



GREATER MADISON
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

READY / SET

2026-2028
**Advocacy
Agenda**

Greater Madison has emerged as a world-class hub of innovation, a magnet for young talent and a place of transformative economic opportunities.

A new generation of changemakers and trailblazers is **fueling population growth** that continues to outpace expectations. And emerging technologies have **set in motion** profound changes in how we work, connect and live.

We know the challenges of regions that failed to make the right investments at the right time. Alignment and coordinated action will turn potential into lasting advantage. **We are ready for what comes next.**

***We can be
the region
that gets
it right.***

**THIS IS
OUR AGENDA**



AI POSITIONING



Encourage place-based policies and programs that enhance state and regional AI readiness.

- Invest in workforce training and upskilling initiatives that align education and industry, expanding access to AI-related credentials.
- Strengthen innovation infrastructure and research capacity.
- Promote AI adoption across all business sizes and types, particularly small and mid-sized firms, through targeted grants and technical assistance.
- Ensure that government regulations promote responsible and safe AI deployment.

DEEP TECH ACCELERATION



Support policies that advance next generation “deep tech” and the infrastructure needed to power them. From artificial intelligence to quantum computing and fusion energy, Wisconsin has a unique competitive position that should be accelerated through strategic investment and infrastructure readiness to import wealth into our communities.

- Encourage policies that support the breakthrough discoveries emerging from UW–Madison and Greater Madison’s bioscience, energy, healthtech and software businesses.
- Maximize our nation’s innovation output by advancing and fully funding the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs program and the National Science Foundation’s Regional Innovation Engines program.
- Bolster government-funded research to ensure the United States remains the world’s dominant innovation economy.
- Encourage state government to expand venture capital fund-of-funds initiatives, expanding the impact of private co-investment and helping new and emerging companies scale in Wisconsin.

EXPANDED HOUSING



Increase the diverse supply of workforce housing by pursuing creative approaches to the development process, including the application of reach codes, layering targeted incentive programs and financing tools, and reducing burdensome zoning restrictions and duplicative process approvals.

- Encourage regular review of new local process regulations to ensure they remain practical and effective. Outdated or overly prescriptive requirements can create unnecessary costs and limit growth and innovation.
- Promote a customer-centric approach within government that prioritizes collaboration. Streamlined processes, timely decision-making and solutions tailored to individual business needs will foster strong partnerships and accelerate project delivery.
- Adopt a presumptive approval policy to ensure that once project plans are submitted, decisions are made in a timely, predictable way with necessary public input, while minimizing the costs associated with lengthy delays.

ELEVATED CONNECTIVITY



Build a future-focused, multi-modal transportation system through strategic airport, road, transit and rail investment.

- Establish intercity passenger rail service to Madison, connecting Milwaukee, Chicago and the Twin Cities.
- Support the growth of Dane County Regional Airport by renaming to an “international” designation and focusing on establishing more non-stop connections to new and vital business hubs.
- Enable communities across Wisconsin to coordinate transportation services through the creation of Regional Transit Authorities.

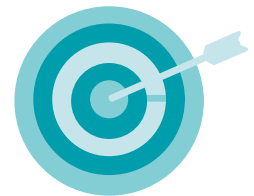
EMPOWERED TALENT



Align industry, education and workforce training to expand opportunity and retain talent in high-demand fields.

- Make Greater Madison the best place in the country for multicultural entrepreneurs to succeed by providing equitable access to capital and opportunities, including support for diverse investment fund managers, supply chain diversification, personalized mentoring and targeted resources.
- Enact a permanent solution that allows undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children, known as Dreamers, and DACA recipients to remain in the country and contribute fully to the economy.
- Pursue important federal immigration reforms that encourage entrepreneurship, support our growing workforce needs and boost our nation's competitiveness.
- Remove state and local barriers tied to federal immigration status to enable qualified individuals to obtain professional licenses, driver licenses and access in-state tuition.
- Support apprenticeship and trades education to advance careers in growing fields.

REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS



Strengthen coordination and place-based economic strategies.

- Promote branding and economic alignment throughout the region, including:
 - Along the I-39 corridor to support emerging industries and regional infrastructure opportunities.
 - In rural communities by investing in infrastructure, workforce training and entrepreneurship to strengthen community resilience.
- Develop a regional public-private model that supports innovative strategies to reduce barriers to entry for entrepreneurs and workers in the child care industry. There is an existing market failure as the industry struggles to pay competitive wages for the workforce while costs remain prohibitive for families in need of care.

Continued

- Support funding for state and federal statistics agencies such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Economic Analysis, and support efforts to modernize statistical processes to improve the accuracy and precision of data products.
- Modernize the Alliant Energy Center campus to maximize sports, entertainment and cultural offerings, with a focus on environment, equity and employment. In addition, enhance the physical connection between the AEC campus and downtown Madison.
- Support digital equity through technology expansion and investment in fast and reliable broadband access.
- The effects of climate change have both environmental and economic impacts. Public and private partnerships should be prioritized to address climate change with policies that incentivize private-sector investment to help create jobs, reduce emissions and costs.
- Ensure State Street and the Downtown Madison economy remain vibrant to attract talent, industry and visitors for the benefit of the region.
- Promote strategic public-private collaboration and investments that protect and enhance the region's natural resources, improve water quality and create transformative spaces for increased access and economic opportunity.



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