

# Madison Mayor Rhodes-Conway: City of Madison and SSM Health commit to South Madison food access

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Madison, WI – The City of Madison is committed to supporting SSM Health’s investment on the south side. Together we will work to ensure permanent food access through a future full-service grocery store. The City of Madison will soon issue a new Request for Proposals (RFP) focused on the development of a full-service grocery store on the City’s Truman Olson property (1402 South Park Street). SSM Health has indicated a commitment to work closely with the City through this RFP process to continue the availability of healthy and robust food options adjacent to their proposed replacement clinic location along South Park Street.

The City issued its first RFP for the Truman Olson site in January 2018 to adjacent property owners and has since been in conversations with the two respondents, SSM Health and Welton Enterprises. The City has determined that there are benefits to issuing a new RFP to the broader development community to confirm if there are other options to accommodating SSM Health’s proposed South Park Street clinic development and a full-service grocery store.

Expressing appreciation for the willingness of SSM Health leadership to collaborate with the City on this important project, Mayor Rhodes-Conway commented, “The City is committed to healthy food access for South Madison residents and to working with SSM Health to enable their vital investment on South Park Street. We are focused on a collaborative process that will lead to a sustainable long-term

solution.”

The new RFP process will be streamlined to focus on timely grocery access and the creation of better connectivity through the Truman Olson site, which will unlock the development potential outlined in the City’s Wingra Creek BUILD Plan. This simplified process will also allow for more efficient collaboration between the Mayor, Alders representing Districts 13 and 14, City staff, and community residents. The RFP will be issued in May with a desire to have clear direction and timelines on suitable development options by the end of the summer. “As the new Alder for District 13, I’m committed to finding practical solutions to the grocery gap issue and am encouraged by the willingness of the City and SSM to take a fresh look at creative options to ensure grocery access for South Madison residents”, says Alder Tag Evers.

The presence of a full-service grocery store has always played an important role in the fabric of the South Madison community. District 14 Alder Sheri Carter comments, “As a lifelong resident of South Madison, I have seen grocery stores come and go over the years and I am committed to identifying and supporting a full-service grocery store. I look forward to working with partners on this vitally important effort, which will continue to ensure food access for the multiple neighborhoods in this area.”

By working closely with community leaders and residents, the City is committed to maintaining the presence of a full-service grocery store for many years to come. It is also the City’s intent to minimize the duration and adverse effects of any potential closure of the current Pick ‘n Save store. In the event of any gap in grocery service, the City is committed to providing community-informed solutions to helping those most at-risk for food insecurity. SSM Health has pledged to support the City in exploring and implementing these solutions.

“The health and well-being of the community is top of mind for SSM Health. We believe that many factors influence personal and community health, including dependable access to fresh, healthy foods,” notes SSM Health Regional President Damond Boatwright. “SSM Health looks forward to collaborating with the City to develop interim solutions, ensuring residents the support they need during any food access gap.”