



# Memorandum

To: Dane County Board

From: Ronda Schwetz

CC: Lauren Kuhl

Please see the answer to the questions the Dane County Board has asked of each department on sustainability and racial equity accomplishments in 2018.

- 1) In regard to your work with racial equity, what are you most proud of in the past year? What do you need in terms of guidance and/or resources to move forward?

One aspect of the Henry Vilas Zoo that we can always be proud of is our ability to reach a very diverse audience due to the zoo being free. We see many types of individuals, families, and groups that might otherwise not have come to the zoo and we are excited about the opportunity to share this treasure of Dane County with them and inspire them to action for the animals and our environment. We have also made adjustments to our pricing for camp programs in order to be accessible to a greater range of children.

As been previously noted, racial diversity has been difficult to maintain in the zoo field due to the lack of interested candidates. However, our most recent hire was a diversity candidate which has added to our ability to recruit and reach a larger audience with our visitors.

This year we also implemented a Teen Volunteer Program including five scholarship recipients, with recruitment efforts targeted towards underserved areas. We had two members in this program that were in a minority classification.

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- 2) In regard to your work with sustainability, what are you most proud of in the past year? Do you have an update on achievement of your sustainable action plan from the Dane County Sustainable Operations Plan? What do you need in terms of guidance and/or resources to move forward?

New buildings at the zoo are being designed to incorporate LEED standards including recycling of construction waste whenever possible. Our most recent opening of the new restroom facility was a much needed improvement and has sustainability in mind. From paperless hand drying areas, to large windows to increase natural light and cut down on lighting needed during the day. Also, we incorporated a water bottle filling station to try and reduce the need for single use plastic water bottles.

As part of the SMART Fund initiative, this year we updated the glass windows in our Rhino Building and simultaneously updated our heating system. We anticipate that these two measures together will significantly reduce the amount of energy needed to heat the building in the winter.

This summer we joined the Madison Bicycle Benefits program and have seen the program used 90 times in less than two months, helping to encourage and highlight the number of guests that travel to the Zoo via bicycle.