

Mayor Rhodes-Conway: Statement on night of unrest

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Madison saw another night of looting and senseless destruction in the wake of the officer-involved shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha.

Madison firefighters and police were called to numerous dumpster fires, which were quickly suppressed.

Two liquor stores, a candy store and other businesses were broken into, full cans, rocks and other projectiles were thrown at responding officers — mounted and on foot. Later in the night, a crowd of a few hundred sprinted from location to location-smashing windows near the square. MPD moved quickly to respond, and effectively interrupted looting in progress.

Our city honors the First Amendment and peaceful protests, but we draw the line on arson, theft, and criminal damage to property that puts people's lives in danger. This behavior does not build a movement — it undercuts the movement, and in Madison, it divides a community that largely supports change.

It is time to work together to put our energy and our anger into more productive measures. There are so many options - reach out to your state representatives, county supervisors and city alders about legislative changes, and attend hearings and committee meetings. Work to make a difference in your community, by volunteering to help young people find jobs, internships, and mentors with life experiences similar to theirs. Support community centers and community-based organizations. And work for change at the federal level to bring the resources and support we need in our community.