

## VNA Good Neighbor Digest



04-01-2024

Vilas Neighborhood News



*Monroe St. Library*

**Solar eclipse glasses!** Starting this Wed., April 3, you can pick up eclipse glasses from the library in order to safely view this phenomenal event happening next Monday afternoon, April 8. Here in Madison we'll experience a partial eclipse. You cannot view a solar eclipse without special protective glasses or you risk retina damage. Supplies of glasses are limited.

The **seed library** is going strong. New seed arrivals include sugar snap peas and pansies. We have a great selection of seeds for you to plant. You are welcome to take however many you will use. Supplies are limited.

Check out our micro **book displays**. For adults, epistolary fiction - stories told through letters. For kids, picture books that focus on empathy, kindness and understanding.

**Storytimes** happen Tuesday mornings at 10:30 for the age 0 - 5 crowd. This coming Tuesday is a musical storytime.

Kids, **make comic art with Annie Sat., April 6**. Drop in any time between 10 and noon. If you are age 7 and under, bring a grown up or reasonable facsimile.

**Tax forms** and **Covid tests** are on the red cart by the checkout desk.

Monroe Street Library is open weekdays 10 - 6 except closed Thursdays, and Saturdays 9 - 5. Call us at 608 266-6390.



*Tag Evers blog (edited)*

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/council/district13/blog/>

**Road Salt & Water Quality, Park and Open Space Plan,  
Regent Street Closure This Friday**

## **Vote tomorrow! April 2**

Many of you have voted already, but if you have yet to do so, please check <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/> for your polling place. Polling places are open from 7am-8pm. Importantly, there are referenda on the ballot asking you to change our state constitution. Please take time to educate yourself on the issues.

[Accessibility Options for Voting](#): The City Clerk's Office want to make sure voters know about accessibility options for the April 2 Election

[Hospitalized Absentee Voting](#): Hospitalized voters can have an absentee ballot delivered to them in the hospital. This process is available until 5 p.m. on Election Day.

## **Boards, Commissions, and Committee Meetings**

Note: This is not a complete list of meetings for this upcoming week. All meetings and their details can be found at the [Meeting Schedule page](#).

- **Board of Public Works: Wednesday, April 3**, in virtual format at 4:30 p.m. Agenda items include authorizing the Board of Public Works to advertise and receive bids for the Warner Park Community Recreation Center Expansion, as well as the acquisition of land interests required for the construction and maintenance of stormwater management facilities required for flood mitigation and restoration within the Old Sauk Trails Business Park Pond and Greenways portion of the Pheasant Branch Greenway.
  - [Meeting Details](#)
  - [Meeting Agenda](#)
  - [Register for Public Comment](#)
  - [Watch Online](#)
  
- **Board of Park Commissioners: Wednesday, April 3**, in person at the Parks Division Lakeside Offices at 330 E Lakeside St at 6:30 p.m. Agenda items include adopting the Lake Monona Waterfront Master Plan, the adoption of Park Development Plans in the Northeast and West planning areas, and authorizing the approval of the Carts in Parks program.
  - [Meeting Details](#)
  - [Meeting Agenda](#)

## **Public Information Meetings & Sessions**

- [Community Meeting - Road Salt/Water Quality, Tuesday, April 2 \(IN-PERSON\)](#): Please join us for a community meeting hosted by the City of Madison Water Utility and Streets divisions to discuss road salting application,

including the impacts on infrastructure and our waterways, particularly our drinking water source.

- [Open House: Park & Open Space Plan, Thursday, April 4 \(IN-PERSON\)](#): The City of Madison Parks Division is updating its Park and Open Space Plan (POSP) and is seeking input from area residents on the plan! The purpose of the POSP is to guide and inform public parks policy and park facility decisions in the City of Madison. Parks, working with a consultant planning team led by MSA Professional Services, Inc., is hosting a series of open houses to introduce the project and gather input from attendees.

### **Announcements & News Releases**

- [Regent Street Closure – Crane Removal](#): Starting on Friday, April 5th at 6:00 am, J.H. Findorff & Son Inc. will close Regent St. from East Campus Mall to Park St, to remove the tower crane located at 832 Regent St. This section of Regent St. will remain closed to thru traffic until 5:00 pm on Monday, April 8th.
- [Scheduled Brush Collection Begins Soon – Learn the Set Out Dates for Your Home Today](#): The first scheduled set out dates for this year’s brush collection by the Streets Division is fast approaching. Some neighborhoods’ first set out date is Sunday, March 31, 2024. The first date for your neighborhood may be different.
- [RoundTrip’s Spring Roll Challenge to Celebrate Green Trips this Earth Month](#): RoundTrip, a transportation options program in Dane County, is launching the Spring Roll Challenge to encourage car-free and car-light trips throughout April.
- [Streets Division Drop-off Sites Hours Expand Starting April 1, 2024](#): Starting on Monday, April 1 the Streets Division drop-off sites at 402 South Point Road and 4602 Sycamore Avenue will begin their expanded summer hours. Also, on Monday, the special drop-off site at 121 East Olin Avenue will open at 3:00pm.

### **Events**

- [Learn to Fall Safely, Wednesday, April 3](#): SAFELY Learn to fall safely and to get back up without injury. We will use thick “crash mats” for practicing. Classes are progressive. Attending all 4 classes recommended. Scholarships available.
- [Dog Park Cleanup Day 2024, Saturday, April 6](#): Do you love your dog park? Help clean up your favorite city of Madison off-leash dog park. Volunteers are needed to assist with picking up trash and scooping up dog poop. Madison Parks will supply trash bags, gloves, scoopers, and buckets. You may bring your own gloves, scoopers, and additional bags. Annual Dog Park Cleanup Day. Weather and park conditions determine which dog park locations are included in the volunteer project. Dogs welcome, though be sure to scoop your pup's poop!
- **Date:** Saturday, April 6, 2024
- **Time:** 9:00 - 11:00 am
- [Advanced Registration Required.](#)

## Earth Day Challenge

Earth Day Challenge Projects are held throughout the city. Volunteers may assist with trash pickup, raking, weeding, and removing sticks. Parks staff will supply gloves, garbage bags and rakes. Rakes at each park will be based on the number of volunteers participating. TO PICK UP SUPPLIES: Look for the Earth Day Challenge sign in each of the designated parks. No staff is onsite during the event.

- **Date:** Saturday, April 20, 2024
- **For More Information Email:** [Parks Volunteer Coordinator](#)
- [Advanced Registration Required](#) (Hint: District 13 Volunteers have already responded in great numbers! Yesss, way to go D13! Brittingham, Olin, Vilas, and Wingra Parks are all filled up. However, you can still sign up to for **Edward Klief Park, 1200 Milton St., Glenwood Children's Park, 602 Glenway St., and The Glen Golf Park, 3747 Speedway Road.**



For further details check:

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/>

## **Boards, Commissions, and Committee Meetings of interest**

### **Save The Date – Budget Engagement Event**

**Wednesday, May 29** is now set for a Southside/Near Westside Budget Engagement Event to be held from 5:30pm to 7:30pm at Goodman South Library, 2222 South Park Street. This event is meant to appeal to residents in Districts 13, 14, 5, and 10, the aldermanic districts on the near west and south sides of the city. Refreshments and food will be provided.

Finance Department staff will be at the event to offer specifics about our budget challenges, including how we got here in the first place and our possible next steps. Ample time will be given to answer questions. Stay tuned for more details.

Those interested are encouraged to dive into the comprehensive information prepared by Finance staff at <https://www.cityofmadison.com/finance/budget/2025-budget/2025-budget-outlook>.

There you will find an information series on the 2025 outlook. Quoting from the website:

“The Finance Department recorded a four-part series to explain the fundamentals of the City’s budget and options for closing the budget deficit. This informational series is a first step toward deciding on an approach to balancing next year’s budget.”

Alders are getting a lot of emails, many of which demonstrate fundamental misunderstandings about the source of the budget deficit and what steps could be taken to fix it. For example, there is apparent confusion between capital and operating expenditures, as many emails suggest the budget could be balanced by cutting affordable housing, BRT, and other capital projects.

## **Announcements & News Releases**

- [Help Our Community Stay Prepared for Emergencies: Public Health Accepting Applications for Funding Opportunity:](#) Public Health Madison & Dane County is now accepting

applications from local organizations interested in helping their community stay prepared for emergencies.

Complete [Meeting Schedule page](#).



*In case you missed it and For Reference*

*VNA Book Club*

The votes are in! The next book is Tom Lake by Ann Patchet. We will discuss it on Thursday April 25th at 7pm. Please let me know if you are interested in hosting!

I'll send reminders out as we get closer to the date. Enjoy the read! Sarah Bahauddin [sarahbahauddin@gmail.com](mailto:sarahbahauddin@gmail.com)

*Vilas Park*

Thanks to everyone who attended the meeting about Vilas Woods! It was a cold two hours, but Parks shared a lot of information, including some general park updates beyond tree maintenance/restoration topics. I do want to note that everything depends on Parks having the budget for these efforts, and Parks staff noted that budgets can change. Highlights from the meeting are:

- The tennis courts are no longer safe to use. Parks plans to close the courts this spring and remove the existing courts and fence in the fall time frame. New courts will be built in the 2026 timeframe, assuming current funding remains available. The meeting attendees had a number of good questions about this decision, such as couldn't the courts just remain as they are until 2026 and people could assume the risk of being injured, but Parks staff said that was not possible because the courts are so unsafe. Parks is coordinating with appropriate Ho-Chunk authorities and a firm that conducts Phase 1 Archeological surveys on the tennis court issue; their current understanding is a survey is not required for the planned tennis court work, but, after questions from neighbors, they are confirming that with the Ho-Chunk authorities. I asked after the meeting, and the

basketball court will remain in place until 2026, when the current court will be removed and a new court will be put in by the tennis courts (as envisioned in the Vilas Park master plan).

- The dinosaur play structure at the Dinosaur playground is going to be removed because it is no longer safe as a play structure. Given its proximity to mounds, it will be cut off at ground level to ensure the ground is not disturbed. Parks is willing to let a private entity have the dinosaur structure if there are any takers, but they have to make clear it is not safe as a play structure.
- The Shoe and Cheese (West) playgrounds will be renovated in the 2026 timeframe. There will be a planning process with public input for these playgrounds. The master plan for the park has the Shoe playground becoming larger (and the Shoe staying!) and the Cheese playground becoming a nature based playground (a new nature based playground is going in at Olbrich for anyone wanting to see one).
- An accessible beach mat is going to be added at Vilas Beach before Memorial Day. Bernie's Beach has one that is very popular and gets a lot of use.
- Parks has an ecology team that is starting to work on natural areas in community parks. They will be involved in maintenance and restoration of the natural areas in Vilas Park. The Park's challenge is it has beautiful, mature trees and very few new trees growing to replace them. We need more young trees now to ensure there are beautiful mature trees in the future.
- Parks staff have been removing invasive species, deadfall, and small safety hazards. However, there are a number of large, mature trees that are safety hazards and will need to be removed (for example, you can see through one tree). It will affect the look of the tree canopy in the park, but it will also give younger trees a chance to thrive.
- The very popular path in the park means that Parks needs to be much more involved in tree maintenance; the safety risks of a branch or tree falling are higher.



- Parks staff hopes to both plant new trees and allow for natural regeneration of oak trees in Vilas.
- They are open to leaving snags (portions of a trunk and main branches) of a tree to preserve wildlife habitat, but it will depends on the location of the tree and safety risk to people/homes.
- Parks staff will communicate their plan for the natural areas of Vilas Park; the neighbors encouraged Parks staff to clearly explain what is happening, why it is happening, and what the natural areas will look like in the future when the plans have been implemented/trees, etc., have grown
- It is possible to have native shrubs in the natural areas to screen the park from homes/roads. Young trees as they grow also can contribute to such a screen.

There was more information covered in the meeting, but these items felt like the most pressing/time sensitive.

*Tag Evers blog*



## **Funding for Madison's Second Bus Rapid Transit Line Included in Federal Spending Bill**

On Monday, March 11, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced that \$118.1 million for the Madison area's second bus rapid transit line, Metro Rapid Route B, has been included in President Biden's 2025 Proposed Budget. About 78 percent of the project would be federally funded, with the remainder coming from local communities benefiting from the route.

Rapid Route B is currently in the development and planning stage and would run generally from Madison's Northside neighborhood through the downtown area, to South Madison, ending in Fitchburg—generally following Metro's existing Route B, one of the area's most heavily traveled routes. Metro Rapid Route B is planned to launch in 2028.

Features will match Metro Rapid Route A including service every 15 minutes or less, high-quality stations with raised platforms,

priority traffic signals, dedicated lanes with fewer stops, and faster fare payment. Metro Route A is currently under construction along Mineral Point Road, Whitney Way, University Avenue, and East Washington Avenue, and will launch this fall.

The next round of public meetings for Metro Rapid Route B are planned for April, where residents can learn more and share feedback about the proposed route, station locations, and more. For additional details, visit [www.madisonbrt.com](http://www.madisonbrt.com).

## *Monroe St. Library*

MSCR summer program guides have arrived, as have Dane County bike maps. And we have Covid tests and some tax forms.

Watch the **Too Good To Miss** shelves for new titles in the next few weeks. Itching to get your hands in the dirt? Check out our display of gardening books (earliest we've EVER displayed that topic). Watch soon for a display of kids' books that the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) considers the best books of 2023.

Alders are receiving many emails containing a fundamental misunderstanding of the source of the budget deficit and what steps might be taken to fix it. Please take this opportunity to learn more about our structural deficit and options to address it

### **Save The Date – Budget Engagement Event**

**Wednesday, May 29** is the tentative date we've set for a Southside/Near Westside Budget Engagement, 5:30pm to 7:30pm at Goodman South Library, 2222 South Park Street. Meant to appeal to residents in Districts 13, 14, 5, and 10 Refreshments and food will be provided.

Finance Department staff will be at the event to offer specifics on budget challenges. Stay tuned for more details.

For more info. <https://www.cityofmadison.com/finance/budget/2025-budget/2025-budget-outlook>.

This is a first step toward balancing next year's budget. It includes: A general understanding of the overall City budget. Fundamentals of the City budget and options for closing the deficit.

An explanation of the “structural deficit”. For example, there is apparent confusion between capital and operating expenditures, as many emails suggest the budget could be balanced by cutting affordable housing, BRT, and other capital projects.

*City of Madison*



## **Madison Selected for “Nature Everywhere” Communities Initiative**

The City of Madison is proud to announce it is one of nineteen communities in the country selected to join the inaugural [Nature Everywhere](#) Communities initiative. The initiative is designed to increase equitable access to nature everywhere children live, learn, and play.

Nature Everywhere Communities will receive two years of strategic planning, technical support, and start-up funding to develop and implement community-driven plans for connecting children and families to nature-based experiences and learning.

As part of this initiative, the City of Madison will host a [Nature Everywhere Day](#) event on June 1, 2024. Local organizations are invited to get involved by sponsoring the event or taking part with a nature-based activity or service. For more information, [contact](#) the Madison planning team by May 1, 2024.



- [\*\*Ride the Drive Returns to Promote Health, Sustainability and Community Engagement\*\*](#): Sunday, August 11, from 10 am to 2 pm. Ride the Drive is a free, one-day rain-or-shine event promoting the use of alternative transportation with miles of open streets.



- [\*\*MPD providing up-close look at police work through Community Academy\*\*](#): The Madison Police Department is now accepting applications for this year’s Community Academy. The evening will start at 6 pm and conclude no

later than 9 pm. This last session will move to the Midtown Police District, 4020 Mineral Point Rd.

All sessions will start at 6:00 pm and end no later than 9:00 pm.

- Thursday, April 4, 2024

**The academy will include:**

- Police Ride Alongs with patrol officers for those who are interested.
- Organizational Structure and Staffing the Streets of Madison
- Community Partnerships
- Use of Force
- Mental Health
- Investigative Services
- Last date is to be determined based on input from attendees!

See the link below for more details, application, and waiver.

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/police/community/academy/>

- **MPD officer finds new ‘beat’ during job shadow program**: As a patrol officer, Sydney Hanick is used to working a beat. But during a recent shift on the north side, she found herself covering a different kind of beat. One involving a musical mashup and the kids who attend after-school programming through the Kennedy Heights Community Center. This is the first round of the Madison Proximity Project. The program pairs an MPD officer with a community member. The officer shadows the community member, and, in return, that person goes on a police ride-along.

Anyone interested in participating in future rounds of the project can email Madison Police Department's Community Engagement Specialist Alex Ricketts at [aricketts@cityofmadison.com](mailto:aricketts@cityofmadison.com).



- **Metro Transit Info Sessions**: Learn how to get around the city with help from Metro Transit! Several sessions are planned in library locations between January and April 2024. Metro employees will be available for one-on-one

conversations in English and Spanish. No registration required; all are welcome!

- [April 23, 10am - 12pm | Lakeview Library](#)



## **Madison Launches New Program to Improve Rental Housing**

The City of Madison is excited to announce the launch of an aggressive new effort to help local owners of rental housing finance improvements to their properties. The Rental Rehab Program offers help to owners that need to make major repairs to their properties, implement energy-efficiency upgrades, and comply with building codes and regulations.

Property owners interested in participating in the rental rehab program should contact the City's Community Development Division for [more information at: homeloans@cityofmadison.com](mailto:homeloans@cityofmadison.com) or (608)-266-4719 and visit [www.cityofmadison.com/homeloans](http://www.cityofmadison.com/homeloans).



## **2024 VNA meeting schedule**

These are mostly on the fourth Wednesday at 6:30, with a few changes noted below. We'll use Zoom through April and consider in-person meetings over the summer and for the annual meeting in November. A few noteworthy items:

- The March and April meetings are combined to April 10 to avoid Spring Break. Usually a slow period anyway.
- The May to October meetings are all on the fourth Weds. and are scheduled in Zoom as "recurring" (one invite below for all). Any in-person locations TBD.
- The November and December meetings are the THIRD Wednesdays, 11/20 & 12/18 to avoid holidays.

Thanks to all of you for your contributions to our neighborhood.

*Doug Carson (president)*



*City of Madison*

- [Mayor, Common Council, Madison Police Department Joint Statement on Recent Acts of Vandalism](#): We believe that all residents and visitors of our community should have the right to feel safe on our streets, at their businesses, and in their homes. I urge everyone to help us with that by reporting potential crimes of hate or bias to MPD immediately.
- [Large Items Free with Work Orders for Resource Recovery Charge Ratepayers](#) : Through 2024, Madison residents who pay the Resource Recovery Special Charge will not be charged for items that require a fee when they make their required large item work orders.



## **Boards, Commissions, and Committee Meetings**

All meetings and their details can be found [here](#).

## **Streets Division Updates**

- **Drop-off Site Hours:** Check the hours before loading your car. Drop-off site information is available at [www.cityofmadison.com/DropOffSites](http://www.cityofmadison.com/DropOffSites).



## **Trash and Recycling**

[www.cityofmadison.com/DropOffSites](http://www.cityofmadison.com/DropOffSites)

Trash & recycling calendar is available at [www.cityofmadison.com/CollectionSchedule](http://www.cityofmadison.com/CollectionSchedule).

- **Large Item Pickup:** Large item collection rules changed a few years ago and now you need a work order to get on the crew's pickup schedule. Learn more about the process at [www.cityofmadison.com/LargeItem](http://www.cityofmadison.com/LargeItem)
- **Recycle Right:** Be sure you're putting the right things in your recycling cart. Get the rules at [www.cityofmadison.com/recycling](http://www.cityofmadison.com/recycling).



**Recorded city meetings** you have missed can be watched on the on City Channel. If you have questions and/or concerns about the budget, please email Tag Evers at [district13@cityofmadison.com](mailto:district13@cityofmadison.com)

The measure of intelligence is the ability to change. — *Albert Einstein*