contains eight lanes with a posted speed of 40 mph at the crosswalk near Parkside Drive. While there is a median that serves as a pedestrian refuge, the speed and volume of traffic makes the crossing difficult for most pedestrians. Adding to that difficulty, there is no intersection control to slow or stop traffic at Parkside Drive. Pedestrians must walk to Thierer Road or Lien Road in order to cross at a signalized intersection.

On its surface, the Parkside Drive crossing appears to present a barrier to reaching the Imagination Center from the south side of East Washington Avenue. However, most pedestrian traffic will originate from west of the Lien Road intersection, east of the Thierer Road intersection, or along Portage Road to the north. The remainder will likely emanate from the Ridgewood neighborhood and travel along Lien Road. With the addition of proper wayfinding signage, pedestrians will be directed to stay on Thierer Road at the Lien Road/Thierer Road split. Between the Lien Road split and East Washington Avenue, existing and planned land uses should not generate a large amount of pedestrian trips. As a result, pedestrian crossings at the Parkside Drive intersection will be minimal for those traveling to the Imagination Center.

At a regional level, the major obstacles to walkability in northeast Madison are the current land use patterns and large distances between popular destinations. Different land uses are typically separated from each other, as opposed to mixed, which creates great distance between trip origins and destinations. In addition, a number of gaps in the pedestrian network exist that makes safe travel difficult along some corridors. While there are pockets of residential density, there are still many areas of low-density residential housing with larger lot sizes. That in turn makes pedestrian travel harder to accomplish. Although the Imagination Center project will not solve these issues, its location will provide a walkable public destination for some area residents and will provide a refuge for those making long pedestrian trips.

Pedestrian Routes



Bicycle Network

As well as walking to the Imagination Center, visitors may also travel by bicycle. Given the nature of the land use patterns around Reindahl Park and the distance between origins and destinations, it is possible that more visitors will travel to the Center by bike than on foot. An analysis of bike infrastructure and bike route connectivity in the region follows.

Reindahl Park and the surrounding area has different levels and types of bike infrastructure. Along East Washington Avenue, the primary transportation corridor in the region, separate bike lanes exist in both travel directions and terminate near East Towne Mall. Other major corridors such as Wright Street, Portage Road, and Sycamore Avenue also have bike lanes albeit only in one direction. The notable exception is Stoughton Road, which does not have any bike infrastructure south of Anderson Street. Stoughton Road only has paved shoulders north of Anderson Street, which is not a robust form of bike infrastructure.

The Portage Road bike lane travels southbound, and the lane will allow visitors to reach the Imagination Center via bike from the Greater Sandburg neighborhood. Additionally, bike lanes along Lien Road and Sycamore Avenue will provide safe means for bicyclists coming to the Center from the Ridgewood Neighborhood. However, it is worth noting that the westbound bike lane on Lien Road follows Lien Road at the Lien Road/Thierer Road split, unlike the sidewalk that follows Thierer Road.

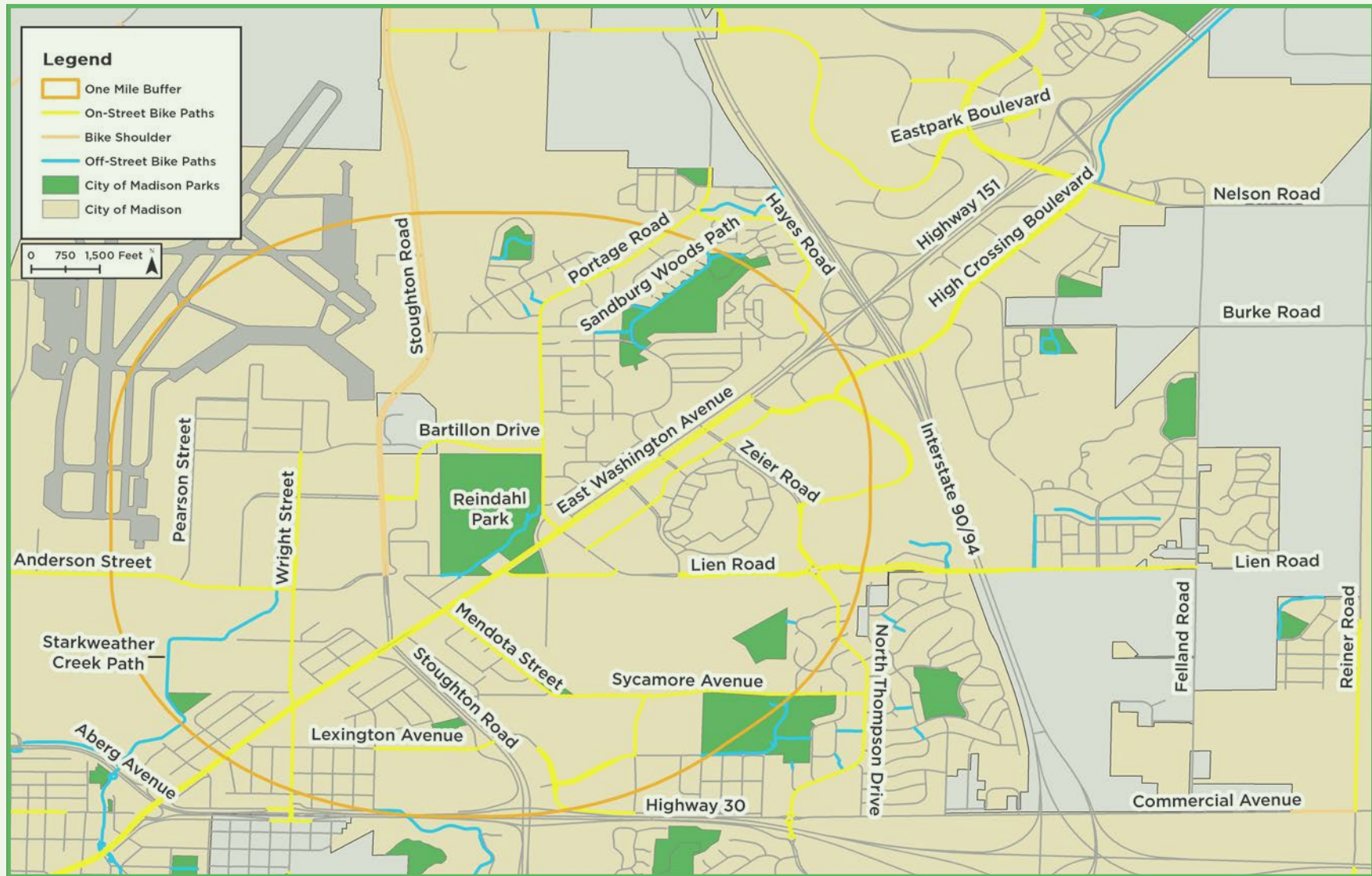
The Reindahl Park area has a few notable off-street bike paths. The Starkweather Creek Path is the most developed route, and it connects the Capital City Path to the Reindahl Park area.

The path enters the region from the southwest and ends near the Anderson Street and Wright Street intersection. The next largest off-street bike trail is the Sandburg Woods path, which connects both sides of the Greater Sandburg neighborhood. Reindahl Park also has an off-street bike and pedestrian path transecting the park. Aside from those paths, there is limited off-street bike infrastructure.

Bike infrastructure connectivity has one noteworthy interruption, which may affect visitors trying to reach the Imagination Center on a bike. There is a gap between the end of the Starkweather Creek Path and Reindahl Park. Specifically, Anderson Street between Wright Street and Stoughton Road lacks any kind of bike infrastructure. This section of Anderson Street crosses in front of the Madison College Truax Campus and is a four-lane road with an Average Daily Traffic Count of 15,950 vehicles. Navigating that portion of the street on a bike is challenging for bicyclists and may prevent some from choosing to bike to the Imagination Center.

In spite of the gap near Madison College, northeast Madison is generally well suited for bicyclists to reach the Imagination Center. In conversations with community members, several people noted this while also suggesting improvements, such as adding a B-Cycle station to the park or more bike storage. As the Imagination Center continues to develop, city staff should seek ways to improve the biking experience in northeast Madison.

Existing Bike Network



NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING

Create complete neighborhoods across the city where residents have access to transportation options and resources needed for daily living.

The Imagination Center will bring resources of all kinds to northeast Madison including child care, civic spaces, educational programs, and recreational opportunities.

The Imagination Center will create a social and civic focal point for several northeast Madison neighborhoods directly adjacent to a planned Bus Rapid Transit stop.

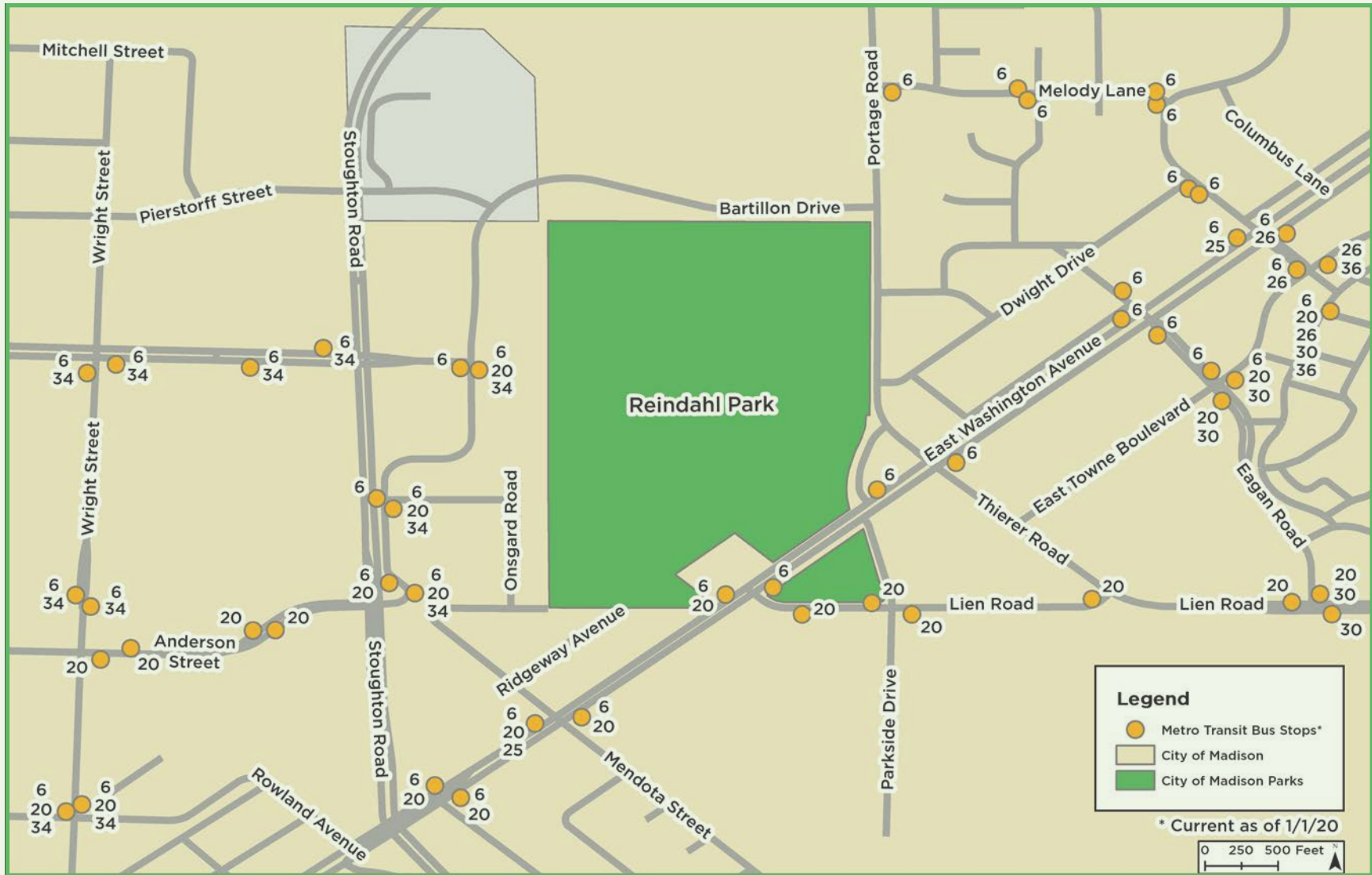
Public Transportation

Another way visitors will be able to access the Imagination Center is through public transit. Madison Metro currently serves northeast Madison with a few bus routes. The primary route serving the area is the #6 bus route, which travels from East Towne Mall through downtown Madison to the West Transfer Point. Buses on the #6 route run every half hour on weekdays and every 15 minutes during peak hours. The bulk of the #6 route travels along East Washington Avenue, with a loop at Madison College and another through the Greater Sandburg neighborhood. The loops offer less frequent stops, approximately once each hour during the week.

Besides the #6 route, the #20 bus route also services the Reindahl Park area. The #20 route travels from East Towne Mall, past Reindahl Park and Madison College to the Dane County Regional Airport, and onto the North Transfer Point. Buses typically run every half hour along the #20 route.

There are a handful of bus stops near Reindahl Park, which mainly serve the #6 and #20 routes. The closest stop is on the northeast corner of Parkside Drive and East Washington Avenue. The #6 route is the only bus that stops there. Another stop, at the intersection of Lien Road and East Washington Avenue, gives riders the chance to board the #6 or #20 bus routes. Maps depicting bus stop locations, including the routes they serve near Reindahl Park, and bus routes in northeast Madison follow.

Metro Transit Bus Stops



Metro Transit Weekday Service (02/25/2020)



Metro Transit Weekend & Holiday Service (02/25/2020)



Bus Rapid Transit

The City of Madison plans to add Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as another public transportation alternative. Planning is underway for an initial east-west BRT corridor with possible future extensions to the north and south. The initial corridor is intended to travel along East Washington Avenue, through downtown Madison, and along University Avenue, Whitney Way, and Mineral Point Road on the west side. The City of Madison identified Thierer Road at East Washington Avenue as a potential stop for Bus Rapid Transit in the 2013 Madison Transit Corridor Study. This location would ideally suit the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park. It would allow for quick and direct travel between the Imagination Center and downtown Madison. In addition, it would help alleviate overcrowding on the #6 bus route, which is currently the most direct bus route to Reindahl Park from downtown.¹¹

Vehicle Travel

Imagination Center visitors will also be able to access the Center via automobile. The main routes most visitors will take will be along East Washington Avenue, Stoughton Road, or Portage Road. The road network is conducive for visitors attempting to reach the Imagination Center from the isthmus or the east side of Madison. East Washington Avenue is a high-capacity arterial corridor that permits direct vehicle travel from downtown. Additionally, visitors from Madison's northside will be able to travel to the Center along Anderson Street in front of the Madison College Truax campus. Visitors from Madison's west side will have a longer trip, but the Imagination Center will be accessible given its location near major highways.

Bus Rapid Transit Map (02/25/2020)



¹¹ Capital Region Sustainable Communities Initiative and the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board. *Madison Transit Corridor Study: Investigating Bus Rapid Transit in the Madison Area*. By the SRF Consulting Group Team. Madison, WI, May 2013.

¹² City of Madison Transportation Department. *Madison Bus Rapid Transit Route - Adopted 2/17/20* by the Madison Transportation Planning and Policy Board.

TELL US/CUÉNTENOS 2015-2016

In 2016, Madison Public Library established a strategic plan for library service in Madison’s eastside called *Communities Inspiring Libraries: A Strategic Plan for Eastside Growth*. The strategic plan process was community-driven and relied extensively on deliberative dialogue methods.

The Library created a planning engagement program called Tell Us/Cuéntenos to host and facilitate conversations around the community. Tell Us/Cuéntenos encouraged face-to-face conversations among community members, with or without a library or government official present. The resulting 52 conversations with 338 participants laid the foundation for the library’s eastside strategic plan including the decision to locate the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park.

Furthermore, the Eastside Strategic Plan identified five critical roles the Library must prioritize when planning new facilities and services for Madison’s eastside. The critical roles provide a framework for analyzing feedback gathered during the Imagination Center engagement process and organizing subsequent recommendations in alignment with the eastside strategic plan. A brief description of each role follows.

SOCIAL FORUM

Madison Public Library is a social hub for the community and should work to become a more intentionally inclusive space for social interaction.

CIVIC INNOVATOR

Madison Public Library should encourage participation in public life and provide a space for civic engagement and connection.

HOLISTIC HEALTH ADVOCATE

Madison Public Library should promote access to health care opportunities and should prioritize health literacy.

CULTURAL PLATFORM

Madison Public Library should provide a platform for expression, education, and celebration. The library must increase culturally diverse and relevant educational and recreational opportunities.

ECONOMIC ENGINE

Madison Public Library should provide resources and tools to enhance workforce development and otherwise support library visitors.

IMAGINATION CENTER ENGAGEMENT 2018-2019

Building from the conversations that produced the Library's eastside strategic plan, the planning process for the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park also relied heavily on in-person conversations.

From October 2018 to December 2019, Madison Public Library organized conversations with local stakeholders including neighbors, service providers, businesses, and other interested parties. The goal of the conversations was simple. The Library wanted to discover how people perceive their neighborhoods as well as Reindahl Park in order to develop a shared vision for the Imagination Center. To that end, Madison Public Library conducted engagement in the following manner:

Madison Public Library's Library Planner and Community Engagement Coordinator identified specific neighborhood groups, organizations, and businesses with whom to share conversations. Library staff also solicited referrals from these stakeholders to arrange meetings with other community members.

Library staff attended existing community-organized events in the area to talk with community members. The Library strived to avoid creating additional events for people to attend while at the same time allowing for their contribution to the Imagination Center planning.

Madison Public Library staff met stakeholders at their convenience, when, where, and how they wanted to meet. Meeting locations varied from schools, businesses, coffee shops, community centers, and Reindahl Park itself.

The Library intentionally kept conversations small to allow for detailed discussion with stakeholders and relationship building. The average conversation size included four participants and conversations typically lasted around an hour.

Library staff hosted planning sessions with students at Sandburg Elementary School, East High School, and West High School to understand the perspective of youth and teens. The Library held two sessions with Centro Hispano's Escalera program.

The Library shared and collected "Build a Library" worksheets with youth. The worksheets are a blank template for children to write or draw their vision for the Imagination Center. The Library received outstanding ideas from 79 students who submitted "Build a Library" worksheets.

IMAGINATION CENTER ENGAGEMENT



112
CONVERSATIONS

425
COMMUNITY
MEMBERS

In total, the conversations included
over **138 HOURS** of dialogue
and created a rich background
for the Imagination Center report.



Local Voices Network

In the fall of 2018, Madison Public Library formed a unique partnership with Cortico, a non-profit focused on fostering constructive public conversation in communities across the country. Specifically, the Library partnered with Cortico's Local Voices Network (LVN) to promote and increase community conversations in Madison. As a small part of the collaboration, Library staff hosted a few conversations with the Imagination Center project using LVN's one-of-a-kind technology, digital hearths. A digital hearth is a device that records and transcribes conversations among small groups of people. These conversations can then be shared with other community members and the media in interactive ways. LVN-style conversations help connect community members to one another, promote civic engagement, and encourage journalism that reflects and responds to local issues.

As a result of the community engagement process outlined above, the Library was able to deeply engage with the community to learn about neighborhood concerns, challenges, and dreams. Over the course of a year, Library staff engaged in 112 conversations with 425 community members. In total, the conversations included over 138 hours of dialogue and created a rich background for the Imagination Center plan.

To sustain engagement with community members throughout the planning process, the Library sent quarterly planning updates detailing project progress if needed. The updates typically included a general recap of engagement efforts, a list and map of organizations the Library met with, a project timeline, and a brief synopsis of the ideas shared in conversations. The Library made updates available in English and Spanish and delivered paper copies of the planning updates upon request. The Library also keeps the updates on the Madison Public Library website at <https://www.madisonpubliclibrary.org/locations/reindahl-park>.

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS ENGAGED

100 Black Men of Madison, Inc.
Access to Independence
African Association of Madison
African Center Community Development
American Family Insurance
Care Net - Dane County
Capital East Soccer Club
Center for Resilient Cities
Centro Hispano of Dane County
Christ the Solid Rock Baptist Church
City of Madison - Community Development
City of Madison - CDA
City of Madison - Parks
City of Madison - Planning
City of Madison - Police
Community Action Coalition
Community GroundWorks
Community Living Alliance
Dane County - Immigration Affairs
Dane County - Joining Forces for Families
East Madison Community Center
East Madison High School - Book Club
East Madison High School - Principal's Group
East Towne Mall Administration
Eastside Lutheran Church
Food for Thought Initiative
Gambian Youths of Wisconsin
Goodman Community Center
Hawthorne Elementary School
High Crossing Neighborhood
Home Savings Bank
HyVee - East Madison
Just Bakery/Madison Urban Ministry
Just Coffee Cooperative
Literacy Network
Madison College - Administration
Madison College - Student Senate
Madison Cricket Association
Madison Football Club
Madison Metropolitan School District
Madison School & Community Recreation
Monona East Side Business Alliance
NAMI - Dane County
Northside Planning Council
Oakwood Village
Office Depot
Old National Bank
Reindahl Community Gardeners
Sandburg Elementary School
Sandburg Neighborhood Association
Senegambia Association
Truax Neighborhood Association

DATA ANALYSIS AND MADISON PUBLIC LIBRARY CRITICAL ROLES

As described in the previous section, Madison Public Library prioritizes five critical roles when planning new facilities and services for Madison's eastside. The following section details various recommendations for the Imagination Center, organized by each library role. The recommendations are based on what Library staff heard during community conversations, research conducted by Library staff, and City of Madison and Madison Public Library goals and objectives.

During conversations with community members, Library staff recorded perspectives, ideas, and suggestions offered by conversation participants. Library staff subsequently assembled the collective feedback and performed a qualitative analysis of the data. The analysis summarized community ideas and grouped suggestions by the five Madison Public Library roles. Simultaneously, Library staff anonymized the data and shared it with South Central Library System's Data Services Consultant, who then performed a similar analysis and returned the analysis to Madison Public Library.

The analyses of community input, combined with research and institutional goals, produced the 19 recommendations that follow. A list of the recommendations and more detailed descriptions follow.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SOCIAL FORUM

1. Meeting Rooms
2. Event and Gathering Space
3. Food Preparation and Programming
4. Youth and Teen Space
5. Anji Play

CIVIC INNOVATOR

1. Immigration and Citizenship
2. Digital Engagement
3. Polling Place and Voter Registration

HOLISTIC HEALTH ADVOCATE

1. Health Literacy and Health Services
2. Environmental Education
3. Garden and Outdoor Workspace

CULTURAL PLATFORM

1. Artist-in-Residence
2. Imagination Center Art
3. Culturally-Representative Material Collection
4. Media Programming and Digital Creation

ECONOMIC ENGINE

1. Digital Inclusion
2. Child Care
3. Literacy Classes
4. Financial Empowerment

- 
- ① Meeting Rooms
 - ② Event and Gathering Space
 - ③ Food Preparation and Programming
 - ④ Youth and Teen Space
 - ⑤ Anji Play

SOCIAL FORUM

Madison Public Library is a key space for social interaction in our community. Visitors use the Library's facilities to connect with each other, spontaneously or intentionally. The Imagination Center should aim to maximize the potential for social mixing at Reindahl Park.

Madison Public Library and
Madison Fire Department visited
Reindahl Park in August 2018.

① Meeting Rooms

Community members frequently expressed that they have trouble finding places to meet that are accessible, safe, free, and open to the public. Neighbors stated that the absence of meeting spaces fulfilling those requirements is an obstacle to neighborhood organization and cohesion. They repeatedly stressed that the Imagination Center should have meeting rooms of different sizes that are suitable for a variety of uses. Whether it is for a study session or a neighborhood meeting, the Imagination Center should have welcoming meeting spaces. Providing meeting rooms of different sizes that are open to the public will further the Library's goal of increasing the versatility of public space.

② Event and Gathering Space

Community members often articulated a desire to organize groups together in public space. Conversation participants suggested having celebrations, gatherings, performances, and presentations at the Imagination Center. They proposed having space suitable for weddings, special events, and large-scale gatherings. Whatever the purpose, the Imagination Center should have a space or spaces capable of hosting gatherings and large events.

Various groups including the Reindahl Park Gardeners and Madison FC currently use Reindahl Park for events. Library staff heard from a great number of community members that they feel that the existing park shelter is outdated and unwelcoming to visitors. The shelter has limited natural light it also is limited by a maximum capacity of 110 people. In the winter months, the City of Madison Parks Department closes the shelter because it is not heated. For these reasons, many groups forgo gathering in the shelter or choose to host gatherings in the lawn or in one of the parking lots at Reindahl Park.

New community event space with modern facilities at the Imagination Center will drastically change the landscape of Reindahl Park. Given the desire for large community gatherings and the limitations of the existing park shelter, Library and Parks staff should plan event space together to meet community and institutional goals.

At a minimum, prospective event space or spaces should accomplish the following:

- Serve as a suitable replacement for the existing park shelter.
- Provide event space for use during all four seasons.
- Have a range of audiovisual capabilities.
- Have capacity for large gatherings up to 300 people.
- Meet the amount of community demand for events and gatherings.
- Be flexible, adaptable, and viable for diverse uses.
- Have access to food preparation space.

Building community space at the Imagination Center will enable gatherings of all kinds to occur in an accessible and welcoming public venue. Providing event and gathering space will be critical to meet community needs. The Imagination Center's location within Reindahl Park will provide a scenic setting and accessible location for the community to come together in a public facility. The provision of community gathering space will reshape the park by enabling it to become a social hub and allowing it to be a unique gathering place.

3 Food Preparation and Programming


Multiple conversation participants stated a desire to come together as a community over food. They listed cooking classes, reservable space, and food related workshops as currently lacking in northeast Madison. The Reindahl Park Gardeners in particular expressed a desire for space for garden registrations, canning classes, and other food-related activities.

The Imagination Center should fulfill these needs by providing space for food-related workshops and food preparation for events. Ideally, a kitchen space will be located within the gathering and event space(s) or close by. Imagination Center staff could use the space to schedule programs and workshops or visitors could reserve it for events and gatherings. A food preparation space will provide great synergy with the gardens at Reindahl Park. The park gardens are vast and attract a diverse range of community members, and the gardeners have significant expertise related to food production and processing. A food-related space would allow for their talents and the talents of others to be shared with the community.

4 Youth and Teen Space

Northeast Madison is home to a higher share of children and teenagers than both the eastside and the City of Madison as a whole. The Imagination Center should embrace the large number of children living in the area by creating space designed for youth. The Imagination Center should take advantage of Reindahl Park to create indoor and outdoor opportunities. Community members emphasized the importance of having a place for teens and children to socialize and learn. Library staff heard from parents that there are limited public options for teenagers seeking a place to meet outside of school or home in northeast Madison. Teens shared with us directly that they desire a place to go that is welcoming and safe to meet with friends and peers.

Along with a space for teens, several parents noted a lack of children's spaces in northeast Madison. They hope for more child-friendly spaces and programs available throughout the year. It is worth noting that parents and caretakers mentioned that they desire a separate youth space or one that is buffered from quieter areas in the Imagination Center. They relayed to Library staff that a lack of separation prevents them from taking their kids to other library locations where they fear they will disrupt other library visitors.



Children participate in cooking classes at the Meadowridge Library in 2019.

One particular viewpoint stood out around discussions of youth and teen space. Community members emphasized that the Library should create youth space specifically to foster learning and development. Stakeholders conveyed their hope that the Imagination Center would be a place where students can find homework help and develop personal skills. To meet community demand, the Imagination Center should incorporate space dedicated to youth and teens that focuses on supporting learning both indoors and in Reindahl Park. Library staff should work directly with teens and children to design space according to their needs.

5 Anji Play

Along the lines of the previous section, parents and teachers shared with Madison Public Library that they would like more opportunities for children to play together outside of school. They hope the Imagination Center will provide programming for children to play and learn with one another. Conversation participants commented on the need to increase recreational and educational opportunities for children of all ages, but underscored a desire for more programming geared towards young children.

Madison Public Library, in collaboration with Madison Parks, currently provides Anji Play programming for children at Reindahl Park during the summer months through a program called the Wild Rumpus. In fact, Madison Public Library has been recognized as the first Anji Play demonstration site in the United States. Anji Play is an educational philosophy centered on self-determined play. It is a comprehensive approach to early learning developed in Anji County, China. The Anji Play approach predicated itself on education through true play, which takes place when children follow their own interests and intentions. Anji Play and other child-centered, research-based early literacy programs will be key to serving youth at the Imagination Center.


In its current arrangement, Wild Rumpus is a weekly pop-up program that takes place one evening a week at Reindahl Park during summer. The program requires a substantial amount of coordination and set-up since there is no permanent

facility or staff based at Reindahl Park to store Wild Rumpus materials. Due to its temporary nature, it also requires families to attend at a specific time each week, which may prevent some from participating in the program. It is also only available seasonally which limits its potential.

The Imagination Center at Reindahl Park should provide space and materials for Anji Play to occur year-round as well as indoors and outdoors. The Center should serve as a focal point for Anji Play activities, in large part because there is park space available to organize play opportunities. Anji Play will help fulfill two needs, a desire for more recreational activities in northeast Madison and programming that focuses on play and learning. The provision of Anji Play experiences will allow more children to play together and advance early learning in the Reindahl Park region.

Children participate in Wild Rumpus at Reindahl Park, July 2018.



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- ① Immigration and Citizenship
 - ② Digital Engagement
 - ③ Polling Place and Voter Registration

CIVIC INNOVATOR

Madison Public Library provides opportunities for participation in civic life. The Imagination Center should expand the Library's efforts to increase public engagement and involvement in northeast Madison.

People vote absentee at the Sequoya Library, 2019. Photo credit: Shanna Wolf.

1 Immigration and Citizenship

The Library heard frequently from community members that the Imagination Center should offer services for those seeking citizenship information and assistance. As detailed in the demographics section of this report, the northeast region is home to a higher percentage of immigrant residents than most other areas of Madison. The Imagination Center should be a place that is welcoming and accessible for immigrants. In addition, the Center should have easily identifiable resources regarding citizenship and immigration information. Madison Public Library currently offers phone interpreter services and immigration rights information at all library locations, and the Imagination Center should offer these resources as well.

Beyond providing resources and information, Imagination Center staff should work to bring direct immigration services to the Center. Multiple organizations offer services to immigrants in Madison through the Dane County Immigration Assistance Collaborative. Some of these organizations include the UW Law School Immigration Justice Clinic, the Community Immigration Law Clinic, Centro Hispano, and the Catholic Multicultural Center. Immigrants living in northeast Madison shared with Library staff that services can be difficult to find since most are not close to where they live. The Imagination Center should work with the Collaborative or other partners to offer a periodic walk-in immigration clinic to serve the large number of immigrants living in the area. Any prospective walk-in clinic should be at times that are convenient for working adults and families.

2 Digital Engagement

Northeast Madison residents do not live near downtown, where most city council and city committee meetings take place. Community members expressed their reservations about participating in city government due to distance and travel concerns of attending meetings downtown. The City of Madison Task Force on Government Structure (TFOGS) identified Aldermanic District 17, which is home to the Reindahl Park area, as one that, “serve(s) transit dependent populations with children aged 0-4 and has been traditionally underrepresented in city government.”¹⁶ Therefore, the Imagination Center should seek ways to connect residents to city government and increase civic participation. The Imagination Center should have the capability to host Common Council and/or committee meetings with the same level of accessibility as meetings held downtown, including live streaming and television broadcast, presentation technology, remote participation by members of the body as well as in-person and remote public testimony.

In addition, the Imagination Center should have communication technology allowing visitors to remotely engage in city meetings held at other locations, and to remotely conduct business with City staff and elected officials. According to the Final Report of the Task Force on the Structure of City Government, “a key component to increasing representation and resident engagement is to create a robust technology plan that will create new avenues for resident engagement.”¹⁷ Creating a platform for digital engagement will go a long way towards promoting civic engagement in northeast Madison and breaking down barriers to participation in city government. These approaches and others will promote involvement in local government and engagement with local decision-making processes.

3 Polling Place and Voter Registration

Madison Public Library locations currently serve as polling places for elections. Visitors can vote at libraries on Election Day, and they can vote at library locations early through In-Person Absentee Voting. They also serve as year-round voter registration sites, and library card records are now recognized as official proof of address in the registration process. In fact, Madison Public Library locations are among the most popular places for early voting in the city of Madison.

During discussions with community members, many brought up voting as a critical way to bring the local community together to participate in civic life. The Reindahl Park area has a low amount of voter participation, and aldermanic district 17 recorded the third lowest voter turnout during the November 2014 elections.¹⁸ The Imagination Center will therefore be a polling place in northeast Madison and a place where residents can register to vote at any time. The Center will also have information regarding elections, including where to find more information about candidates and issues. This could take the form of candidate debates or civic discussions about local challenges or political issues. The Imagination Center will serve a critical role in connecting area residents to government resources and information about community issues.

^{16,18} City of Madison Task Force on Government Structure. *Final Report of the Task Force on the Structure of City Government*. November 20, 2019.

¹⁷ Ibid.

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- ① Health Literacy and Health Services
 - ② Environmental Education
 - ③ Garden and Outdoor Workspace

HOLISTIC HEALTH ADVOCATE

The health and well-being of residents is of central importance to Madison Public Library. The Library should promote access to health care opportunities and should prioritize health literacy.

Yoga At The Lakeview Library,
2016. Photo credit: Erin Moore.

1 Health Literacy and Health Services

A primary focus of the Imagination Center should be improving health literacy and offering health services. Throughout planning discussions for the Imagination Center, participants often spoke about health related topics. Many stakeholders shared with Library staff that they are concerned with what they perceive as an increasing amount of people with behavioral health issues in northeast Madison. Others conveyed that they wished that they could be more active, eat healthier, or have greater access to information on health related topics. Community members hope that the Imagination Center will deliver opportunities for recreation as well as relaxation and respite. Additionally, residents desire a place to meet with health care professionals and take part in community fitness classes. A primary focus of the Imagination Center should therefore be improving health literacy and offering health services.

In *Communities Inspiring Libraries: A Strategic Plan for Eastside Growth*, Madison Public Library identified a need to improve health literacy for eastside residents. Health literacy is defined as “the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.”¹⁹ According to the National Library of Medicine (NLM), more than 90 million adults in the United States have low health literacy.²⁰ Health information, including health insurance options and coverage, is complex and not easily discernible for many. Health care information and legislation

also change at a rapid pace, which complicates the ability for individuals and families to navigate the health care landscape. These factors and others make it difficult for individuals to access health care information, engage with health professionals, and take control of their health care decisions.

The Imagination Center should provide opportunities for visitors to improve their health literacy by having resources and staff dedicated to connecting patrons with relevant and high-quality health related information. Library staff have an ideal skillset to assist visitors who are seeking health information. Librarians are highly skilled at finding factual and relevant information as well as providing confidential assistance to patrons looking for help. In addition, Library staff can identify appropriate local health care providers and services for visitors seeking health care services.

Along with knowledgeable staff, the Imagination Center should have health related resources readily available to visitors. The Imagination Center collection should have a special focus on health and health care information for people looking to expand their medical knowledge. The Center should also provide space for health services. Ideally, the Imagination Center will have a private space available for health care professionals to meet with community members. The space will allow practitioners to provide services such as health screenings and counseling in a comfortable and secure setting. Conversation participants

repeatedly shared that mental health is a pressing issue in the Reindahl Park area. Accordingly, Imagination Center staff should arrange counselors and behavioral health professionals to assist visitors.

From time to time, community members expressed a desire to participate in fitness and recreational classes at the Imagination Center. The Center’s setting within Reindahl Park will allow for many different kinds of recreational programming. Library and Parks staff should work together to identify opportunities for joint activities at the park.

Combined, health literacy and health services will help community members better understand their health care, enhance their health knowledge, and improve their overall well-being. A focus on health literacy will empower individuals and families to be self-determined with their health care. Health services at the Imagination Center will enable visitors to access care directly in a safe environment. Additionally, well-planned recreational activities will provide an opportunity for residents to come together and advance their health goals as a community.

¹⁹ Goldsmith, Francisca. “Healthier Communities: Libraries Improve Health Literacy, Access.” *ALA Policy Perspectives*, no. 6 (May 2019).

²⁰ Ibid.

2 Environmental Education

Over the past few years, neighbors have voiced concerns on a variety of environmental issues in the Reindahl Park area. The Madison Water Utility has detected PFAS substances in the local water supply and has closed Well 15 in Reindahl Park indefinitely.²¹ At the time of this writing, the Wisconsin Air National Guard has proposed Madison as the location for a squadron of F-35 fighter jets. Neighbors are concerned with projected increased noise levels and potential environmental pollution associated with the proposed jets. Area residents are also concerned about municipal growth and environmental change in the region.

In *Communities Inspiring Libraries: A Strategic Plan for Eastside Growth*, the Library recognized environmental education and environmental literacy as a priority for eastside residents.

The Imagination Center's location in a public park provides rationale to address environmental literacy gaps and create programming for environmental education. The eastside plan calls on eastside Madison Public Library locations to create "Partnerships with Madison Parks and key eastside health facilities to provide health and environmental literacy resources and a safe space to learn, share, and create."

The Imagination Center should embrace environmental education as a primary focus. The Center's collection should give emphasis to environmental knowledge and information along with health materials as recommended previously. Imagination Center staff should also develop programming to focus attention on environmental challenges and opportunities. Many existing community organizations may be able to assist with this work. The Reindahl Park Gardeners and organizations like Community GroundWorks are well equipped to share their knowledge and resources with the public.

The Imagination Center facility itself will create a tremendous opportunity to educate visitors on environmental efficiency considerations of an innovative public space. The Library has made great strides over the past two decades to strengthen operational sustainability and energy efficiency of Library facilities. Library cleaning practices have changed to include Green Seal cleaning products, and geothermal and solar

systems heat, cool, and provide power at multiple library locations. Central Library's green roof absorbs rainwater and prevents stormwater run-off. In addition, the Library has installed efficient HVAC and lighting systems at various locations with plans to install more.²²

Imagination Center construction and operations should incorporate techniques to maximize efficiency and sustainability, while at the same time providing a comfortable and accessible feel for all visitors. In turn, the Library should prioritize sharing identified efficiency methods with community members via signage, displays, and other approaches. Education surrounding the decisions and practices that underlie a dynamic, eco-conscious building will positively reinforce environmental knowledge for center visitors. In turn, visitors may become more curious and attempt to put their own environmentally-friendly strategies into action.

It is clear that environmental considerations weigh heavily on the minds of area residents and community members. Northeast Madison is changing and environmental quality will likely continue to be important to community members in the years to come. The Imagination Center should embrace a leading role regarding environmental education and best practices, and offer opportunities to those looking for environmental knowledge and programming.

²¹ NBC15 Staff. "Well 15 out of Service Indefinitely Due to PFAS Contamination." NBC 15, August 27, 2019.

²² "Committing to Sustainability." Madison Public Library, August 12, 2019.

③ Garden and Outdoor Workspace

Building on the connection of the Imagination Center and Reindahl Park, the Imagination Center should create a place for outdoor reading and reflection. Several community members asked for a space to relax, socialize, or work outdoors. Among these, teenagers in particular felt strongly about having an outdoor seating space to meet with peers or to study. A variety of neighbors also stated they have a desire to congregate in an outdoor space during the warm weather months. Reindahl Park has a few benches and tables, but they are spread over large areas and they are not set-up to encourage social mixing. The Imagination Center should have an area specifically designed to encourage learning and social interaction outdoors.

Providing an outdoor workspace or garden may also allow families and groups to take advantage of multiple park visit purposes simultaneously. For example, parents will be able to use outdoor space and have a line of sight while their kids are practicing soccer, playing at the splash park, or engaging in other park activities. Groups may use the outdoor space for socializing and in turn attend Imagination Center programming or events. An outdoor area will further integrate the Imagination Center into the existing park landscape and deliver another connection between the Center and the park.

Rain garden planted at Pinney Library, 2009.



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- A photograph showing children at an outdoor event. In the foreground, a young girl with braids and colorful hair clips is smiling and looking into a white plastic tub. She has blue paint on her hand. Another child is visible behind her, also looking into the tub. In the background, other children in orange vests are working at tables, and a man in a blue shirt is visible. The scene is outdoors with a brick wall and a banner in the background.
- ① Artist-in-Residence
 - ② Imagination Center Art
 - ③ Culturally-Representative Material Collection
 - ④ Media Programming and Digital Creation

CULTURAL PLATFORM

Madison Public Library should provide a platform for expression, education, and celebration. The Library must increase culturally diverse and relevant educational and recreational opportunities.

Children create their own boats from recycled materials at the Hawthorne Bubbler Regatta, part of the Arts in the Alley program at Hawthorne Library, 2019.

1 Artist-in-Residence

Community members often spoke to the Library about an absence of opportunities for artistic expression in northeast Madison. Many parents pointed out that they need to travel downtown or to other areas of the city and Dane County to find art programs for themselves and their kids. Teenagers shared a desire for a place to connect with each other and display their creativity close to home. Others wished for a public place with art that is reflective of the area's history and its diversity. Together, they all hope the Imagination Center will be a place that has materials, knowledge, and artists available to help people learn, share, and create artistic works.

Madison Public Library takes an active role in the promotion and creation of art. One initiative in particular, the Artist-in-Residence program, is well suited for incorporation at the Imagination Center. The Bubbler at Madison Public Library coordinates the Artist-in-Residence program at Central Library. The program provides space to artists of different mediums to create art and share their talents with the community. Connecting artists to the community and the community to artists in an intentional way produces an opportunity for people of all ages to create art with familiar mediums, develop new skills, and connect with each other in an open and accessible space.

In December 2019, the Bubbler expanded the Artist-in-Residence program to Thurber Park. The Thurber Park program consists of an 11-month residency opportunity for artists that ultimately leads to the creation of a public art piece. During the residency, artists are required to create workshops for the public and have open studio sessions. The goals of the program are to create funding, time, and space for artists to develop their practice, to create hands-on programming that fosters neighborhood connection and community building, and to make and install public art.

The Imagination Center should have space to support arts programming and an expansion of the Artist-in-Residence program. Creating a space at Reindahl Park will allow for new and exciting programming with the ability to increase the diversity of artistic mediums currently available to artists in Madison Public Library facilities. The location of the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park will bring opportunities to community members who currently lack arts programming and facilities in their area. It will also add to the mix of recreational activities available at Reindahl Park to activate the park in new and exciting ways. An arts space will encourage the community to come together through art to express themselves and deepen relationships with each other.

2 Imagination Center Art

Community members shared numerous ideas regarding artwork at the Imagination Center. Several people asked for an art gallery filled with local artist creations while others asked to display their own artwork or collections. All seemed to agree that art should be a focal point of the Center's design. Community members hope that artwork in the Center will reflect the area's identity, diversity, and immigrant populations.

Reindahl Park area residents often talked about their area as one that lacks identity. This perception could be due to many factors including geographical separation, demographic transitions, or the area's development over a long period of time. One thing is clear though; there is a tremendous amount of history and a wide range of people from different cultural backgrounds living near Reindahl Park. Artwork in the Imagination Center should seek to highlight the area's past and showcase modern experiences. It should aim to develop understanding and create shared links between community members. In addition, artwork at the Center should elevate diverse voices, issues, and perspectives from the area and beyond.

③ Culturally-Representative Material Collection

During conversations about the Imagination Center, many community members shared with the Library that they hope the Center will offer a robust collection of literary, educational, and recreational materials. Several stakeholders communicated that they value the Madison Public Library collection and are excited to have increased access to materials at the Imagination Center. Conversation participants had a few specific thoughts on the prospective collection at the Imagination Center. Some asked for more Spanish, Hmong, and Mandarin resources and materials. Others asked for a collection with an environmental and/or health focus. Most, however, simply desired greater access to books, resources, and materials.

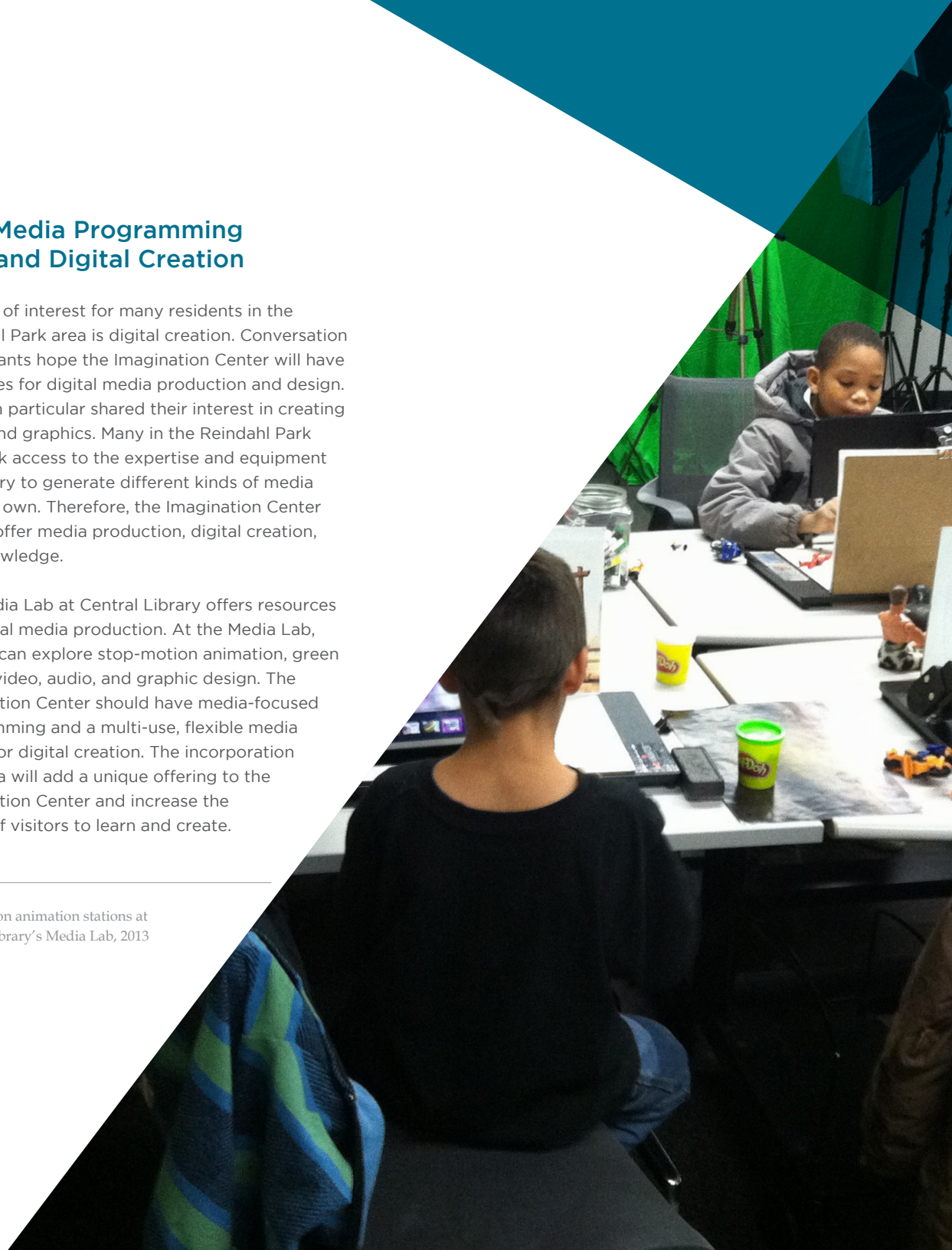
Madison Public Library's collection advances the Library's mission to "provide free and equitable access to cultural and educational experiences and celebrate ideas, promote creativity, connect people, and enrich lives." The Library's collection provides a wide array of resources and information to Library visitors. In addition, the collection offers a range of educational and recreational uses. The Imagination Center should therefore have a strong collection that serves visitors with various needs and diverse cultural backgrounds.


④ Media Programming and Digital Creation

An area of interest for many residents in the Reindahl Park area is digital creation. Conversation participants hope the Imagination Center will have resources for digital media production and design. Youth in particular shared their interest in creating music and graphics. Many in the Reindahl Park area lack access to the expertise and equipment necessary to generate different kinds of media on their own. Therefore, the Imagination Center should offer media production, digital creation, and knowledge.

The Media Lab at Central Library offers resources for digital media production. At the Media Lab, visitors can explore stop-motion animation, green screen video, audio, and graphic design. The Imagination Center should have media-focused programming and a multi-use, flexible media studio for digital creation. The incorporation of media will add a unique offering to the Imagination Center and increase the ability of visitors to learn and create.

Stop motion animation stations at Central Library's Media Lab, 2013



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- ① Digital Inclusion
 - ② Child Care
 - ③ Literacy Classes
 - ④ Financial Empowerment

ECONOMIC ENGINE

Visitors use Madison Public Library to access many different types of resources and assistance. Whether it is writing a resume or learning a new language, Madison Public Library is a destination for those looking to expand their knowledge and abilities.

Patrons using the computers
at Meadowridge, 2019.
Photo credit: Shanna Wolf.



① Digital Inclusion

Approximately 14% of residents living in the Reindahl Park area do not have an internet connection in their homes or a mobile data plan. The Library heard from several conversation participants that a lack of digital access is an obstacle in their everyday lives. Several adults shared that barrier-free, high-quality Wi-Fi is difficult to find in northeast Madison. Furthermore, students informed the Library that there are limited places to work on homework or browse the internet after school and on weekends. The Imagination Center should therefore be a place where visitors can connect to the internet and fully engage in digital society. The Center should showcase high-speed internet connections through Wi-Fi and wired computers, as well as provide related services like printing and scanning.

The Imagination Center is well-positioned to provide broadband access resulting in a high quality digital access experience. Reindahl Park area residents will have a reliable, public destination close by where they can use devices and access high-speed internet.

Patron using a computer at Sequoya Library, 2019.
Photo credit: Shanna Wolf.

② Child Care

A topic many community members spoke to is a lack of child care options in the Reindahl Park area. Conversation participants told Library staff that a shortage of nearby child care locations lengthens their commute times and is inconvenient for families. Stakeholders shared that many child care homes and centers are inaccessible by public transportation or require a substantial amount of travel. Library staff often heard child care options are not located within walking distance for most residents, largely because the area is not very walkable in general. The Library also heard repeatedly there are limited options for safe and welcoming places for children to go before and after school.

According to the Center for American Progress (CAP), a child care desert is an area where there is a ratio of more than three young children (under five years of age) for every licensed child care slot.²⁴ In northeast Madison, CAP identifies the census tract home to Reindahl Park and the Greater Sandburg neighborhood as a child care desert. In that census tract, there is a ratio of 17.41 children under the age of five per child care slot. However, the CAP does not identify the census tracts surrounding Reindahl Park as having child care deserts. Surrounding census tracts have ratios of 2.03, 0.87, 0.89 children per licensed child care slot respectively.²⁵ This suggests that there might

²⁴ Malik et al., "America's Child Care Deserts in 2018". *Center for American Progress*. December 6, 2018.

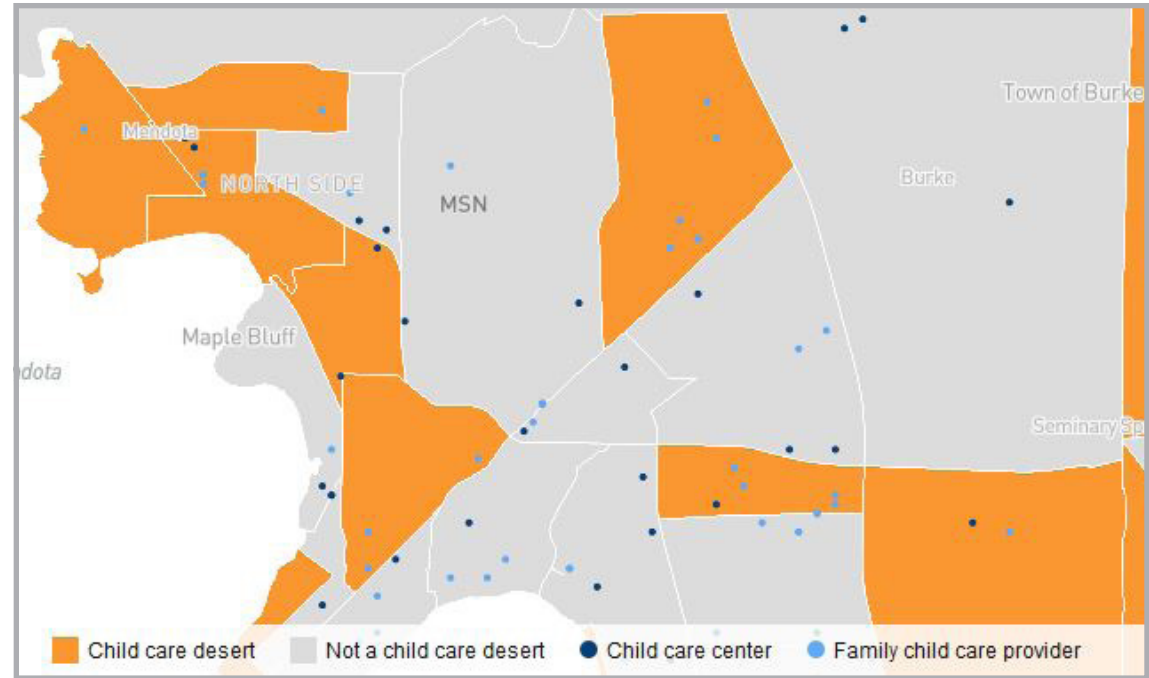
²⁵ Census Tracts 26.03, 26.01, 25

Child Care Deserts in Northeast Madison - Center for American Progress

be a need for more licensed child care slots in the Reindahl Park census tract specifically, but perhaps not the region. While this exercise gives a baseline indicator of child care need near Reindahl Park, greater scrutiny at the regional level is required.

Examining local data about the child care landscape in northeast Madison is more revealing. In the four census tracts representing northeast Madison to the west of Interstate 90/94, there are 17 child care centers.²⁶ The State of Wisconsin classifies child care centers in a few different categories. Licensed family child care centers provide care for between four and eight children, typically in a caretaker's home. Licensed group child care centers provide care for nine or more children.²⁷ The 17 centers near Reindahl Park (family and group) represent 6.9% of the total number of licensed child care centers in Madison. However, the area is home to approximately 10.1% of children in Madison under the age of five.²⁸ This could indicate there is a need for more child care locations. However, while there may be a spatial mismatch for the number of child care centers, the aforementioned data says nothing about the capacity of child care locations in the area.

Overall capacity numbers show there are 583 total child care slots in the Reindahl Park area spread among the 17 centers. The map on page 49 shows Reindahl Park area group child care centers and family child care locations. It also lists the capacity of each child care facility. The most recent American Community Survey (ACS) data estimates approximately 1,310 kids live in the four census tracts near Reindahl Park. The ratio of children to



child care slots is therefore 2.25. While the regional level data is below CAP's threshold for a child care desert, it is still relatively high. Another way of looking at the same data is by stating there are enough licensed child care slots for approximately 44.5% of kids under the age of five in the area.

Having enough slots for approximately four out of every ten children may be limiting for parents seeking child care. ACS data estimates that approximately 75.7% of Madison two-parent households with children have both parents in the

workforce. Additionally, around 87.3% of Madison parents in one-parent households with children are in the workforce.²⁹ Working parents likely seek external care for their children more than stay at home parents. These numbers suggest that there may be a high level of need for more child care slots in Madison and in the Reindahl Park area.

One more way to look at the issue of child care is by reviewing the options of specific child care locations in northeast Madison. Madison College is one of the group child care centers located in

Child Care Capacity in Northeast Madison

# OF CHILDREN	# OF TOTAL CHILD CARE SLOTS	RATIO OF CHILDREN TO TOTAL CHILD CARE SLOTS	# OF UNCONDITIONAL CHILD CARE SLOTS	RATIO OF CHILDREN TO UNCONDITIONAL CHILD CARE SLOTS
1,310	583	2.25	265	4.94

northeast Madison and has capacity for 32 kids. Most families are ineligible to use the Center, however, because it is only open to students, faculty, and staff of the college. There are also four religiously affiliated child care centers in the area. While perhaps not important to all families, child care may be an obstacle for those who do not share the same beliefs as a religiously affiliated child care provider.³⁰ Together, the religious affiliated centers and Madison College combine to offer 318 of the 583 total child care slots in the area. The table above reexamines the child care desert threshold with the conditionality of some child care locations in mind.

When conditionality is examined, the region has a ratio of children to accessible child care slots of 4.94, which suggests that the area overall is effectively a child care desert and investment in child care is needed.

Whether the conditional concerns stated above are considered or not, the number of children living in the neighborhoods surrounding Reindahl Park is rising at a rapid pace. The 2010 Census estimated 1,095 kids under the age of five years old lived in the four census tracts closest to the park. More recent data from the 2013-2017 ACS 5-year Estimates approximates 1,310 kids living in the same area. That rise represents a 20.1% increase over the past eight years. In addition, the City of Madison is planning for more growth in the area. The City of Madison Comprehensive Plan identifies two large peripheral growth areas in northeast Madison east of I90/94. Future development has the potential to bring in hundreds or thousands of additional dwelling units to the region over the next few decades.³¹

Given the limited availability of child care in northeast Madison and the area's continued and projected growth, the City of Madison occupies a

unique position to positively influence child care with the Imagination Center. One potential solution the Library and the City of Madison could pursue to increase the number of child care slots in the region is to collaborate with an organization to establish a group child care center directly at the Imagination Center. Alternatively, the City of Madison could explore the creation of a family child care cooperative. A family child care cooperative would provide multiple family care providers access to shared early learning facilities, programs, resources, and support within a community of practice. Whether either of these solutions or others is pursued, the complexity of access to high-quality child care should continue to be examined in greater depth. As such, the Library should conduct further exploration and align efforts with the City of Madison Comprehensive Early Childhood Plan, which is set to be released in spring of 2020.

²⁶ "This analysis excludes Census Tract 114.02, which contains portions of Madison as well as large portions of Sun Prairie and the Towne of Burke, for the sake of data clarity and accuracy.

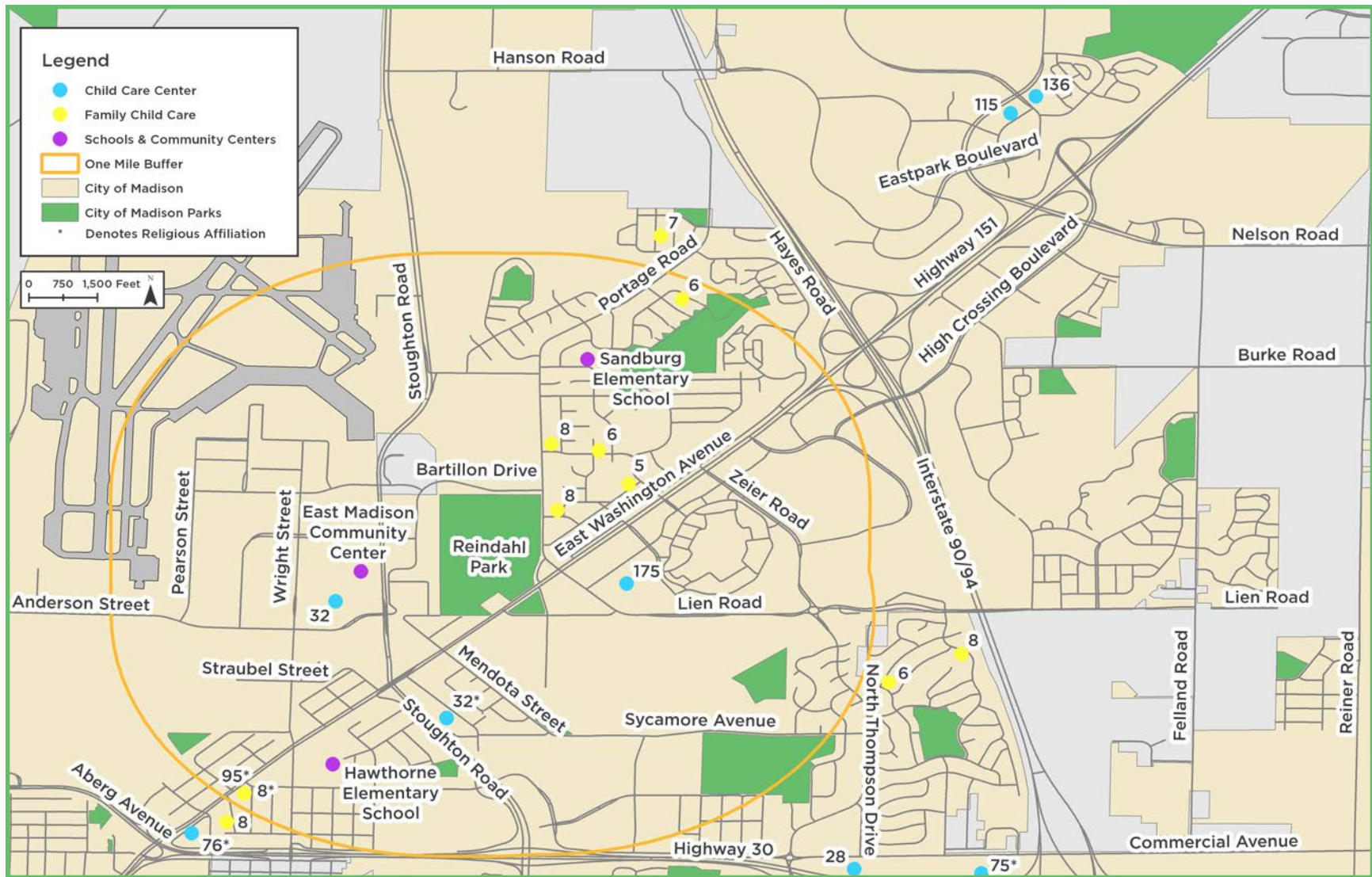
²⁷ "Wisconsin Child Care Licensing Home Page." Wisconsin Child Care Licensing Home Page. Accessed November 12, 2019. <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing>.

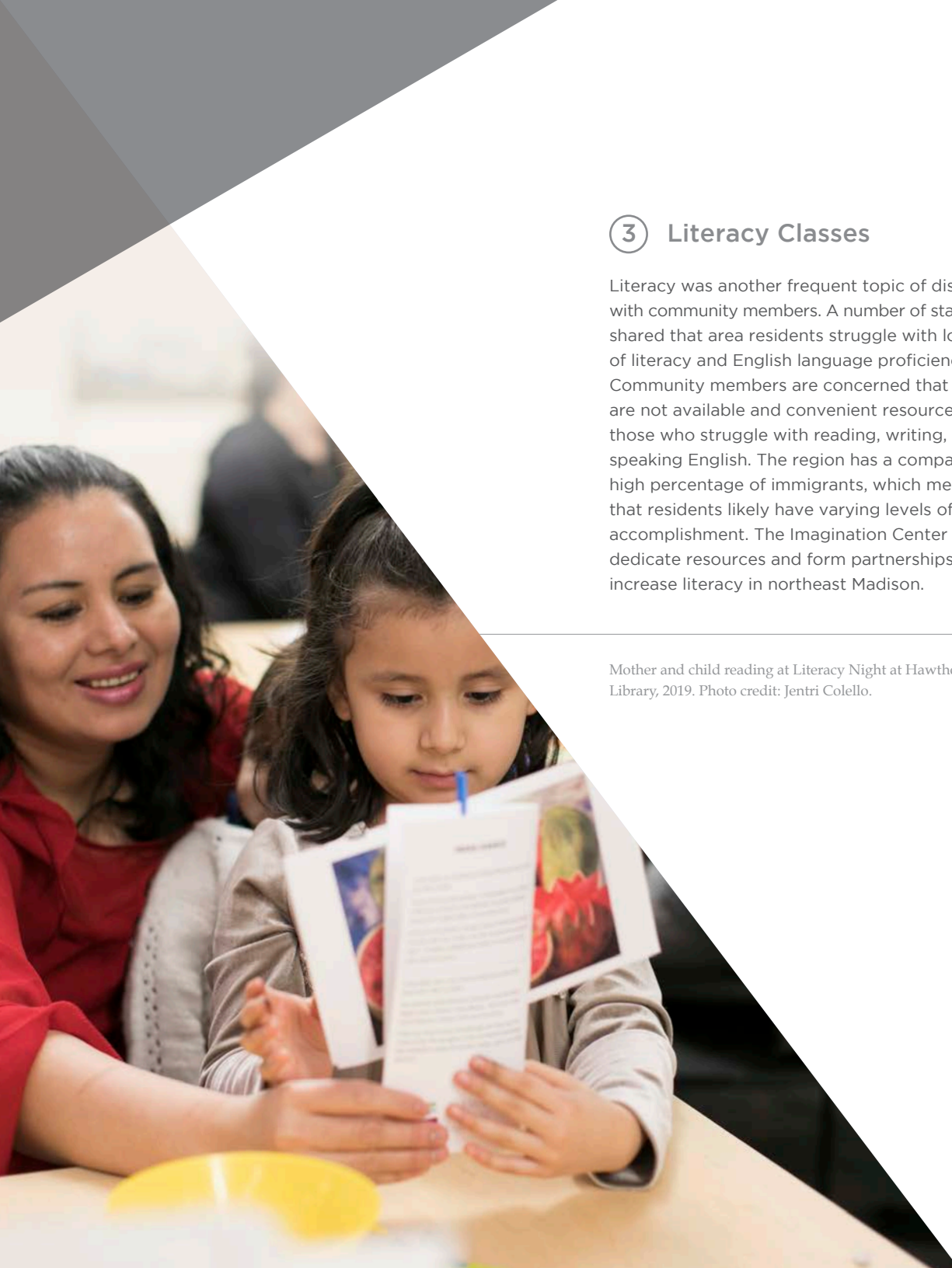
^{28,29} 2017 American Community Survey 2013-2017 (5-year estimates)

³⁰ Edwards, Andrew W. "Parent's Satisfaction, Preferences, and Perception of Staff Competence and Quality of Services Rendered at Faith-Based Daycare Centers." *Social Work and Christianity*, 2013.

³¹ City of Madison Common Council. *Imagine Madison: City of Madison Comprehensive Plan*. By the City of Madison. Planning Division. Madison, WI, 2018.

Reindahl Park Area Child Care Centers and Homes





③ Literacy Classes

Literacy was another frequent topic of discussion with community members. A number of stakeholders shared that area residents struggle with low levels of literacy and English language proficiency. Community members are concerned that there are not available and convenient resources for those who struggle with reading, writing, and speaking English. The region has a comparatively high percentage of immigrants, which means that residents likely have varying levels of English accomplishment. The Imagination Center should dedicate resources and form partnerships to increase literacy in northeast Madison.

Mother and child reading at Literacy Night at Hawthorne Library, 2019. Photo credit: Jentri Colello.

Madison Public Library offers many resources for those who struggle with literacy. These include materials such as simplified versions of novels, materials to improve job and parenting skills, and basic STEM books. In addition, the Library has materials focusing on teaching and learning English as a Second Language (ESL) and basic literacy. The Imagination Center should have resources such as these for people who wish to improve their English knowledge and skills.

To further increase English proficiency, Imagination Center staff should form partnerships with organizations to provide literacy classes and tutoring for community members. Currently, East Madison Community Center provides literacy classes, but likely not as many as needed in the area. Imagination Center staff should work with EMCC and area organizations such as Literacy Network and DANenet to provide English and digital literacy classes at Reindahl Park.

④ Financial Empowerment

Financial literacy came up often in conversations with neighbors and service providers. Community members hope the Imagination Center will provide resources and materials that improve people's financial knowledge. However, financial knowledge does not necessarily equate to financial strength and security. Madison Public Library should go beyond financial literacy at the Imagination Center and take a leading role in helping visitors achieve financial empowerment.

Financial empowerment is a person's ability to take control of their financial circumstances to achieve financial security. One aspect of financial empowerment is financial literacy, or the ability to understand topics such as personal finance, money, and investing. However, financial empowerment is more expansive than financial literacy. Empowerment is predicated on economic security. All of the elements that constitute a person's financial situation and well-being affect their security. These include items such as a person's credit score, debt-to-income level, wealth, tax filings, access to financial counseling, and the ability to realize government assistance or benefits.³²

³² "Financial Empowerment: Improving Financial Outcomes for Low-Income Households." *Financial Empowerment: Improving Financial Outcomes for Low-Income Households*. Toronto, ON

Tax assistance at Lakeview Library, 2016.
Photo credit: Erin Moore.

Madison Public Library should serve as a connector for people seeking financial empowerment. The Library has many programs that offer assistance for those looking for financial help. For example, the Library partners with community agencies to offer free tax assistance and provides basic job assistance. The Imagination Center should offer services like these and explore innovative ways to help Library visitors build financial security. The Reindahl Park area is home to several financial institutions including local banks and large corporate institutions. Imagination Center staff should seek ways to collaborate with these institutions to help individuals and families improve their financial well-being.



The Imagination Center at Reindahl Park will advance many strategies outlined in *Imagine Madison: City of Madison Comprehensive Plan*. The following is a brief overview of 12 *Imagine Madison* goals the Center will promote.

NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING

Create complete neighborhoods across the city where residents have access to transportation options and resources needed for daily living.

The Imagination Center will bring resources of all kinds to northeast Madison including child care, civic spaces, educational programs, and recreational opportunities. The Imagination Center will create a social and civic focal point for several northeast Madison neighborhoods directly adjacent to a planned Bus Rapid Transit stop.

ECONOMY AND OPPORTUNITY

Close the educational opportunity gap.

The Imagination Center will seek to improve access to quality child care and increase programming for youth. In addition, the Center will have services focused on literacy, tutoring, and digital skills development. The Imagination Center will also add a high quality Wi-Fi destination to an area where many do not have public internet access nearby.

Remove barriers to achieving economic stability.

The Imagination Center’s focus on financial empowerment will help residents achieve economic security. The location of the Imagination Center close to a variety of local financial institutions could pave the way for unique and innovative partnerships focusing on financial growth.

CULTURE AND CHARACTER

Create vibrant and inviting places through creative architecture and urban design.

The Imagination Center will be a new, exciting, and welcoming public space. The Center will have a variety of activities, offerings, and amenities that will make it a dynamic and inviting place. Creative architecture will be part of the Center’s design, and it has the potential to be a civic landmark in northeast Madison at Reindahl Park.

Create safe and affirming community spaces that bring people together and provide social outlets for underrepresented groups.

The Imagination Center’s meeting rooms, community shelters, seating areas, food preparation space, and outdoor space will provide the infrastructure for safe and affirming community spaces. The Center will bring the community together through art, media, civic engagement, and recreation. In addition, immigrants and English learners will be able to access immigration, citizenship, and literacy resources. Reindahl Park will activate in novel and exciting ways with the addition of the Imagination Center.

Balance the concentration of cultural and entertainment venues between the downtown and other areas of the city.

The Reindahl Park area currently lacks civic and cultural venues. The Imagination Center will transform the region by providing a place for the arts, and it will offer various opportunities for entertainment.

Integrate public art throughout the city.

The Imagination Center will provide a location for art in a region without much public art. Its focus on displaying the region's history, highlighting the richness of residents' experiences, and broadening perspectives will make it a desirable addition to Madison.

Provide opportunities to learn about, create, collaborate, and enjoy the arts.

The Artist-in-Residence program at Reindahl Park will increase arts programming in northeast Madison immensely. Visitors will have numerous opportunities to learn, share, and create art at the Imagination Center.

GREEN AND RESILIENT

Increase the use and accessibility of energy efficiency upgrades and renewable energy.

The Imagination Center will utilize construction methods focused on energy efficiency and renewable energy. The Center's focus on environmental education and showcasing efficiency measures will aim to expand environmental knowledge in northeast Madison.

Acquire parkland and upgrade park facilities to accommodate more diverse activities and gatherings.

The Imagination Center represents a new and exciting development for Reindahl Park. The Center will add diverse activities and increase social gatherings at the park. Services such as the Artist-in-Residence program and Anji Play will enhance park offerings. Gathering and event space as well as meeting rooms will provide a means for social gatherings of all kinds in northeast Madison.

EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT

Locate community facilities to provide a high level of service to all neighborhoods.

The location of the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park will directly improve the level of public service in the northeast region of Madison. The Imagination Center will be a great example of agency collaboration and public facility co-location.

Improve accessibility to government agencies and services.

The Imagination Center staff will be able to register voters at any time, and the Center will be a polling place for local elections. In addition, staff will be able to connect visitors to resources and services on topics as varied as immigration, health care, and tax filing.

Madison Public Library intends to build on its successful partnership with Madison Parks through the Imagination Center project. The *2018 -2023 Park and Open Space Plan*, accepted by Common Council on October 30, 2018, contains strategies that dovetail well with the Imagination Center.

Design park facilities to accommodate diverse activities and populations.

The Imagination Center will be a newly constructed facility in Reindahl Park that will feature flexible public spaces. In addition, the Center will directly incorporate spaces for people with different cultural backgrounds, ages, and abilities. As a result, Reindahl Park will be better suited to accommodate diverse activities and populations.

Create equitable access and funding for parks.

Engagement and inclusion are cornerstones of the Imagination Center project. The Center will increase opportunities for civic engagement and create new partnerships. Equity is at the center of the Imagination Center planning process.

Increase engagement with groups and organizations and develop new ones.

The Imagination Center will create new opportunities for community organization and engagement. The Center will add to the mix of uses at Reindahl Park and attract diverse communities and groups.

The community’s vision for the Imagination Center is broad and ambitious. At its core, the vision will promote creativity, connect people, and enrich lives. Madison Public Library, Madison Parks, and the City of Madison are prepared for the task of creating the Imagination Center. However, like our planning efforts to date, the Imagination Center’s success will depend on continued community involvement and investment.

To that end, conversation will remain a priority for the Library as its rewards continue to manifest. The vision laid out in these pages is the result of numerous and varied contributions from community members of different backgrounds. The hours of conversation shared with us provided a rich tapestry of connection and a solid foundation for the Imagination Center project. The community-driven framework used to conduct planning for the Imagination Center will be critical for its upcoming design and operation. As the vision for the Imagination Center continues to take shape, we are excited to begin the preliminary design process.

As the process moves forward to realize the scope of this project, we will need to address some real challenges in making this vision a reality. The Imagination Center will add a new library to the Madison Public Library system, which will require substantial capital and operating investments in order to build and sustain its facilities and services. Financial estimates for the Imagination Center will require more exploration in response to this scoping study. The preliminary design process will provide some estimates to help inform the City on what will be needed to

support these expenditures. As with past library building projects, we anticipate that the Imagination Center will require a public/private funding partnership and the capacity for fundraising will need to be assessed. A fundraising feasibility study will need to be conducted. Based on those conditions, we recognize that the current timeline for the Imagination Center project within the City of Madison Capital Improvement Plan will not be feasible given the magnitude of this project. The Imagination Center will likely take several years to design, build, and establish a sustainable budget to meet the vision expressed in this report. However, we will begin the preliminary design process to discover the possibilities of the Imagination Center and further define its future.

The Imagination Center will undoubtedly transform Reindahl Park and the surrounding area. Reindahl Park, as well as northeast Madison, has a long and diverse history. Its residents included Amund Reindahl, the son of immigrants, and include the immigrant communities who call the neighborhoods home today. The Imagination Center will build upon the area’s history and connect people in new and meaningful ways. In the future, the Center will assuredly be a civic anchor for the northeast Madison region. The road ahead may be long, but the journey to reach the community’s vision will continue. There is no doubt the Imagination Center will improve the lives of many for years to come.

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