

FITCHBURG TEEN CENTER FEASIBILITY STUDY 2024



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DANE COUNTY



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary – Page 1

Background & Phase One – Page 2

Feasibility and Engagement – Page 4

Financial and Operational Feasibility (Hope Community Capital) – Page 11

Facility Design and Development (JLA Architects) – Page 16

Feasibility Recommendations and Findings – Page 19

APPENDIX – Page 21

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Teen Interns

- Kaleyah Ashford
- Jahir Duran Nunez
- Neveah Grimmer
- Semaje Gooch
- Simone Weinhold
- Joe Beal
- Sandy Flores Ruiz

UW Fellows

- Awa Patty
- Ojaswi Pasachhe

City of Fitchburg

- Mayor Julia Arata-fratta
- Brad Sippel
- Jessica Wolfe
- Deanna Schmidt

University of Wisconsin Madison Extension

- Joe Maldonado
- Taylor Seale

JLA Architects

- Rafeeq Asad
- Abby Hultman
- Imani Haupt

Hope Community Capital

- Carrie Sanders
- Corrie Beula Kovacs
- Kristeen Reynolds

Dane County Department of Human Services

- Connie Bettin

EQT By Design

- Naman Siad
- Mathias Lemos Castillo
- Annette Miller

Latino Chamber of Commerce

*...And to all of our community
members and partners who supported
the mission and goals of the Teen
Center*

I. Summary

Since 2021, EQT By Design in partnership with UW-Madison Extension has led a comprehensive community-driven initiative to establish a Teen Center in Fitchburg, a rapidly growing city within Dane County, Wisconsin. As we conclude the Phase Two feasibility study, the overwhelming evidence points to not just a desire, but to a critical need for this community asset and resource. Through extensive research and stakeholder engagement, EQT by Design concludes that a Teen Center would serve as a vital economic investment for Dane County youth, their future, and the broader community.

The feasibility of the Teen Center in Fitchburg is supported by several key factors:

Teen Population:

- 641 Verona area teens
- 22% of Fitchburg's population is under the age of 18

Location Advantages:

- Situated in a [Healthy Neighborhood Initiative](#) Priority Area
- Accessible location | bus, adjacency to teen population

Community Support:

- Over 80% of teens and adults support the Teen Center (Phase One)

Quotes from EQT By Design Teen Center Engagement



"This center would be not only great for teens but great for parents who worry about their teens not having anything to do after school or any place to go when they need help from someone who isn't family." - Semaje Gooch, Edgewood High School, Phase Two Teen Intern

"The Teen Center would be essential for providing gaps in care for youth mental health." - Kaleyah Ashford, Verona Area High School, Phase Two Teen Intern

II. BACKGROUND

PHASE ONE

Phase One of this process included an engagement study that centered the voices of Fitchburg residents (emphasizing teen demographics, underrepresented populations, minority- and women-led organizations).

This study was informed by the City of Fitchburg's [Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative](#) ("HNI"), a 5-year pilot program adopted in 2019, designed to formulate and implement a strategic, collaborative, and holistic approach to address neighborhood-specific issues. Within this plan, a relevant action item included: "Work in conjunction with interested parties to identify other neighborhood hubs in other priority neighborhoods". The Neighborhood hub was further defined as: "A public or private place, open and easily accessible to all Priority Neighborhood and other City Residents, that houses HNI people activities, programs, and services." This spurred the request for engagement on the feasibility of a Teen Service and Resource Facility as a potential and viable neighborhood hub.

In Phase One, EQT's engagement study was adapted to include a youth/teen centered strategy. Teen interns, UW-Madison Extension, and UW Health were essential partners in leading the collection of insight and input in Phase One. This engagement included a teen and adult survey, a photovoice project, targeted focus groups, public open houses, and engagement events co-led and co-designed by teens (See Timeline 1 below). Throughout these various engagement strategies, there was an overall positive and supportive sentiment of the Teen Center.

The key focus and values highlighted by teens emphasize the **importance of mental health**, the **creation of a safe space where they can authentically be themselves**, and a **commitment to diversity**. They also expressed a desire for strong community outreach, fostering personal connections, and supporting educational resources that align with their purpose and goals. Additionally, **teens prioritized opportunities for personal growth, spaces dedicated to fun, and the flexibility to compromise**.

The surveys were used to gauge engagement and insight from a diverse range of community members who would be future stakeholders in this development. A total of 390 surveys were collected, 214 of which were collected by teen interns. Below is a demographic breakdown of the survey results:

When looking at the survey results, **an overwhelming number of respondents support the development of the Teen Center (over 80%)**. The biggest concerns centered around operational and capital support. A key demographic difference to note was that while 48% of white respondents addressed operational support as the biggest concern, 50% of BIPOC respondents indicated capital support as a greater barrier.

The majority of teens indicated that the teen center should focus on social/mental health, recreation and sports, and an overall chill-out space. Adults focused on youth leadership and development, health/mental health, and recreation and sports. These insights were important as they informed the feasibility study in Phase Two.

Throughout the engagement study, key events and programs helped center the voices of marginalized youth and teens. Focus groups that targeted teens, varying from the Juvenile Detention Center to AVID classes, sought to gain insight from a wide range of teen voices. All the teens in these specific focus group sessions said “yes” to the desire for a Teen Center. Lastly, through events like the Community Engagement Walk and Bike Event, community members and teens were able to gain more insight about the Teen Center and share their input. Phase One was essential to capture the voices of the community, centering the voices and values of the teens. The engagement study highlighted that there is in fact strong, grounded support for the Teen Center, with additional input on how an adaptable and multifaceted center would be key to serving the goals of both the teens and greater community. **A key takeaway was that continued youth engagement was integral to the future phases of this project and that an investment in youth was essential to create a sustainable outcome.**

The City of Fitchburg sought to assess the feasibility of a Teen Service and Resource Facility in a key designated neighborhood hub. Equity by Design (EQT) was hired to lead the Teen Center Feasibility study and workplan with subject matter expertise, insight and co-development support from [Hope Community Capital](#) and [JLA Architects](#) (Feasibility Partner Group).

Quotes from EQT By Design Teen Center Engagement



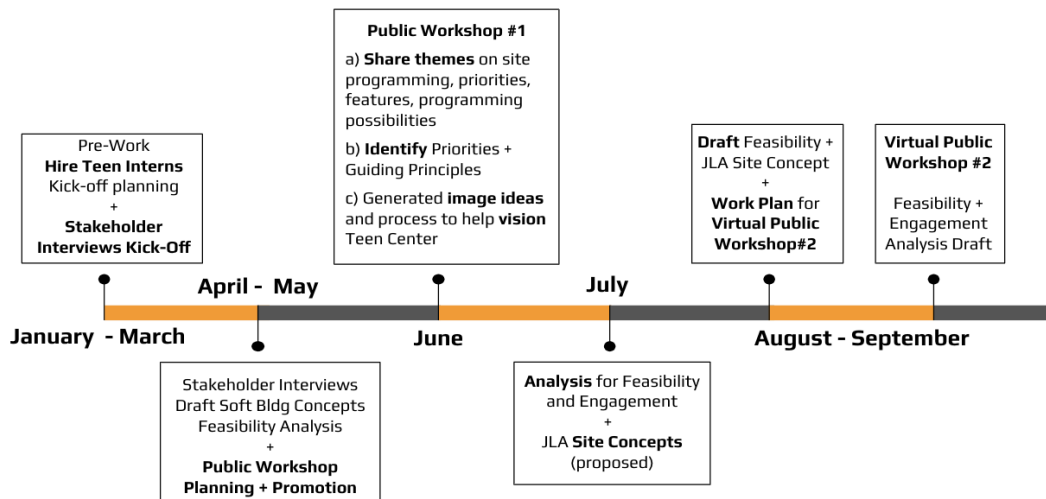
"The teen center is so important and unique in its approach to supporting our youth because it has truly considered and acted on what teens actually want and need." - Jahir Duran Nunez, Verona Area High School, Phase Two Teen Intern

"We're looking for a space... where we can exercise the kind of independence and responsibility that will bring us success in college and life." - Joe Beal, West High School, Phase Two Teen Intern

III. Feasibility & Engagement Process

PHASE TWO OVERVIEW

Phase 2 Timeline (2024)



Phase Two of the Fitchburg Teen Center project was designed to focus on the feasibility of it in the City of Fitchburg. The research team consisted of EQT By Design, JLA Architects, Hope Community Capital, UW-Madison Extension, teen Interns, and two undergraduate research fellows from UW-Madison (who were formerly teen interns for Phase One). All worked together to engage, research, and disseminate insights from stakeholders.

TEEN INTERNS & UW RESEARCH FELLOWS

In typical community engagement projects, the insights, reflections, and perspectives come from adult community members. EQT is proud to share that for both Phase One and Phase Two, key learning and perspectives came directly from teens who are affiliated with middle schools (Badger Ridge, Savanna Oaks), high schools (Edgewood, West, Verona), UW-Madison, and the Dane County Juvenile Detention Center.

Seven (7) teen interns and two (2) UW Research Fellows were the connecting thread through both Phase One and Phase Two, grounding the work between all entities (EQT, UW-Madison Extension, the City of Fitchburg, JLA Architects, and Hope Community Capital). Moreover, as teens will be the future key users of the Teen Center space, it was important to include, center, and share decision-making as part of the overall design of this project. Specifically, we had one of the teen interns who continued forward from the first phase of this study to this next phase (Phase Two). And we had two interns who were set up as fellows for this phase since they were now enrolled at UW-Madison.

From March–November 2024, the teen interns and UW Fellows engaged their peers and the surrounding community to gain deeper insights into the resources and activities needed for the Teen Center to operate successfully. Teen interns and UW Fellows together successfully engaged 113 teens and 17 adults affiliated with youth-service organizations through various activities such as hosting stakeholder interviews and public workshops, conducting needs assessments and research, and providing final recommendations to the Phase Two project team.

From start to finish, young people have been involved in Phase One and Phase Two of the Fitchburg Teen Center. This was a committed value by all involved, including EQT by Design. The key value was to ensure youth were meaningfully engaging young people alongside staff as co-researchers, co-collaborators, and co-decision makers.

Public Workshop (*UW Research Fellows Report*)

During the two community workshops and two high school workshops, community members and youth emphasized several key points on how the Fitchburg Teen Center can support the well-being of youth, including:

- Offering mental, career, and academic support, which can be difficult for some youth to access.
- “Creating a space where youth see their life, culture, and identity reflected and honored” (community member).
- Offering youth leadership opportunities, such as a youth involvement group or youth board of directors for the teen center.

Summary of Public Workshop Responses:

Our first public workshop took place at Verona High School, where we set up a poster board gallery walk to gather feedback from students. Here's what we learned about their needs and the current gaps in support:

Safe Spaces: Students want a space where they feel secure and can express themselves freely. They specifically mentioned the need for areas where they can relax and de-stress, away from the pressures of school and home life.

Mental Health Support: Many students expressed a strong need for mental health resources. They're looking for counseling services, stress management workshops, and activities like art therapy and journaling sessions. One student mentioned how they struggle with anxiety and would benefit from regular counseling and coping strategies.

Career and Academic Support: Students are eager for resources to help with their future plans. They suggested workshops on resume building, college applications, job interviews, and financial literacy. For instance, a student looking to apply for college scholarships emphasized the need for guidance on writing compelling essays.

Community Building: They want more opportunities to connect with their peers. Suggestions included having spaces for group activities, social events, and community service projects. A

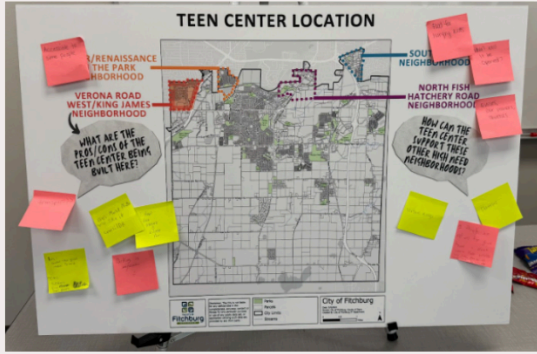
student highlighted the value of having a dedicated area for collaborative projects and team-building exercises.

We also had two more public workshops for community members, in which we described the research and development process of the Fitchburg Teen Center. In one of the workshops, we asked two questions about promoting “trust, acceptance, and hope for justice-involved youth” and establishing a space of non judgment at the teen center. Community members shared similar responses of “promoting diversity” and providing youth leadership opportunities at the teen center to “cultivate ownership.”

Quotes from EQT By Design Teen Center Engagement



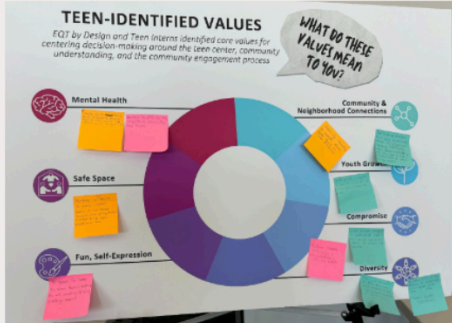
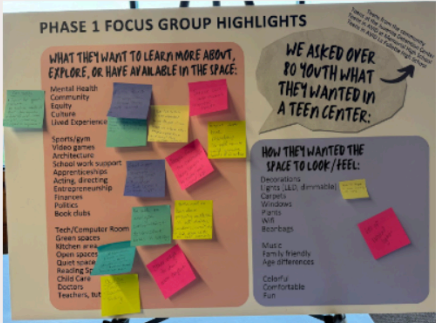
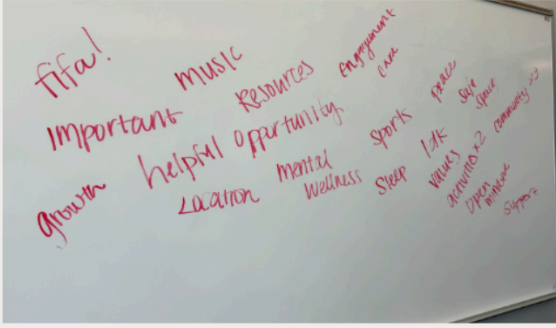
"The Teen Center is crucial for the well-being of young people in this community, as it can provide them with the support and resources they need to thrive." - Ojaswi Pasachhe, UW-Madison, Phase One Teen Intern, Phase Two UW Research Fellow



Madison West High School's Equity Symposium Event



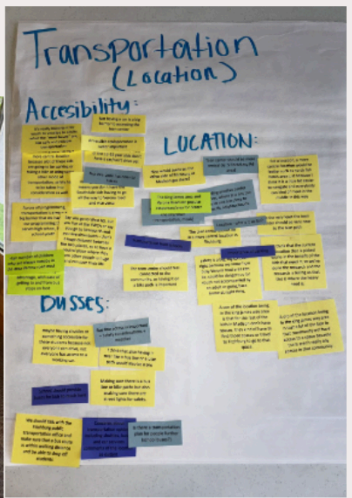
Feedback collected from youth and youth-serving organizations at WLCC



Verona High School's Latino Youth Summit



Teen Interns and UW Fellows engage the community about the identified major themes



Teen Interns engage in a qualitative analysis activity of all the compiled stakeholder responses

KEY CONSTITUENT INTERVIEWS

To gain the perspective of key constituents (teens, city staff, youth center operators, and other adjacent city administrators), intended to inform financial and operational feasibility, interviews were conducted through a combined effort by EQT, Hope Community Capital and Teen Fellows. The purpose of the stakeholder interviews was to gain insight on the expertise of key stakeholders in this project and learn what can help inform the needs of this feasibility study. **Over 30 interviews were conducted.**

Teen Engagement + Interviews (*UW Research Fellows Report*)

Teen Interns engaged with a variety of peers and community members in various schools, community locations, and virtual environments:

- West High School's Equity Symposium Event (*50 teens, 5 adults*)
- Verona High School's Latino Youth Summit Event (*40 teens, 3 adults*)
- Youth-serving organizations and teens at WI Latino Chamber of Commerce (*3 teens, 3 adults from the YWCA, Fitchburg Sol Youth Group, and Journey Mental Health*)
- Youth-serving organizations and teens at a virtual Zoom event (*1 teen, 2 adults from the YWCA, Journey Mental Health, and Dear Diary*)

UW Fellows engaged with a variety of peers and community members in various schools, community locations, and virtual environments:

- Staff from the Department of Children & Families, Briarpatch Youth Services, Restorative Justice staff from West High School, and the Dane County Juvenile Detention Center (*4 adults*)
- Justice-involved youth at the Dane County Juvenile Detention Center (*10 teens*)

City of Fitchburg Staff

The City of Fitchburg staff interviews carried consistent themes: the pressing *need for dedicated spaces* for youth programming and teen-centric activities as well as the importance of creating *multigenerational teen-oriented facilities*. When describing attributes of the Teen Center,

City staff indicated the proposed facility should be accessible, located in proximity to other youth-serving organizations, and designed with inclusivity in mind, serving as a safe welcoming hub for community engagement.

Additionally, there was a consensus that co-located facilities such as libraries or senior centers can create an efficient and synergetic neighborhood environment.

Concerns that were raised by city staff include funding, resource allocation and staffing. The biggest hurdle was financial feasibility, with an emphasis on exploring options like leasing existing spaces to reduce capital costs and pursuing federal grants or partnerships with local entities. Staffing was another concern, with many interviews noting that volunteer programs

and ongoing community involvement will be the key to creating a facility that serves the teens in the best way possible.

Adjacent Community Stakeholders

We interviewed several operators and gathered key insights for the new teen center. Two operators specifically emphasized the importance of incorporating warm handoffs and restorative justice into the center's programming and partnerships. These elements were highlighted as essential for fostering a supportive, inclusive environment that promotes healing, accountability, and connection among the teens and the broader community.

Jay Kiefer, Program Director at Briarpatch Youth Services, highlights the significant role of Briarpatch in providing a “warm hand-off” to other services, though they lack direct mental health counseling services. Briarpatch faces challenges such as limited funding and space, impacting its ability to offer comprehensive support and maintain safe, supervised environments. Additionally, transportation issues have increased risks for unsupervised youth.

Ciarra Grobe, Restorative Justice Coordinator at West High School, and other program directors stress the need for restorative justice practices that promote two-way communication between justice-involved youth and their communities. They emphasize the importance of culturally responsive mentoring and providing structured, consistent support to build trust and address mistrust from past negative experiences with adults and the justice system.¹

City staff and Fitchburg community members echoed similar sentiments, emphasizing the importance of creating a safe, accessible, and welcoming space that is tailored to the needs of teens in the Fitchburg area. The community members carried a shared understanding that the teen center should help to eliminate the financial, cultural, and educational barriers that many marginalized teens face. **The physical space and its ability to meet the demands of diverse teen populations was a key focus.** Similar to the city staff, there was an emphasis on collaborating with community partners to ensure that the Teen Center was well supported by the community and further served to create a neighborhood hub.

Another important factor that was addressed was the involvement and engagement of teens in the design and operation of the center. This was a crucial point, that in order for this teen center to serve its purpose, **teens must be at the center of the planning process and their voices need to be uplifted.** Lastly, in terms of the types of programming, the stakeholders highlighted the importance of varied programming that is both relevant to teens and inclusive.

To address the similar concerns raised by the city staff, the community members suggested securing funding from a diverse range of sources, including public funds, private funds, private

¹ UW Fellows Report

donations, and community fundraising. An additional concern that was brought up was the issue of turnover and the capacity to maintain consistent staff and programming.

Youth Operators

Lastly, the third group of stakeholders interviewed were youth operators (including Goodman Community Center, Boys and Girls Club, Lussier, WI Youth Company). The youth operators highlighted the need for a well-designed teen center that can **accommodate various programming, including a kitchen for cooking activities, sport-designated areas, lounge areas and breakout spaces, and flexible meeting zones**. These spaces should be accessible and adaptable in order to provide a flexible center that can cater to the diverse interests of the teens. The facility should offer services such as tutoring, meals, and WiFi.

In terms of operational concerns, similar sentiments were shared about staffing and longevity. **Staff and operators need to be skilled, culturally competent and relevant, and understand the unique barriers teens face**. Funding also was addressed, especially when considering transportation and safety. Community engagement and partnership were also addressed, especially when addressing creative ways and events to bring the various community stakeholders together to support teen programming.

Justice-Involved Youth in Dane County (Theory of Change Model - Full version page 28)

<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: #c47a3b;">ISSUE</p> <p>High Recidivism Rates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Wisconsin youth released in 2011, 63% returned to corrections within three years. Nationally, nearly half of incarcerated youth return within that same time frame. <p>Racial Disparities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The percentage of BIPOC youth in the juvenile population increased by 16.8% between 2007 and 2021, while White youth declined by 25.8%. Black youth are detained at a rate 2.5 times higher than the national average. <p>Distrust and Lack of Control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many justice-involved youth feel powerless due to repeated failures by adult institutions, leading to a deep distrust in the justice system, particularly law enforcement. For youth of color, this mistrust is rooted in centuries of systemic racism. 	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: #5b9bd5;">SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES</p> <p>Reduction in Recidivism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreased youth return rates to corrections due to consistent, engaging, and supportive programming. <p>Improved Educational, Employment, and Leadership Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth involved in decision-making and leadership roles will feel more connected to their community, fostering a sense of agency and responsibility. Youth gain skills that support them academically, financially, professionally, and socially. <p>Improved Support Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current support systems gain additional staffing, resources, and physical space for programming at the teen center. Support systems have increased capacity to support youth and are more accessible. <p>Community Growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build bridges between youth, adults, and law enforcement through restorative practices, leading to stronger community bonds and healthier interpersonal relationships. Youth contribute to the positive development of their community through community service. <p>Enhanced Well-Being for BIPOC Youth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Racial disparities in justice involvement are reduced because BIPOC youth have equitable access to resources that cater to the unique challenges they face. Youth gain trauma-informed mental health support and develop strong, meaningful relationships with their mentors and peers.
<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: #c47a3b;">STRATEGIES</p> <p><i>Proposed solution: Create a Fitchburg Teen Center that can serve as a safe, supportive space for youth, including those involved with the justice system.</i></p> <p>Restorative Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize restorative justice practices, such as circles, to establish two-way communication between youth and their community, promoting trust and empathy. <p>Culturally-Responsive and Trauma-Informed Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer youth support and mentorship from culturally-responsive, empathetic adults who reflect diverse identities and have training in restorative practices and trauma-informed support. <p>Youth Leadership and Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return power to youth voice by offering leadership opportunities that enable youth to support decision-making, such as a youth leadership board or involvement in community planning. <p>Opportunities for Personal and Professional Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with external service providers, like Briarpatch Youth Services, to connect youth to career development, mental health, and academic support services. Offer community service opportunities and recreational activities to promote social growth. 	

Quotes from EQT By Design Teen Center Engagement



"The teen center could help thousands of other young people that are in similar situations or don't have access to recreational things outside of school... it can help children feel seen, feel known, and feel supported." - Sandy Florez Ruiz, West High School (2024), UW-Madison, Phase Two Teen Intern

IV. Financial and Operational Feasibility

As part of Phase Two, Hope Community Capital and EQT by Design conducted stakeholder interviews with potential operators and community partners to assess the feasibility of the Fitchburg Teen Center. The research focused on three key areas:

Resource Assessment	Location Analysis	Programming Framework
<i>Available funding streams and financial sustainability</i>	<i>Site requirements and constraints</i>	<i>Core service offerings aligned with teen needs</i>
<i>Community partnerships and support networks</i>	<i>Minimum space requirements and accessibility needs</i>	<i>Activity spaces and amenities</i>
<i>Political and institutional backing</i>	<i>Environmental considerations</i>	<i>Target demographic analysis</i>
	<i>Property acquisition timeline</i>	

Key Findings

The research revealed two critical success factors that will shape the teen center's success. First is teen-centered governance; the center will operate with majority (51%) teen leadership. This approach ensures that programming remains relevant and truly responsive to youth needs, putting real decision-making power in the hands of those the center serves.

The second factor is a clear operational vision for the facility. The teen center will serve as a safe, engaging environment for teens outside school hours. The space will feature several key areas designed to meet diverse needs and interests. These include dedicated hangout spaces where teens can socialize and relax, a maker space equipped for creative activities and projects, full kitchen facilities for culinary activities and shared meals, a sports court for physical activities, and multiple gathering and relaxation areas throughout the facility to accommodate different group sizes and activities.

Financial Framework

Project scope and costs:

- **Facility Size:** 10,000 - 20,000 square feet
- **Construction Costs:** \$4.25M - \$8.5M (at \$425/sq ft)
- **Additional Costs:** \$1M+ for land acquisition and remediation
- **Annual Operating Budget:** Approximately \$1.2M

Funding Strategy

Our financial framework consists of two main funding channels: capital funding for initial setup and operational revenue for long-term sustainability.

We will secure capital funding through partnerships with city and county governments, private philanthropists, and community foundations. These funds will help build the infrastructure, purchase equipment, and complete the center's initial setup according to our design standards.

For long-term sustainability, we have developed a diverse revenue plan. The Verona Area School District can serve as a strategic funding source that can support some daily operations and core programs. This could then be supplemented with private fundraising and donor engagement. To ensure financial stability, we also propose that income generation occur through program licensing to partner organizations and selective facility rentals during off-peak hours. This approach seeks to create a balanced financial foundation that can support the center's mission and growth while maintaining high-quality operations.

This feasibility analysis follows James A. Graaskamp's framework, which defines a project as feasible when there is a "reasonable likelihood of satisfying explicit objectives when a selected course of action is tested for fit to a context of specific constraints and limited resources." Further evaluation in Phase 3 will determine the final project's feasibility.

CAPITAL BUDGET TO BUILD, ESTIMATE, WITH DISCUSSION OF ASSUMPTIONS, 8,000 SF:

Development Budget Sources and Uses	
Funding Source	Budget
City of Fitchburg	\$4,000,000
Dane County	\$925,000
GAP (Capital Campaign)	875,000
Total Sources	\$5,800,000
Expense /Cost Center	Estimated Budget
Land Cost / Remediation	\$1,400,000
Hard Cost, vertical	\$3,000,000
Soft Cost	\$600,000
FF&E	\$500,000
Contingency	\$300,000
Total Uses	\$5,800,000

Discussion: This assumes new construction and a fundraising gap of \$875,000 to build this building. Phase 3 is where a determination of redevelopment or land purchase occurs. Without a site identified, it is difficult to know what the land cost/remediation cost would be.

OPERATIONAL BUDGET WITH DISCUSSION OF ASSUMPTIONS, for site Programming

Operational Budget for City of Fitchburg, estimate:

Discussion: This assumes the city of Fitchburg would cover the expenses such as insurance, utilities and other contract services for the center. This of course needs to be complemented with a committed operator and optimal programs that can provide revenue. The operator is assumed to bear most of the burden for daily programming operations. And, it is expected that the City of Fitchburg will take care of facility and maintenance specific costs related to the building itself. What are those costs?

Expense (not covered in reimbursement from programs):	
Expense:	Amount:
Insurance	\$ 35,000
Utilities	\$ 25,000
Contract Professional Services (Legal/Accounting)	\$ 10,000
Physical Building Maintenance (mowing, shoveling, cleaning facility, and parking lot kept clear, includes 1 FTE Maintenance Professional)	\$ 74,000
Reserves	\$ 25,000
CITY OF FITCHBURG COSTS	\$169,000

Operational Budget for potential Operator, estimate:

Discussion: We had estimated that program services expenses would be around \$750,000 in order to deliver all of the core programs that the teens identified. Of the existing operators who provide similar services or programs, each has a unique mission that corresponds to a curated list of focus areas, which results in widely varied operational expenses. We identified \$750,000 annually in costs for the various programs based on comparable projects in Madison and beyond. There is a desire to create a partnership with area teen operators, Verona Area and Madison Metropolitan School Districts as a way to address core programming annual budgets. While there were some initial conversations that were started as a part of this feasibility study, it is unclear at this time what those specific sources may be, more diligence is needed.

So, what are the estimated costs to the operator?

Operator Costs: Operational Costs that they cover	
Expense:	Amount:
Center Director (1.5 FTE, incl. benefits)*	\$135,000
Core Programming: Sports, Food, Mental Health, Music, Art, Career Development, Life Skills	\$750,000
ESTIMATED OPERATOR COSTS	\$885,000

Site Selection

Several sites were discussed, but a consensus emerged to find a site that is Northwest of Verona Road (Three Fountains, Anton Dr., Whitney Way area)

Project Area



Overall Conclusion Regarding Costs and Funding Needs

Successful implementation of this teen-focused facility requires a comprehensive funding strategy that addresses multiple financial aspects. To ensure long-term sustainability and effective resource allocation, we have identified three key funding categories: operational funding for day-to-day activities, capital funding for facility development, and programming operations to support teen services. Each category requires specific funding approaches and sources:

Operating Funding – mix of grants and earned income (contracts and fees for usage of facility)

Capital Funding - Generally a mix of public funding (grants) and fundraising campaign

Operations - established organizations collaborating to serve the goal of teen-focused programming; licensing or leases to organizations providing funding; activities that meet the needs of the teens while also generating revenue; programming for teens during the day and also the evening.

Recap of Impactful Unknowns :

- Site selection and location (impacting site-related costs)
- Operator partnerships (impacting programming and operating budget)
- Programmatic funding is uncertain - highlighting the potential impact of fundraising!
- Rising cost of construction and materials

Quotes from EQT By Design Teen Center Engagement



"This teen center will directly impact so many youth, especially those I see myself in... navigating life with limited resources and support." - Awa Phatty, UW-Madison, Phase One Teen Intern, Phase Two UW Research Fellow

V. Facility Design and Development

JLA Architects led the development of teen-centered and teen-identified strategic goals, which further clarified the future role and purpose of the facility. Over 300 teen voices contributed to shaping these strategic goals and visions for the center. The concepts for the design were based on the site description and programming as informed by the planning and design team's work with the [Reindahl Park Imagination Center](#). Ultimately, these findings in the phase two feasibility study set the groundwork for future next steps in phase three, which include site acquisition and building design.

The Teen Center strategic goals identified through community engagement can be found below (Full JLA Sliddeck can be found in the Appendix).



Location Accessibility

The design focuses on creating multi-generational and accessible spaces that cater to a diverse range of users. By leveraging existing facilities, the goal is to ensure that spaces are flexible and adaptable, meeting the varying needs of different age groups and abilities. In addition, careful consideration is given to the demographic needs of the community, ensuring that these spaces are inclusive and serve a broad spectrum of individuals, promoting both functionality and accessibility for all.

- Key words: Cultural Diversity, Public Transport, High-Density, Teen Areas, Existing Facilities, Vacant Land

Safe Welcoming Spaces

Creating a safe welcoming space emphasizes community collaboration and fosters cultural diversity and inclusion, ensuring that everyone feels welcome and supported. It prioritizes providing resource support and offering comprehensive services that cater to individuals from all backgrounds. Additionally, there is a strong focus on outdoor engagement, encouraging connections with nature and the environment as part of a holistic strategy to meet the diverse needs of the community. The goal is to create a space that not only serves but uplifts and empowers individuals from all walks of life.

- Examples: Safe Hangout spaces, commerce center, local trades, unions, businesses, kitchen, lounge, breakout spaces, art studio

Teen Engagement

At the center of this project is the necessity for teen engagement. It is important that there is involvement of teens in design, where they can envision a safe hangout spot and space for community partnerships.

- Examples: Community engagement wall
 - Involving teens in design, programming, functionality
 - Flexible program areas for support groups, activities

Funding Partnerships

Funding remains at the center of concerns of the feasibility of the teen center. In order to create an economically viable and sustainable initiative, resource allocation and funding partnerships are key. Collaboration with local entities is a key strategy to avoid duplication of services and to maximize the efficiency of available resources. By working together with community organizations, government agencies, and other stakeholders, the goal is to create a cohesive network of support that enhances the project's impact while ensuring its sustainability over time.

- Examples: Commerce fundraising, multipurpose event space, collaborations with local entities

Teen Focused Operations

Building on the teen engagement focus, the operations must also reflect the specific needs of teens. From the engagement with teens, it is important for the center to be flexible, well-staffed, with facilities for education, safety, and crisis support. Ultimately, the space should be a safe and engaging environment where young people can connect and participate in meaningful activities.

- Examples: Crisis support, general office/admin space, hotel teleconferencing, drop-in programs, flexible operation hours, employment entrepreneurship support

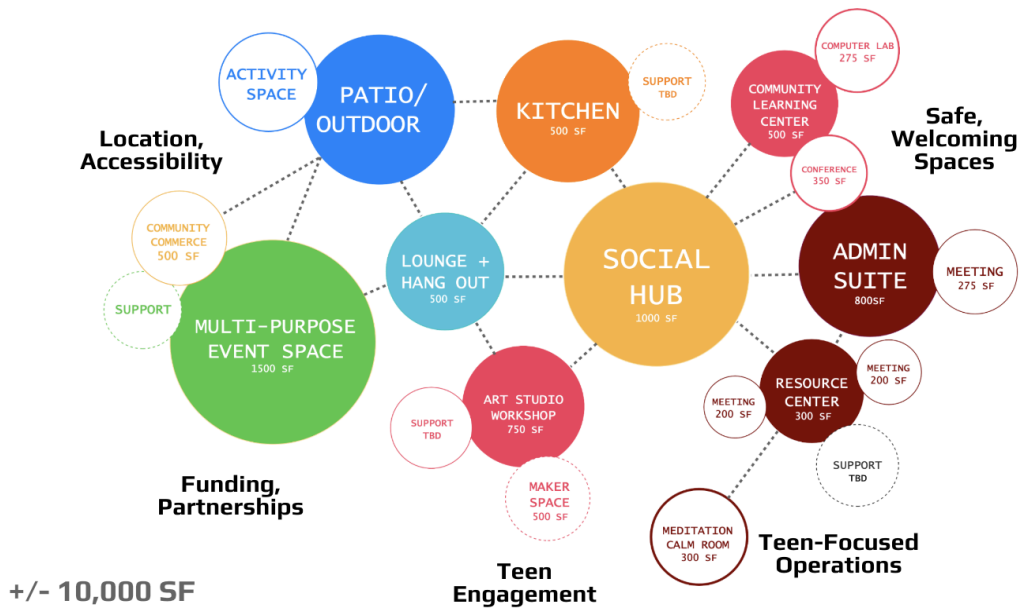


Image: JLA Teen-Centered Strategic Goals for the Teen Center

The feasibility phase helped direct focus during the conception phase. Based on the analysis, as well as the work done by EQT and Hope Community Capital, the optimal purpose of the space led JLA to a ~ 10,000 square foot estimate. Further analysis is available in the key findings from the feasibility study below.

Quotes from EQT By Design Teen Center Engagement



"Having a safe, welcoming place where I can feel accepted, understood, and free from pressure would have made a huge difference in my life, and it could do the same for countless other high schoolers." - Simone Weinhold, West High School, Phase Two Teen Intern

VI. Feasibility Recommendations and Findings

EQT By Design and the planning team have developed the following actionable next steps for the Fitchburg Teen Center.

Recommendations:

Third Space for Teens

The Teen Center would be a vital “Third Space” for youth, offering an environment outside of home and school where teens can connect, grow, and be their authentic selves. As sociologist Ray Oldenburg notes, these spaces are crucial for fostering a sense of community and belonging, which are essential for the physical and mental health of young people. In Fitchburg, where teens make up 22% of the population, there is currently no dedicated space to meet their specific needs, leaving them vulnerable to isolation and disengagement. While other youth programs exist, they are not tailored to teens and do not provide the flexible, adaptable environment needed for personal growth and self-expression. A Teen Center would offer exactly this—a safe, supportive space that connects teens to resources like workforce development, education, and sports, while helping them build the social-emotional skills and confidence to navigate life’s challenges. By addressing this gap, the Teen Center would play a critical role in supporting the growth and well-being of teens, strengthening both individuals and the broader community. (See in more detail in Appendix D)

City of Fitchburg

- Teen Center Operation RFP (Phase 3)
- Identify a location that is accessible and attractive to teens
- Acquire the location

Physical Building

- Teen/Community Vision or City Budget Option
- Secure detailed construction estimates
- Complete site selection and acquisition
- Develop a construction/renovation program for the space
 - Architectural / Engineering
 - Permitting
 - Entitlements (zoning)

Friends of the Teen Center

- Establish 501 c3
- Hire a fundraising professional
- Raise financial capital to build or renovate the space
- Develop a funding plan to cover expenses annually

Teen Operators

- Develop an operating structure including:
 - Designated entity/organization to operate the structure
 - Designated appropriate / desired programming within the building to meet the teens' requests
- Secure operational funding commitments
- Apply for the Teen Center Operations RFP
- Finalize operator agreements

APPENDIX

Appendix A - "A Day in the Life of the Teen Center"

Appendix B - UW Research Fellows Report, Theory of Change Model, Presentation

Appendix C - Council of the Whole Verbal Statements - November 20, 2024

Appendix D - Envisioning a Third Space

Appendix E - Fitchburg Common Council (CoW) Presentation

APPENDIX A - "A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE TEEN CENTER"

Teen interns were asked to describe how they imagine themselves moving in and out of the Teen Center space, what it looks and feels like, and what resources and services they would take advantage of.

"After school, I would take the bus from my high school, or if it is accessible by bike I would use that form of transportation. Hopefully the Teen center would have bike racks, or locations nearby to park bikes. Then upon entry passing by the administrative staff in an entrance area (possibly), a quick greeting would be exchanged, and if it was a first time there I would probably ask about various resources provided, and have a knowledgeable conversation with the staff about the area. Then if there were quiet rooms I would try to use them to complete homework and assignments for classes, that would probably take an hour, and on my way to one of there was a coffee, or drink machine available I would use that. After that I would look around to see if I have any friends or if there are any card or ping pong games going on (I'm a big fan). If there weren't, I would try to spend time looking at the notice board to see if there are any upcoming events, or any people coming to talk/cooking class and other class schedules so I can try to go to those. Then if there is a gym I would try to make use of that because I don't have the time usually to be able to complete sports, homework, and cook especially if they are in different locations, so this would be very convenient. After that it would probably be around 5:30pm and if there are showers available I would use that. If not, I would save the gym until the end. Then if there are cooking classes, or cooking materials I would join that, and try to make something of the sort! Finally, any free time to sit around in a common area between and just being able to meet and talk to new people! This is just a one day example, and knowing me I wouldn't get around to all of it, and probably get distracted by the creative room and start painting."

"I would walk in and the first thing I would do is grab a snack or drink from the pantry. There would be a lot of quick options for people with allergies or other dietary restrictions. Then, I would go to a bulletin board or some sort of posted list of upcoming events at the teen center or events to get involved in. In a similar area I would also check a list of volunteering or other opportunities (job related, camps, etc) and it would be easy to sign up for them through QR codes or paper sign up sheets. After that, I would probably go to a quiet space or a tech lab to work on schoolwork or read. If I didn't have any school work I would utilize the gym or spend some time on the outdoor patio/garden. Before leaving I would clean up after myself and see if anything else needs tidying, and then I would walk back to the close and easily accessible parking lot to leave."

"I enter through a welcome center. The building feels charming, natural, and comfortable from its design down to its materials and lighting. I go to the hangout area to meet a friend and observe teen-made art on the walls as we walk to the kitchen to prepare a snack. After we

return to the lounge and hang out, we split into study rooms and later regroup at the track to get some exercise.”

“A day in the life would be, going in and most likely supporting staff in opening the center. Making sure everything is in place from the previous day. Check the schedule for any programming the center has that day and prepare for it. Greet teens as they enter, take care of any problems, and make sure things run smoothly for the day.”

“When I get off the bus, I would walk in the doors and the receptionist would ask what I will be doing today. I would tell them I will be spending most of the day in the gym. After I get done, I would head to make some dinner then hang out with the other teens for a while and chill. Once I am ready to go home, I would sign out at the desk and head home.”

“If I was coming right after school, I would probably use the kitchen and lounge areas.”

APPENDIX B - UW RESEARCH FELLOWS REPORT, THEORY OF CHANGE MODEL, PRESENTATION

“Supporting Justice-Involved Youth in Dane County”
by Awa Phatty, Ojaswi Pasachhe, EQT By Design,
and the University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension

Executive Summary

Recidivism rates are high among youth, or individuals under the age of 18 years, in Wisconsin, and they have been increasing steadily over the years. Notably, Fitchburg has a high detainee count for its population size, coming in third after Madison and Sun Prairie, with 14 detainees in 2023 (Dane County Juvenile Report, 2023). Moreover, a disproportionate percentage of justice-involved youth identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). While some programming is available to support justice-involved youth in Dane County, organizations that facilitate this lack the resources and staffing to adequately meet their needs, highlighting the need for improved support systems for justice-involved youth.

Several environmental, social, and political factors influence justice-involved youth and contribute to increased rates of recidivism, with mental health and trauma being one of the largest factors. Moreover, conflict, neglect, and strained family relationships have been associated with an increased risk of committing an offense (Aazami et al., 2023). Thus, it is imperative that youth have the opportunity to form trusting relationships with adults who can support and guide them. However, failure to acknowledge and empower youth voices has caused justice-involved youth to distrust adults and the justice system. This is especially true for BIPOC youth, who have also experienced institutionalized racism.

In light of this, we propose the establishment of a Fitchburg Teen Center to meet the needs of justice-involved youth and their communities. By implementing restorative justice practices and a diverse group of culturally responsive staff, the teen center will serve as a safe, inclusive space for youth to build meaningful interpersonal relationships and reestablish trust within their communities and the justice system. Restorative justice and community-based interventions have been shown to reduce rates of offense and recidivism (Latimer et al., 2005; Aazami et al., 2023). It will also improve the physical, psychological, and social well-being of justice-involved youth by increasing access to resources, such as trauma-informed mental health services, leadership opportunities, and professional development programs, that support positive development and youth empowerment. This is crucial for dismantling racial disparities in the justice system and intergenerational cycles of incarceration, as they provide justice-involved youth the skills and opportunities they need to achieve their future goals.

Data Highlights

Racial Disparities in the Juvenile Justice System

- The percentage of Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) youth in the Dane County juvenile population increased by 16.8% between 2007 and 2021, whereas the

percentage of White Non-Hispanic youth decreased by 25.8% (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2022).

- Rates of arrest and recidivism are higher for Black individuals and males, and Black youth detention rates in Wisconsin are 50% higher than the national average (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2022).

Mental Health and Environment

- In 2016, 76% of youth in Wisconsin juvenile correction facilities received mental health services (Wisconsin Office of Children’s Mental Health, 2017).
- There is a correlation between depression and increased likelihood to exhibit violent behavior and commit crimes (Wisconsin Office of Children’s Mental Health, 2017).
- Youth with more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), such as having an incarcerated family member, are more likely to commit crimes.

Stakeholder Interview & Public Workshop Summary

- Justice-involved youth benefit greatly from the two-way communication and cultural awareness that restorative justice practices offer.
- Financial and physical barriers limit the ability of schools and youth-centered organizations to meet the specific needs of youth and support their long-term goals.

During the two community workshops and two high school workshops, community members and youth emphasized several key points on how the Fitchburg Teen Center can support the well-being of youth, including:

- Offering mental, career, and academic support, which can be difficult for some youth to access.
- “Creating a space where youth see their life, culture, and identity reflected and honored” (Community Member).
- Offering youth leadership opportunities, such as a youth involvement group or youth board of directors for the teen center.

Report

Target Audience

The target audience is justice-involved youth between the ages of 12-18 years old in Dane County, with an emphasis on youth near the Fitchburg area. We also recognize the racial disparities in arrests, detention, and recidivism in Wisconsin, so we seek to provide additional support to BIPOC youth involved in the justice system.

Current Support Systems

Several organizations in Dane County provide crucial support for justice-involved youth. Key players include the Dane County Youth Justice System, the YWCA, and Briarpatch Youth Services, which together offer a range of programs aimed at addressing various needs:

Restorative Justice Programs: These programs, operated by organizations like the YWCA and the Department of Corrections, involve both voluntary and court-ordered

participation. They focus on engaging youth in meaningful dialogue with peers and adults to address and rectify offenses constructively, rather than simply imposing fines.

Briarpatch Youth Services: Briarpatch serves around 2,000 youth annually through nine different programs, including Youth Restitution and Street Outreach. The organization functions as a connector, helping youth access additional resources like mental health counseling. They offer a voluntary shelter for homeless youth aged 12-17 for up to 28 days and engage in community outreach to support youth in crisis.

Stakeholder Insights

Jay Kiefer, Program Director at Briarpatch Youth Services, highlights the significant role of Briarpatch in providing a “warm hand-off” to other services, though they lack direct mental health counseling services. Briarpatch faces challenges such as limited funding and space, impacting its ability to offer comprehensive support and maintain safe, supervised environments. Additionally, transportation issues have increased risks for unsupervised youth.

Ciarra Grobe, Restorative Justice Coordinator at West High School, and other program directors stress the need for restorative justice practices that promote two-way communication between justice-involved youth and their communities. They emphasize the importance of culturally responsive mentoring and providing structured, consistent support to build trust and address mistrust from past negative experiences with adults and the justice system.

Environmental Factors and Interventions Influencing Justice-Involved Youth

Traditional interventions like fines and jail time often fail to address the underlying issues faced by justice-involved youth. While these methods may achieve short-term compliance, they frequently exacerbate deeper problems. For example, fines can burden families financially, worsening existing socioeconomic disparities. Jail time can isolate youth from their education and support systems, increasing the likelihood of reoffending and perpetuating a cycle of criminality.

Restorative Justice (RJ) practice offers a more effective approach by focusing on repairing the harm caused by offenses rather than simply punishing the offender. Here’s why RJ tends to be more successful:

Addresses Root Causes: RJ aims to understand and tackle the underlying issues that led to the offense, such as trauma or lack of support. This comprehensive approach allows for targeted interventions that address these root causes and can help prevent future offenses.

Promotes Accountability and Understanding: Instead of imposing a one-size-fits-all punishment, RJ involves the youth in discussions with victims and community members. This process helps the youth understand the impact of their actions, fostering genuine accountability. By actively participating in making amends, they are more likely to experience meaningful behavior change.

Builds Community Connections: RJ facilitates dialogue between the offender, the victim, and the community, helping to rebuild trust and relationships. This engagement creates a support network to aid the youth in their rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.

Focuses on Healing: The primary goal of RJ is to heal the harm caused by the offense. Victims have the opportunity to express how they were affected, and offenders are given a chance to make amends and repair relationships. This focus on healing benefits both parties and promotes positive movement forward.

Reduces Recidivism: Research shows that RJ practices can lead to lower recidivism rates. By addressing root causes and providing support rather than just punishment, RJ helps break the cycle of offending. Youth involved in RJ programs are less likely to re-offend compared to those who face only traditional punitive measures.

Public Workshop Responses

Our first public workshop took place at Verona High School, where we set up a poster board gallery walk to gather feedback from students. Here's what we learned about their needs and the current gaps in support:

Safe Spaces: Students want a space where they feel secure and can express themselves freely. They specifically mentioned the need for areas where they can relax and de-stress, away from the pressures of school and home life.

Mental Health Support: Many students expressed a strong need for mental health resources. They're looking for counseling services, stress management workshops, and activities like art therapy and journaling sessions. One student mentioned how they struggle with anxiety and would benefit from regular counseling and coping strategies.

Career and Academic Support: Students are eager for resources to help with their future plans. They suggested workshops on resume building, college applications, job interviews, and financial literacy. For instance, a student looking to apply for college scholarships emphasized the need for guidance on writing compelling essays.

Community Building: They want more opportunities to connect with their peers. Suggestions included having spaces for group activities, social events, and community service projects. A student highlighted the value of having a dedicated area for collaborative projects and team-building exercises.

We also had two more public workshops for community members, in which we described the research and development process of the Fitchburg Teen Center. In one of the workshops, we asked two questions about promoting “trust, acceptance, and hope for justice-involved youth” and establishing a space of non judgment at the teen center. Community members shared similar responses of “promoting diversity” and providing youth leadership opportunities at the teen center to “cultivate ownership.”

Recommendations

Given our findings, we believe the Fitchburg Teen Center represents a vital opportunity to address the pressing needs of justice-involved youth in Dane County, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds. By providing a safe, supportive, and culturally responsive space, we can foster trust, promote healing, and empower youth to break free from the cycles of incarceration and recidivism. The Teen Center's focus on restorative justice, youth leadership, and holistic support services will ensure that these young individuals are not only diverted from the justice system but also given the tools to thrive academically, socially, and professionally.

As mentioned before, restorative justice and other community-based interventions have been shown to reduce the likelihood of re-offense and improve their long-term wellbeing. In light of this, it is crucial to establish the Teen Center to increase the accessibility of these services and ensure that all youth have the opportunity to utilize them. Moreover, because the Teen Center will primarily serve youth, the services that it offers can be tailored to support the specific needs of the individual, which can be difficult to achieve in schools. This makes the Teen Center a unique provider for justice-involved youth, who may require additional assistance and mentoring.

Investing in this center is an investment in the future of Fitchburg, creating safer neighborhoods, reducing racial disparities, and building a generation of empowered, resilient leaders. The positive impact on our youth will ripple out into the community, improving educational outcomes, decreasing crime, and strengthening trust between youth and adults. By supporting the development of the Fitchburg Teen Center, we are ensuring that no youth is left behind and that every young person, regardless of their past, has the opportunity to realize their full potential. Overall, this is a long-term solution that benefits both the individual and the community, laying the foundation for a brighter, more equitable future.

JUSTICE-INVOLVED YOUTH IN DANE COUNTY THEORY OF CHANGE MODEL

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

Reduction in Recidivism

- Decreased youth return rates to corrections due to consistent, engaging, and supportive programming.

Improved Educational, Employment, and Leadership Outcomes

- Youth involved in decision-making and leadership roles will feel more connected to their community, fostering a sense of agency and responsibility.
- Youth gain skills that support them academically, financially, professionally, and socially.

Improved Support Systems

- Current support systems gain additional staffing, resources, and physical space for programming at the teen center.
- Support systems have increased capacity to support youth and are more accessible.

Community Growth

- Build bridges between youth, adults, and law enforcement through restorative practices, leading to stronger community bonds and healthier interpersonal relationships.
- Youth contribute to the positive development of their community through community service.

Enhanced Well-Being for BIPOC Youth

- Racial disparities in justice involvement are reduced because BIPOC youth have equitable access to resources that cater to the unique challenges they face.
- Youth gain trauma-informed mental health support and develop strong, meaningful relationships with their mentors and peers.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration

- Break the intergenerational cycle of incarceration by providing youth with the tools, support, and opportunities to succeed beyond the justice system.
- By addressing root causes of youth crime and providing alternatives to incarceration, the center will contribute to a safer, more connected Fitchburg community.

Racial Equity and Reduced Stigma

- Reduction of inequity and overrepresentation of BIPOC youth in the juvenile justice system.
- Feelings of shame and embarrassment toward restorative justice and accessing resources are reduced, increasing inclination to seek help from support systems.

GOAL

Justice-involved youth receive the structure, support, and opportunities for development that they need to heal and be successful in the future in a culturally-responsive, safe, and nonjudgmental space.

JUSTICE-INVOLVED YOUTH IN DANE COUNTY THEORY OF CHANGE MODEL

CONTEXT

Fitchburg is facing increasing rates of recidivism among justice-involved youth, or individuals under the age of 18 years old. Although Fitchburg has a smaller population in comparison to other cities in Dane County, it had the **third highest youth detainee count** in 2023 with 14 detainees (Dane County Juvenile Report, 2023). Moreover, a disproportionate percent of justice-involved youth identify as **Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)**. Furthermore, existing resources for youth **lack the necessary funding, staffing, and resources** to meet their needs.

ISSUE

High Recidivism Rates

- For Wisconsin youth released in 2011, 63% returned to corrections within three years. Nationally, nearly half of incarcerated youth return within that same time frame.

Racial Disparities

- The percentage of BIPOC youth in the juvenile population increased by 16.8% between 2007 and 2021, while White youth declined by 25.8%. Black youth are detained at rates 50% higher than the national average.

Distrust and Lack of Control

- Many justice-involved youth feel powerless due to repeated failures by adults and institutions, leading to a deep distrust in the justice system, particularly law enforcement. For youth of color, this mistrust is rooted in centuries of systemic racism.

STRATEGIES

*Proposed solution: Create a **Fitchburg Teen Center** that can serve as a safe, inclusive space for youth, including those involved with the justice system.*

Restorative Justice

- Utilize restorative justice practices, such as circles, to establish two-way communication between youth and their community, promoting trust and empathy.

Culturally-Responsive and Trauma-Informed Support

- Offer youth support and mentorship from culturally-responsive, empathetic staff that reflect diverse identities and have training in restorative practices and trauma-informed support.

Youth Leadership and Advocacy

- Return power to youth voice by offering leadership opportunities that enable them to support decision-making, such as a youth leadership board or involvement group

Opportunities for Personal and Professional Development

- Partner with external service providers, like Briarpatch Youth Services, to connect youth to career development, mental health, and academic support services.
- Offer community service opportunities and recreational activities to promote social growth.

References

Aazami, A., Valek, R., Ponce, A. N., Zare, H. (2023). Risk and Protective Factors and Interventions for Reducing Juvenile Delinquency: A Systematic Review. *Social Sciences*, 12(9), 474.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12090474>

Bergseth, K. J., & Bouffard, J. A. (2013). Examining the Effectiveness of a Restorative Justice

Program for Various Types of Juvenile Offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 57(9), 1054-1075. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X12453551>

Dane County Juvenile Court Program. (2022). *Dane county juvenile court annual report 2022*. <https://juvenilecourt.danecounty.gov/documents/pdf/reports/2022-ANNUAL-REPORT.pdf>

Earle, M., Robinson, M., & Nelson, E. (2018). *The Complex Maze of the Juvenile Justice System in Wisconsin and Its Impact on Youth of Color*. Kids Forward. <https://kidsforward.org/assets/The-Complex-Maze-of-the-Juvenile-Justice-System.pdf>

Latimer, J., Dowden, C., & Muise, D. (2005). The Effectiveness of Restorative Justice Practices: A Meta-Analysis. *The Prison Journal*, 85(2), 127-144. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885505276969>

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Wisconsin Department of Justice, & Dane County Department of Human Services. (2022). *Juvenile Population, Offenses, Arrests, Youth Justice Referrals, and Recidivism in Dane County 2007-2021*. <https://danecountyhumanservices.org/documents/pdf/Youth-Justice/Juvenile-Pop--Arrest--LE-Referral---Petition-Analysis-2007-2021---2022.05.20.pdf>

Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health. (2017). *2017 Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health Annual Report*. <https://children.wi.gov/Documents/2017OCMHAnnualReport.pdf>

Research Summary

FTC Fellows

Main Focuses of Our Research

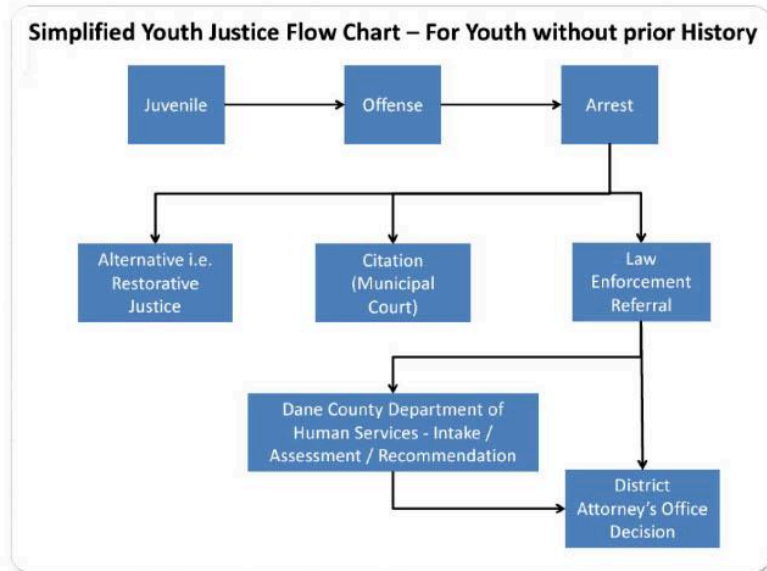
Our research is on justice-involved youth and rates of recidivism (reoffense) in Dane County. Along with conducting online research, we have spoken to stakeholders of the Teen Center, such as Restorative Justice Coordinators at local high schools and youth at the Juvenile Detention Center.

Some of our main focuses include:

- Juvenile arrest and recidivism
- Policies and environmental factors that influence justice-involved youth
- Strengths and weaknesses of current support systems
- Role of the Teen Center in supporting justice-involved youth

Basic Process of the Youth Justice System

Figure from “Juvenile Population, Offenses, Arrests, Youth Justice Referrals, and Recidivism in Dane County 2007-2021” by the Office of Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Wisconsin Department of Justice, and Dane County Department of Human Services.



Juvenile Arrest and Recidivism

Recidivism is high among youth (<18). For Wisconsin youth released in 2011

- 36% returned to corrections (first year)
- 45% returned to corrections (second year)
- 63% returned to corrections (third year)
- Nationally, almost half of incarcerated youth return within three years.
 - For young adults 18 to 29, 20% return in one year, and 40% return after three years

Fitchburg: 14; Third highest detainee count after Madison & Sun Prairie (Noteable bigger cities)

Dane county juvenile report:

<https://juvenilecourt.danecounty.gov/documents/pdf/reports/2022-ANNUAL-REPORT.pdf>

Residence: Dane County	Male	Female	Total
Belleville	3	0	3
Collage Grove	2	2	4
Deerfield	3	0	3
DeForest	3	0	3
Fitchburg	8	6	14
Madison	152	68	220
McFarland	1	1	2

15

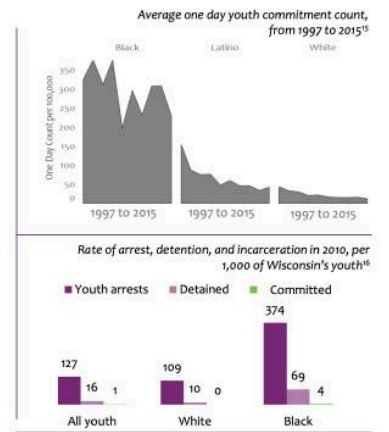
Middleton	6	4	10
Morrisonville	1	1	2
Mount Horeb	5	1	6
Oregon	5	1	6
Sauk City	1	0	1
Stoughton	10	0	10
Sun Prairie	20	8	28
Verona	2	1	3
Waunakee	1	0	1

Disproportionate Juvenile Arrest

Youth incarceration, or the commitment of juveniles found guilty of a crime to state facilities, has seen notable trends in Wisconsin over the years. Understanding these trends is crucial for addressing issues of equity, rehabilitation, and effective justice system interventions for young offenders.

Gender/Racial Makeup of Dane County Arrest:

- In 2016, state facilities housed 178 youth in Lincoln Hills (males) and Copper Lake (females) Schools.
- These facilities had 166 new commitments in 2016.
- The racial makeup of commitments to Division of Juvenile Correction facilities shows that more youth of color are arrested than white youth.
- Detention rates have decreased for all races and ethnicities, with Hispanic and white youth experiencing the greatest decrease.
- However, Wisconsin's detention rates remain racially disproportionate, with black youth being detained at a rate 50% higher than the national average and 19 times more often than white youth.



Trends influencing increase in Justice-involved youth

Intersection of Trauma, Mental Health, and Youth Justice

- **Trauma:**
 - High Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) linked to youth offending
 - 80% of violent youth offenders had an incarcerated household member
 - Early exposure to toxic stress impacts executive functioning
- **Mental Health:**
 - Youth with depression more likely to display violent behavior
 - Two-thirds of youth in WI juvenile correction facilities had prior mental health service use
 - 76% received mental health services in 2016 (e.g., dialectical behavior therapy, cognitive behavioral treatment).

Environmental Factors Influencing Justice-Involved Youth

- In terms of Fitchburg and surrounding locations, there are limited spaces designed for youth, and some spaces may be unsafe for youth.
 - **Community and Relationships:**
 - Many youth across Dane County don't feel a strong sense of community, especially at school. This may impact their social life and relationships, which can increase their risk of committing an offense.
 - Conflict, neglect, and strained family relationships are associated with an increased risk of committing an offense (Aazami et al., 2023).
 - Distrust toward adults and stigma around the justice system and restorative justice practices can discourage youth from seeking support.
 - Youth need to be able to form strong, trusting relationships with adults, as this can help them find consistency, structure, and support in their lives.
-

Policies Influencing Justice-Involved Youth

- Chapter 938 in Wisconsin Legislature focuses on youth justice.
 - *“Adult’ means a person who is 18 years of age or older, except that for purposes of investigating or prosecuting a person who is alleged to have violated any state or federal criminal law or any civil law or municipal ordinance, ‘adult’ means a person who has attained 17 years of age,”* (Wisconsin Legislature, 938.02, line 1).
 - Essentially, 17-year-olds are considered as adults under civil, criminal, and local law.
 - **2nd Chance Bill (AB 378, 2015)**
 - Would enable 17-year-olds who have committed their first nonviolent offense to be sent to the juvenile justice system rather than adult justice system.
 - Wasn't passed in Wisconsin in 2015, but studies have indicated that it is effective at reducing recidivism.
-

Current Support Systems

- The Dane County Youth Justice System and YWCA offer restorative justice programs as an alternative to traditional citations/referrals.
 - There are several organizations that provide mental health and counseling services to youth, including Journey Mental Health and Anesis Therapy.
 - Other organizations that provide more general support to youth include Briarpatch Youth Services and the Commonwealth Youth programs.
 - Briarpatch has 9 different programs, including Youth Restitution and Restorative Justice, where youth can participate in restorative justice practices and engagement activities.
 - Some high schools have Restorative Justice (RJ) Coordinators that connect students to restorative justice programs and facilitate restorative justice circles.
 - We spoke to the RJ coordinators at Madison West High School and Verona Area High School.
-

How the Teen Center Can Support Justice-Involved Youth

- **Programming and Interventions:**
 - A teen center provides much-needed programming to youth, such as mental health education, community service, and restorative justice circles.
 - Having community-based and family-based interventions can reduce the risk of offense/reoffense (Aazami et al., 2023).
 - Restorative justice practices have been shown to be more effective at reducing the risk of recidivism than traditional methods (Latimer et al., 2005).
 - It can connect justice-involved youth to mentors that can provide guidance and support.
-

How the Teen Center Can Support Justice-Involved Youth

- **Socialization:**
 - It serves as a place for socialization, which is an important aspect of positive youth development.
 - Justice-involved youth benefit more from participating in social activities (Aazami et al., 2023).
 - **Leadership:**
 - Having leadership opportunities can return the power to youth voice and give justice-involved youth a sense of control over their situation, which is crucial in promoting trust and openness.
 - A youth leadership council for the teen center would allow youth to help facilitate and improve the teen center.
-

How the Teen Center Can Support Justice-Involved Youth

Safe Space:

- It serves as a safe space for teens to go after school and receive support. It's important we have equipped staff who can connect with the teens on a more personal level, staff that will be long term and culturally aware.
 - Faculty that can relate to their struggles and can empathize with the things they struggle with beyond the surface.

Career and personal development:

- Exposure to new things for teens to figure out what they are passionate about regardless of their socioeconomic status.
 - Learning hard and soft skills that will equip them for the future
 - Pick up where schools lack in supporting students outside of the classroom. (Mentally, Academically, Professionally, Financially etc.)
-

References

- Aazami, A., Valek, R., Ponce, A. N., Zare, H. (2023). Risk and Protective Factors and Interventions for Reducing Juvenile Delinquency: A Systematic Review. *Social Sciences*, 12(9), 474. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12090474>
- Bergseth, K. J., & Bouffard, J. A. (2013). Examining the Effectiveness of a Restorative Justice Program for Various Types of Juvenile Offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 57(9), 1054-1075. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X12453551>
- Dane County Juvenile Court Program. (2022). *Dane county juvenile court annual report 2022*. <https://juvenilecourt.danecounty.gov/documents/pdf/reports/2022-ANNUAL-REPORT.pdf>
- Earle, M., Robinson, M., & Nelson, E. (2018). *The Complex Maze of the Juvenile Justice System in Wisconsin and Its Impact on Youth of Color*. Kids Forward. <https://kidsforward.org/assets/The-Complex-Maze-of-the-Juvenile-Justice-System.pdf>
- Latimer, J., Dowden, C., & Muise, D. (2005). The Effectiveness of Restorative Justice Practices: A Meta-Analysis. *The Prison Journal*, 85(2), 127-144. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885505276969>
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Wisconsin Department of Justice, & Dane County Department of Human Services. (2022). *Juvenile Population, Offenses, Arrests, Youth Justice Referrals, and Recidivism in Dane County 2007-2021*. <https://danecountyhumanservices.org/documents/pdf/Youth-Justice/Juvenile-Pop--Arrest--LE-Referral---Petition-Analysis-2007-2021---2022.05.20.pdf>
-

APPENDIX C - COUNCIL OF THE WHOLE VERBAL STATEMENTS - NOVEMBER 20, 2024

This fall, I entered my first year of college at UW-Madison, intended to study political science and legal studies. I hope to become a lawyer and one day open my own law firm here in Fitchburg to help not only my community but underrepresented people. Coming from a low-income household, money was always a barrier and as we know, there are few things in life that are free. My only recreational opportunities growing up were the park and free programs that Fitchburg offered - which wasn't consistent and limiting. This internship holds so much to me and my younger self, who had to push herself to get what I have now. But I know that the teen center could help thousands of other young people that are in similar situations or don't have access to recreational things outside of school. Not only that, as a first generation student attending college it can feel really scary. But with the teen center, it could help younger people feel prepared, have a safe space with other peers who have been in their shoes. I lacked a sense of support as a young teen, but through this teen center, it can help children feel seen, feel known, and feel supported.

- *Sandy Florez Ruiz, West High School (2024), UW-Madison, Phase Two Teen Intern*

Around March last year, I was pulled into this project after it visited our school's equity symposium to gather our feedback - and that's really part of what makes this project unique. Its development has been based on the input of young adults from all around the county. It takes our ideas seriously. This project gave us something that, to me, is priceless- the chance to leverage our voices. So we did! The programs we have right now, that I know a lot of people have compared to the teen center, are great. But those services are almost exclusively enrichment programs - and we aren't looking for enrichment programs like the ones the Y, or the boys and girls club, or the schools provide. We're looking for a space. A teen development space where we can exercise the kind of independence and responsibility that will bring us success in college and life. To me, it's a space for self improvement. To others, it may be a space to unwind, a space to socialize, a space to seek opportunities.

- *Joe Beal, West High School, Phase Two Teen Intern*

The past few years have been a complete roller coaster, filled with both amazing and yet difficult moments. Having a safe, welcoming place where I can feel accepted, understood, and free from pressure would have made a huge difference in my life, and it could do the same for countless other high schoolers. Such a space not only provides security but also access to vital resources-things teens need but may be too afraid to ask for or unable to obtain. These resources, whether health materials or mental health support, have the potential to significantly improve the lives of teens. It would be incredible to have a place that offers these services. Currently, in Fitchburg and Madison, there is no such space dedicated to working closely with teens to improve their well-being. This project is different-it is aimed directly at teens, a group often overlooked, and it finally offers them the respect, opportunities, and understanding they deserve.

- *Simone Weinhold, West High School, Phase Two Teen Intern*

This project is really important because I've noticed that in the past couple of years, there has been a rise in teen gun violence, pregnancy, drug use and lots of other things. I feel like teenagers don't have a safe place to go to that's not home, and maybe for some even home isn't safe. This center would be not only great for teens but great for parents who worry about their teens not having anything to do after school or any place to go when they need help from someone who isn't family. A fun connection is that last year I participated in a program called YPCL, a camp that runs for 2 days and focuses on leadership and community. And within this camp each group that came was supposed to come up with an action plan that they would work on that would benefit their community. I myself said that I wanted to open a teen community center in the future to help teens off the streets doing things they aren't supposed to be doing, and now here I am doing exactly that. I really appreciated the opportunity to work with all the amazing people on this team.

- *Semaje Gooch, Edgewood High School, Phase Two Teen Intern*

I go to Verona Area High School, but I was in 8th grade when I joined the internship. While in this program, I learned that teen voices can make a difference in the community. For example, even in Phase One, teens in the community were very clear about what they wanted for the teen center. But without this research project, if adults went and built a teen center without asking teens what they wanted, it wouldn't be used like it is supposed to be and teens wouldn't come. I think this teen center is important because it gives teens a place to hang out without spending money. It can also be a place to go when their parents aren't home and they need a safe place to go. Or, if someone is having problems at home, it can be a good place to talk to people about what's going on and get resources. Or, if you just need to have a space to relax and recharge, it can also be used for that.

- *Kaleyah Ashford, Verona Area High School, Phase Two Teen Intern*

I'm a freshman at Verona Area High School. I think that areas for teens are lacking, especially in Fitchburg. Specifically, there are few spaces we have for teens and they are lacking resources essential for teen development. The Teen Center in Fitchburg would be an important space where teens can learn, maintain, grow, and organize. The Teen Center would be essential for providing gaps in care for youth mental health. The Teen Center overall is a place for teens to be safe while parents are working, to be around safe people during and outside of school, and to have access to important resources in order to thrive.

- *Jahir Duran Nunez, Verona Area High School, Phase Two Teen Intern*

I am a senior at Verona in high school, and I entered this project my freshman year. I'm lucky to have been able to essentially grow up with this project and watch it develop. Now that I'm nearing the end of my high school journey, I can look back on years past and reflect on everything I wish my peers and I could've used to be healthier, happier versions of ourselves. While some are able to thrive in school and take advantage of its resources, others continuously struggle to feel included, supported, or safe. I attribute this to the fact that at the end of the day, school is a place where a lot of our autonomy and independence is taken away, and put in the hands of people who don't remember what it's like to be our age. The teen center is so important and unique in its approach to supporting our youth because it has truly considered and acted on what teens actually want and need. What we need is to be able to support and

take care of each other, what we need is to feel trusted to manage our own spaces, what we need is a space without pressure to conform to the standards of adults. If teens remain at the heart of this project, and if adults continue to listen to us, rather than overpower us, I believe those needs can be met and that our youth will be stronger because of it.

- *Neveah Grimmer, Verona Area High School, Phase One and Phase Two Teen Intern*

I'm a sophomore majoring in Neurobiology and Psychology at UW-Madison. I was a youth intern for Phase 1 of the Fitchburg Teen Center project in high school, and the incredible work being done to support youth and the community led me to return as a research fellow. The Teen Center is crucial for the well-being of young people in this community, as it can provide them with the support and resources they need to thrive. This is especially important for justice-involved youth, who are more likely to experience mental health issues and show distrust toward the community. Traditional interventions for these youth are ineffective at acknowledging the deeper issues while holding them accountable. However, restorative justice, mental health, and professional development services can address these issues and contribute to their healing. Unfortunately, the accessibility and personalization of these services are limited due to a lack of funding and resources for organizations that offer them, which is why the Fitchburg Teen Center is so important. It can provide justice-involved youth with culturally responsive, individualized, and trauma-informed support, which will improve their well-being and give them the skills they need to achieve long-term success.

- *Ojaswi Pasachhe, UW-Madison, Phase One Teen Intern, Phase Two UW Research Fellow*

I go to UW-Madison, and I am currently a Junior majoring in Legal Studies and Public Relations with a certificate in Educational Policy. I joined this project during phase one in my senior year of high school, and I've stuck with it because I wholeheartedly believe in this initiative and understand the urgent need for it. This teen center will directly impact so many youth, especially those I see myself in. Just a few years ago, I was one of those teens, navigating life with limited resources and support. The more I grow, experience, and reflect on my upbringing, the more I realize how much of a positive difference a space like this would've made for me. In addition to our core work on youth engagement, we've spent time researching justice-involved youth—those who have had run-ins with the juvenile justice system. This research really opened my eyes to the challenges they face and how limited the options are for them to break the cycle once they're in the system. The current system too often focuses on punishment rather than providing the support needed to help these kids turn their lives around. This teen center has the potential to fill that gap. It can provide mentorship, resources, and a positive environment that steers youth away from trouble, offering them an alternative to the streets and helping them avoid the path that leads so many into juvenile detention. This project is special because it's not just another top-down decision. It gave me and all the other interns a real chance to feel heard, seen, and valued. We're not just involved; we're part of the decision-making process. So many decisions get made for teens without them at the table, but this center is different. It's about reclaiming that power—giving teens a chance to shape something that will help them grow, find community, and truly be uplifted. I'm proud to be part of a project that is doing something tangible to empower young people.

- *Awa Phatty, UW-Madison, Phase One Teen Intern, Phase Two UW Research Fellow*

APPENDIX D - ENVISIONING A THIRD SPACE

When envisioning the Teen Center, it is important to center the project on the essential need for a “Third Space” for youth. Sociologist Ray Oldenburg explained that Third Spaces are crucial for creating a sense of community and belonging, outside the pressures of the first two spaces (home and school). Teens are often faced with many pressures and obstacles, whether at home or in a school setting.

A third space, like the teen center, is where they can show up as their authentic selves, leaving behind the burdens they face. These spaces are critical to fostering connection and belonging, which are essential for both the physical and mental health of youth. Without a dedicated third space, teens are left vulnerable to isolation and engagement, which is not ideal as this is also a particularly vulnerable-while-important moment of their growth and development! Teens, like adults, need a third space to figure things out. Unfortunately, what happens for teens is that they end up in the “void of in-between,” too old to be part of those supportive spaces for “when they are young” and not old enough with the “choice of space and place” as an adult. So, that leaves teens and the adults in their lives being caught up and part of this uncomfortable void.

It is also important to note that Teens make up 22% of the Fitchburg population, yet the city lacks a dedicated space for them to grow and thrive. While seniors have resources and spaces specifically tailored to their needs while making up only 12% of the population, teens are left to slip through the cracks when it comes to a third space. While many look to other youth programming services and argue that this is a “duplicate service,” it is imperative to understand that these services are not catered specifically to teens and do not have the services to address this specific age group. Teens, like older adults, need a unique and flexible environment to grow, outside the structured environment of school and the often-inaccessible afterschool sports and recreational programs. They need a center that is adaptable and flexible, that supports self-expression and personal growth and equips them with the confidence and support to navigate the world around them. While also in this case being strategic about how they bridge and connect to programming that is in the vicinity to address important needs like workforce, sports, and education.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Welcome



**FITCHBURG COMMON COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 20, 2024**

Opening Remarks

Project Team



**Deanna Schmidt
Brad Sippel**



**Annette Miller
Mathias Lemos Castillo
Naman Siad**



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DANE COUNTY

**Joe Maldonado
Taylor Seale**

Phase 2 Teen Interns
**Kaleyah, Jahir,
Neveah, Semaje
Sandy, Simone, Joe**

UW Fellows
Awa, Ojaswi



**Rafeeq Asad
Abby Hultman
Imani Haupt**



**Carrie Sanders
Kristeen Reynolds**

Agenda & Objectives

Phase One Recap

Phase Two Overview + Breakdown

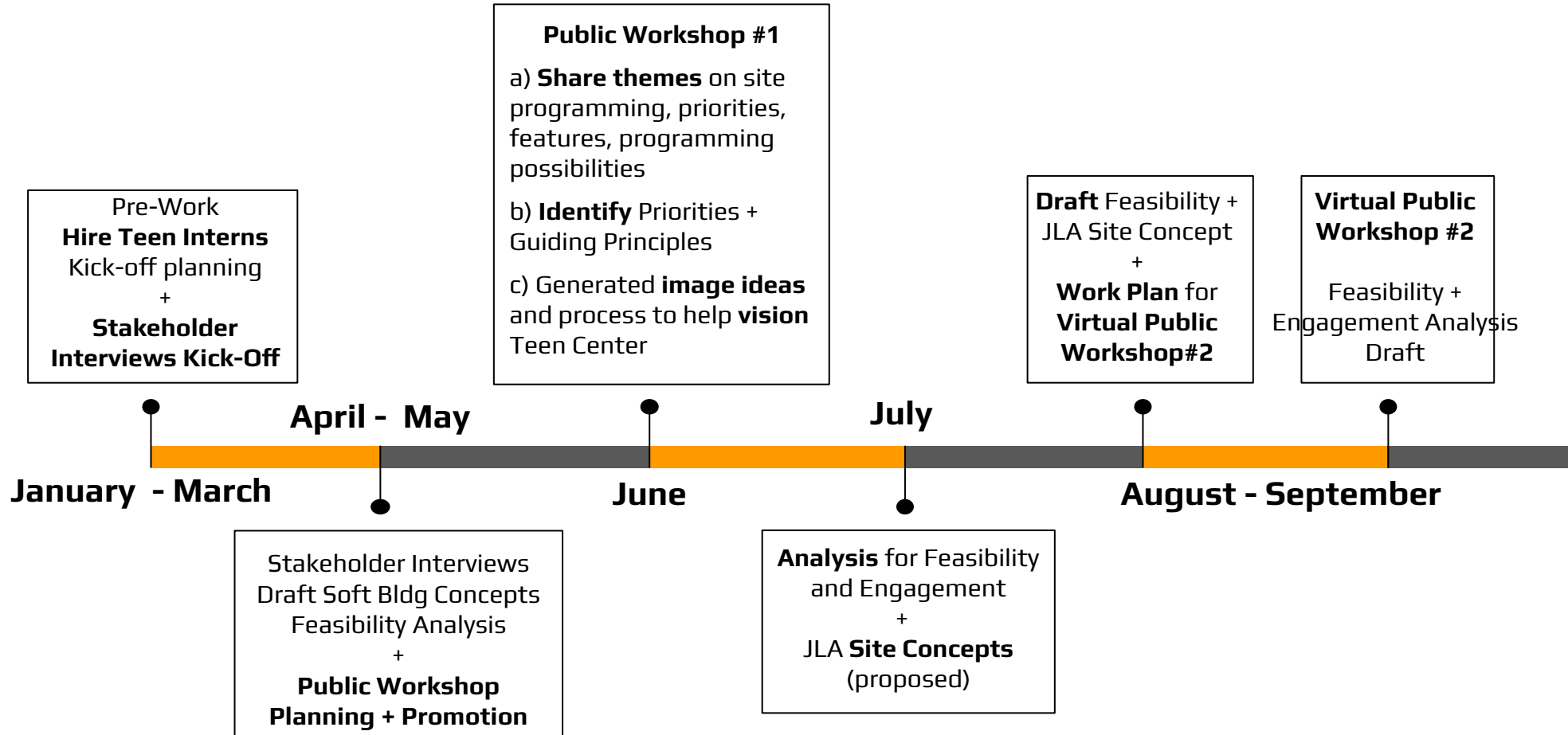
JLA Architects

Hope Community Capital

Next Steps

Questions, Discussion

Phase 2 Timeline (2024)

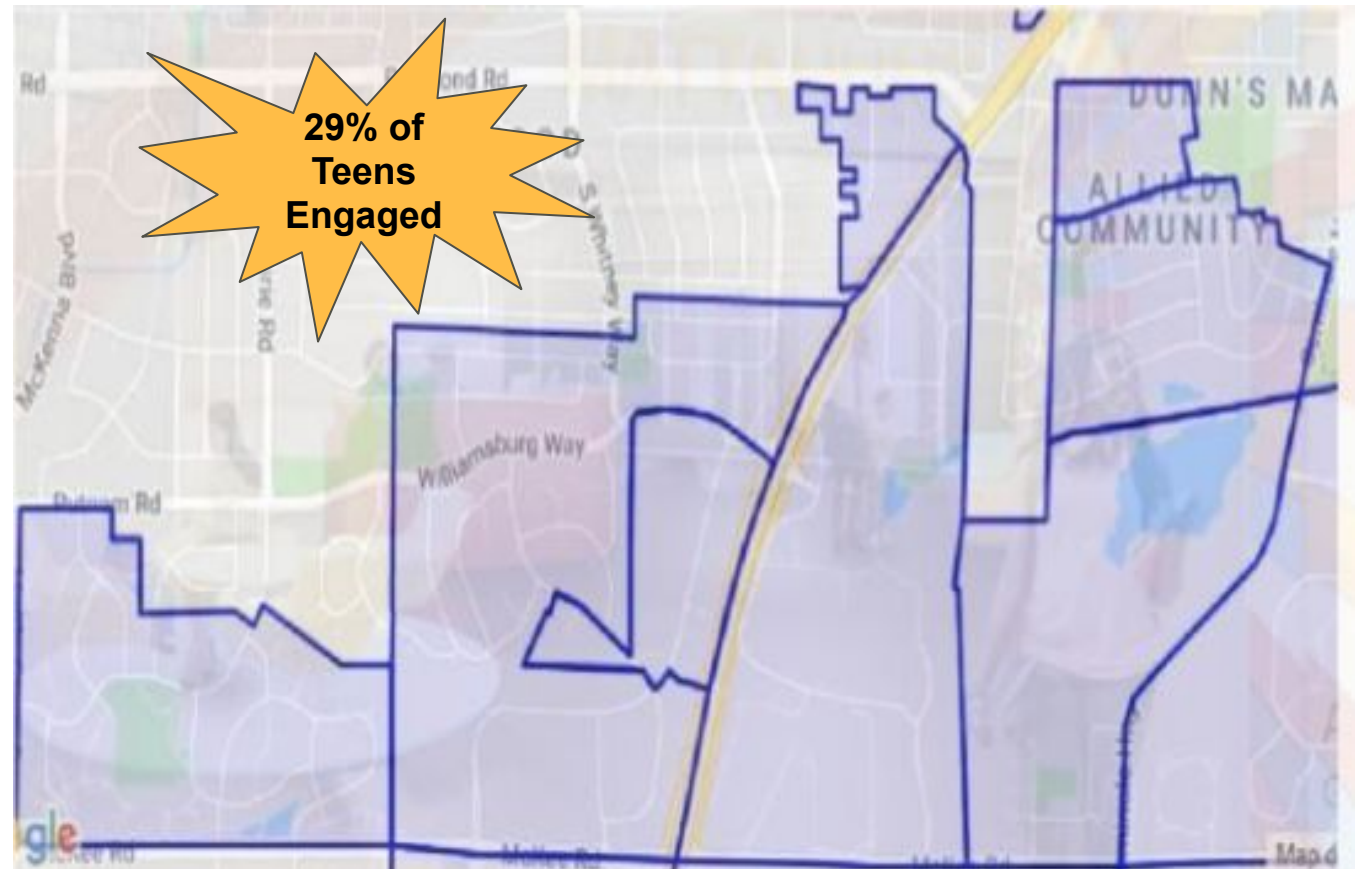
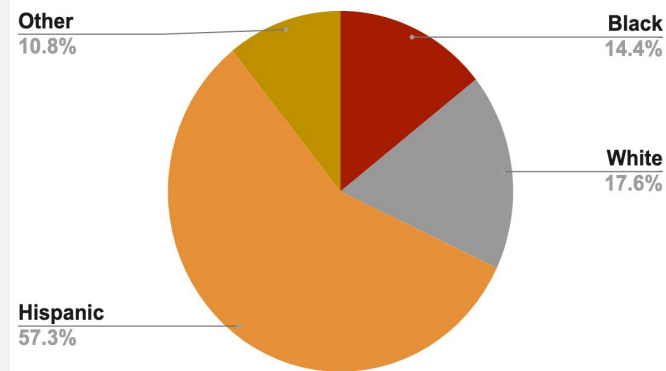


Phase 2 - Key Demographics

Teens, Fitchburg & Verona Areas

- ❑ 641 Teens live in this area between the ages of 13 and 20
- ❑ 58% of students meet economic eligible criteria (<185% Fed Pov Level)
- ❑ Financial accessibility to the space is key

Demographic Breakdown



Phase 1 - Engagement Data

TEEN CENTER FOCUS AREAS - Community Identified

Adults

Health, Mental Health

Recreation and Sports

Youth Leadership,
Youth Development

LGBTQ+ & BIPOC Teens

Diversity

Social and Mental Health

Teens

Chill Out Space

Social and Mental
Health

Recreation and Sports

LGBTQ+ & BIPOC Adults

Art, Music

Theatre, Dance





Phase 2 - Feasibility Study

Overview

Continuation of Teen Leadership, Justice-Involved Youth

Identify Strategic Goals and Purpose

Learning from Key Stakeholders

Approximate Range for Considerations for Operations + Capital

Optimal Space Uses

Stakeholder Interviews

The slide features a white background with a light gray border. The text "Stakeholder Interviews" is centered in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. In the bottom right corner, there is a large orange triangle pointing towards the center, and a gray shadow effect on the right side of the slide.

Phase 2 - Interviews

Stakeholder Interviews

Teen Interns

West High School

Verona High School

**Dear Diary, Inc.
Fitchburg Sol Youth Group
Journey Mental Health
YWCA of Madison**

*3 in-person engagements
1 virtual engagement
101 teens reached
12 adults reached*

UW Fellows

Briarpatch Youth Services

**Department of Human Services
(Dane), Children Youth &
Families Division**

Juvenile Detention Center (Dane)

West, Verona High School

*3 in-person engagements
1 virtual engagement
10 teens reached
5 adults reached*

EQT By Design, Hope Community Capital

City of Fitchburg Staff

**Neighborhoods
Friends of the Teen Center
Local Businesses**

**Centro Hispano
Goodman Center
Boys & Girls Club
Lussier Center
WI Youth Company**

Madison + Verona Superintendents

25 adults, organizations reached

Phase 2 - Interviews

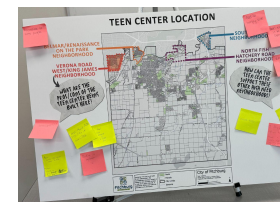
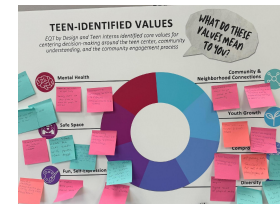
Stakeholder Interviews - Teen Interns

Interns Overview

7 Teen Interns

Sandy, Joe, Simone, Kaleyah, Semaje, Jahir, Neveah (Phase 1)

Badger Ridge Middle, Savanna Oaks Middle, Edgewood High, West High, Verona High, UW



Teen Stakeholder Priorities, Themes

building on Phase 1 data

Mental Health & Well-being

Community Connections

Operations

Education, Career Opportunities

Accessibility

Amenities & Aesthetic

“Must Haves”

Phase 2 - Interviews

Stakeholder Interviews - UW Fellows

UW Research Fellows Overview



Ojaswi Pasachhe
UW-Madison, Year 2
Neurobiology &
Psychology Major
Phase 1 Intern,
Verona High



Awa Phatty
UW-Madison, Year 3
Public Relations &
Legal Studies
Phase 1 Intern,
Memorial High



Restorative Justice Priorities, Themes

building on Phase 1 data

*How a Teen Center Can Positively Impact
Justice-Involved Youth to Reduce Crime
and Recidivism Rates in Dane County*

Mental Health & Well-being

Trusting Relationships, Mentorship

Safe, Inclusive Spaces (*outside of school*)

**Education, Career, Leadership
Opportunities**

Hope, Identity for the Future



Phase 2 - Interviews

Stakeholder Interviews - EQT by Design, Hope Community Capital

25 Interviews of individuals and entities gaining key insights and knowledge about teen center operations and programming, needs of City of Fitchburg, school districts, along with a few business and neighborhood stakeholders

150 emails went out to inform and invite programming and resource oriented groups to engage



Phase 2 - Interviews

Stakeholder Interviews - EQT By Design, Hope Community Capital

Fitchburg City Staff:

Administration, Library, Economic Development

Major Themes, Priorities

- Facility Planning
- Community Involvement
- Services
- Collaboration and Partnerships**
- Funding and Resource Allocations**
- Staffing and Volunteer Programs



Phase 2 - Interviews

Stakeholder Interviews - EQT by Design, Hope Community Capital

Neighborhoods, Friends of the Teen Center, Local Businesses

Major Themes, Priorities

- ❑ Addressing Access Barriers
- ❑ Funding and Workforce Issues
- ❑ Data Utilization
- ❑ Teen Involvement
- ❑ Location, Accessibility
- ❑ Flexibility, Adaptability
- ❑ Cultural Relevance
- ❑ Language Accessibility
- ❑ Safe and Welcoming Spaces
- ❑ Collaborations, Partnerships
- ❑ Mental Health Needs



Phase 2 - Interviews

Stakeholder Interviews - EQT by Design, Community Capital

Youth-Serving Organizations:

Goodman Center, Boys & Girls Club, Lussier, WI Youth Company

Major Themes, Priorities

- Teen-Focused Spaces
- Program Structure**
- Community Engagement
- Programming**
- Expansion Potential and Future Expansion

Public Workshops



Phase 2 - Public Workshops

Free Public Workshops Held for the Fitchburg Community

WELCOME! Fitchburg Teen Center Public Workshop

5:00pm - Event Begins

5:30pm - Informational Presentation #1

6:30pm - Informational Presentation #2

7:00pm - Event Ends

Chat with our Teen Interns to learn more about this project. Enjoy the DJ, Food Trucks, and Yard Games!



JOIN US!

PUBLIC WORKSHOP

Thursday, September 12th
6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
Virtual on Zoom
Register Below!

CITY OF FITCHBURG
TEEN CENTER

Register Here →

Event Link:
<https://tinyurl.com/FTCenter24>

TALLER PÚBLICO

Jueves, 12 de Septiembre
6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
Virtual por Zoom
Regístrate con el código QR

CITY OF FITCHBURG
TEEN CENTER

Regístrate aquí →

Enlace del evento:
<https://tinyurl.com/FTCenter24>

Public Workshop #1
(In-Person, June 2024)

+

Public Workshop #2
(Virtual, September 2024)

Phase 2 - Public Workshops

In-Person Workshop (June 2024)

- ❑ Overview of Phase 1
- ❑ Summary of Phase 2
- ❑ Stakeholder Interview
Dissemination (*major themes, priorities from Teen Interns, UW Fellows*)
- ❑ **100%** of attendees agreed with the assessments provided by Teens, Fellows



Phase 2 - Public Workshops

Virtual Workshop (September 2024)

BREAKOUT SESSION NOTES

- ❑ Overlapping services with existing facilities like the Boys and Girls Club and YMCA
- ❑ Concerns about safety
- ❑ Accessibility via public transportation

SAVE THE DATE!

PUBLIC WORKSHOP

Thursday, September 12th
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Virtual on Zoom
Register Below!

CITY OF FITCHBURG
TEEN CENTER

More Information →

Free Event!

EQT by design | hope COMMUNITY CAPITAL | JLA ARCHITECT | CITY OF FITCHBURG

JLA Design Study

Teen Center Strategic Goals
Purpose of Facility
Data to Design



Teen Center Strategic Goals

Youth Identified, Evaluated from Community Engagement

**Location,
Accessibility**

**Teen
Engagement**

**Teen
Focused
Operations**

**Safe,
Welcoming
Spaces**

**Funding,
Partnerships**

Teen Center Strategic Goals

Youth Identified, Evaluated from Community Engagement

Location, Accessibility

Multi-generational, accessible, diverse spaces. Leveraging existing facilities and considering demographic needs.

- ❑ Cultural Diversity
- ❑ Public Transport
- ❑ High-Density Teen Areas
- ❑ Existing Facilities, Vacant Land

Teen Engagement

Teen Focused Operations

Safe, Welcoming Spaces

Funding, Partnerships

Teen Center Strategic Goals

Youth Identified, Evaluated from Community Engagement

Location,
Accessibility

- ❑ Safe Hangout Spaces
- ❑ Commerce Center
- ❑ Local Trades, Unions, Businesses
- ❑ Kitchen, Lounge, Breakout Spaces, Art Studio

Safe,
Welcoming
Spaces

Community collaboration,
cultural diversity, inclusion,
resource support, outdoor
engagement,
comprehensive services
for all backgrounds.

Teen
Engagement

Funding,
Partnerships

Teen
Focused
Operations

Teen Center Strategic Goals

Youth Identified, Evaluated from Community Engagement

Location,
Accessibility

Safe,
Welcoming
Spaces

**Teen
Engagement**

Involvement of teens in design, providing safe hangout spots and spaces for community partnerships with teens.

- ❑ Community Engagement Wall
- ❑ Involving Teens in Design, Programming, Functionality
- ❑ Flexible Program Areas for Support Groups, Activities

Funding,
Partnerships

Teen
Focused
Operations

Teen Center Strategic Goals

Youth Identified, Evaluated from Community Engagement

Location,
Accessibility

Safe,
Welcoming
Spaces

Teen
Engagement

- ❑ Commerce, Fundraising
- ❑ Multi-Purpose, Event Space
- ❑ Collaborations with Local Entities

**Funding,
Partnerships**

Resource allocation, financial feasibility, collaboration with local entities to avoid service duplication and ensure sustainability.

Teen
Focused
Operations

Teen Center Strategic Goals

Youth Identified, Evaluated from Community Engagement

Location,
Accessibility

Safe,
Welcoming
Spaces

Teen
Engagement

Funding,
Partnerships

**Teen
Focused
Operations**

Flexible, well-staffed programs with volunteer support, dedicated teen areas, and facilities for education, safety, and crisis support.

- ❑ Crisis Support
- ❑ General Office/Admin Space
- ❑ 'Hotel'/Teleconferencing
- ❑ Drop-In Programs, Flexible Operation Hours
- ❑ Employment, Entrepreneurship Support

Teen Center Strategic Goals

Youth Identified, Evaluated from Community Engagement

Location, Accessibility

Multi-generational, accessible, diverse spaces. Leveraging existing facilities and considering demographic needs.

- ❑ Cultural Diversity
- ❑ Public Transport
- ❑ High-Density Teen Areas
- ❑ Existing Facilities, Vacant Land

- ❑ Safe Hangout Spaces
- ❑ Commerce Center
- ❑ Local Trades, Unions, Businesses
- ❑ Kitchen, Lounge, Breakout Spaces, Art Studio

Safe, Welcoming Spaces

Community collaboration, cultural diversity, inclusion, resource support, outdoor engagement, comprehensive services for all backgrounds.

Teen Engagement

Involvement of teens in design, providing safe hangout spots and spaces for community partnerships with teens.

- ❑ Community Engagement Wall
- ❑ Involving Teens in Design, Programming, Functionality
- ❑ Flexible Program Areas for Support Groups, Activities

- ❑ Commerce, Fundraising
- ❑ Multi-Purpose, Event Space
- ❑ Collaborations with Local Entities

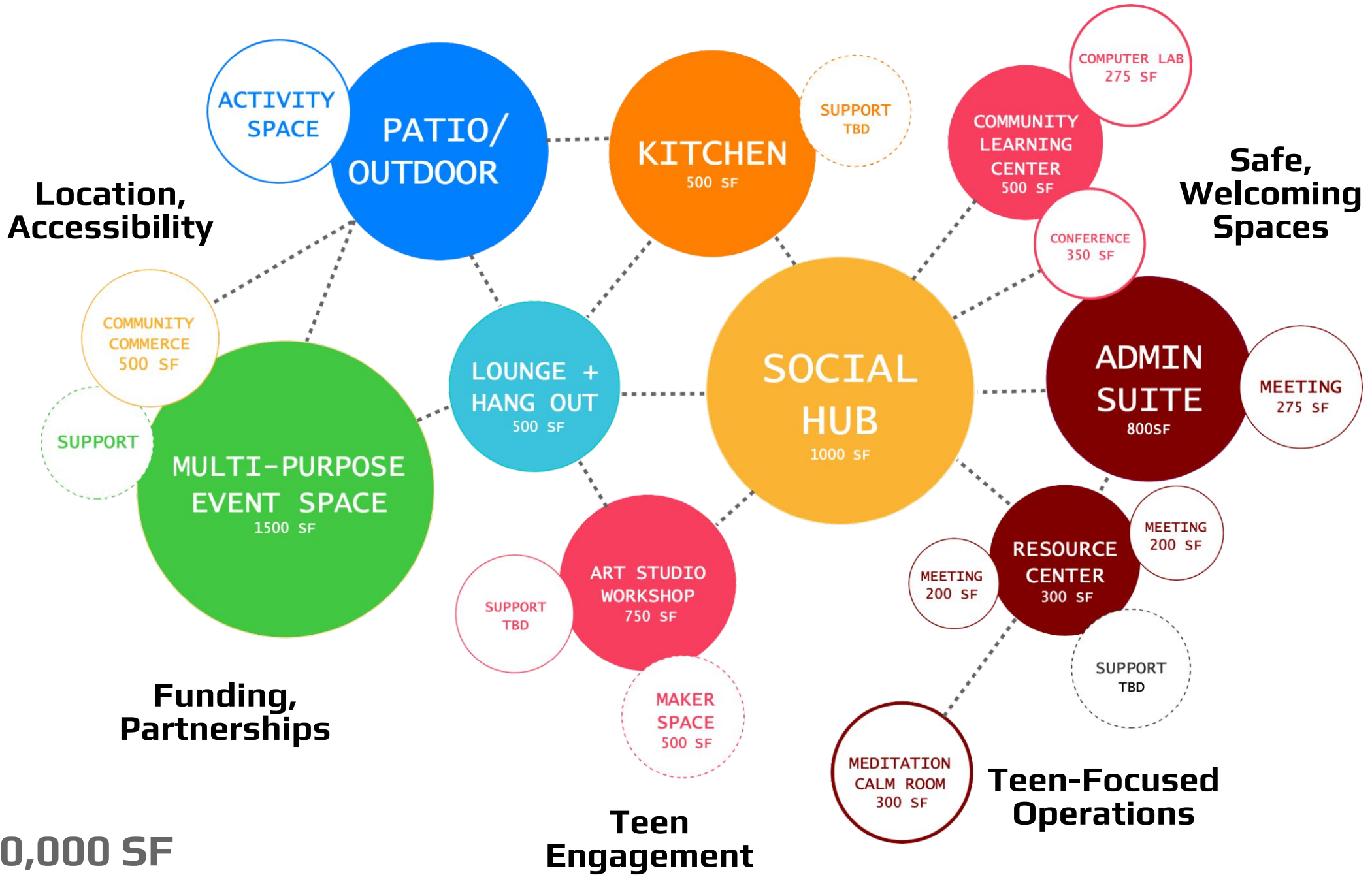
Funding, Partnerships

Resource allocation, financial feasibility, collaboration with local entities to avoid service duplication and ensure sustainability.

Teen Focused Operations

Flexible, well-staffed programs with volunteer support, dedicated teen areas, and facilities for education, safety, and crisis support.

- ❑ Crisis Support
- ❑ General Office/Admin Space
- ❑ 'Hotel'/Teleconferencing
- ❑ Drop-In Programs, Flexible Operation Hours
- ❑ Employment, Entrepreneurship Support





Phase 3 - Design

Next Steps

1. Site Acquisition
2. Operator Selection
3. Design Team RFP
4. Building Construction

Phase 3 - Design

Next Steps

1. Site Acquisition
2. Operator Selection
3. Design Team RFP
4. Building Construction

- ❑ **Design Development**
Solidify project program
Coordinate with Civil/Landscaping and Youth consultants
Provide exterior elevations, renderings

Phase 3 - Design

Next Steps

1. Site Acquisition

2. Operator Selection

3. Design Team RFP

4. Building Construction

❑ Design Development

Solidify project program

Coordinate with Civil/Landscaping and Youth consultants

Provide exterior elevations, renderings

❑ Municipal Entitlements

Work with City officials for design approvals

Assist on submittal packages for municipality zoning

Phase 3 - Design

Next Steps

1. Site Acquisition

2. Operator Selection

3. Design Team RFP

4. Building Construction

❑ Design Development

Solidify project program

Coordinate with Civil/Landscaping and Youth consultants

Provide exterior elevations, renderings

❑ Municipal Entitlements

Work with City officials for design approvals

Assist on submittal packages for municipality zoning

❑ Construction Documents

Provide required Code and Life Safety plans

Complete construction documents, including structural

Coordination with selected Contractors

Phase 3 - Design

Example - Imagination Center



Hope Community Capital

Best Practices & Experience Overview

Teen Center Operational Recommendations

Financial Capital Considerations

Feasibility Overview

Based on Feasibility Engagement Data

Proposed Range for Space Needs	
Approximate Square Footage	8,000 - 10,000
Focused Programming Needs	Sports, Arts, Career Development Kitchen, Life Skills Mental Health
Public Funding (City and County)	
Approved Funding Sources:	Amount:
City of Fitchburg	\$4,114,938
Dane County	\$ 925,000

What Did Youth Say?

- The space should be available to support teens and programming that focuses on those related needs
- Promote community connections through programs, career, and life skill development opportunities

Estimated Operational Costs

Based on Feasibility Engagement Data

Proposed + Strategic Revenue Sources, Operating	
Government Operating Grants (City, County, School District funded)	Lease / License Income from program providers
Contracts for Programming	Gymnasium / Sport Court Rentals
Individual and Corporate Contributions	Expense Reimbursements from Programs / Tenant Programs (Utilities, Insurance, Reserves)
Foundation Grants	Meal Programming
Program Fees and Registration Fees	

What Did Youth Say?

- ❑ They did support additional revenue streams by hosting sports and esports tournaments
- ❑ They supported a culinary kitchen for hosting events and classes for teens
- ❑ They emphasized the importance of having a pantry for students to make simple food as needed, and 1-2 provided dinners per week

Estimated Development Costs

Based on Feasibility Engagement Data

Project Feasibility Costs (for New or Redevelopment), 8,000 SF	
Land Cost / Remediation	\$1,400,000
Hard Cost, Vertical	\$3,000,000
Soft Cost (design, architect, planning)	\$600,000
FF&E (furniture, fixtures and equipment)	\$500,000
Contingency	\$300,000
Total Uses:	\$ 5,800,000

Estimated Operational Costs

Based on Feasibility Engagement Data

Costs to City of Fitchburg: Building and Maintenance

Expense (not covered in reimbursement from programs):	Amount:
Insurance	\$ 35,000
Utilities	\$ 25,000
Contract Professional Services (<i>Legal/Accounting</i>)	\$ 10,000
Physical Building Maintenance (<i>mowing, shoveling, cleaning facility, and parking lot kept clear, includes 1 FTE Maintenance Professional</i>)	\$ 74,000
Reserves	\$ 25,000
City of Fitchburg Total Costs	\$ 169,000

Estimated Operational Costs

Based on Feasibility Engagement Data

Operator Costs: Operational Costs that they cover	
Expense:	Amount:
Center Director (1.5 FTE, incl. benefits)*	\$135,000
Sports, Food, Mental Health, Music, Art, Career Development, Life Skills	750,000
Program Operator Costs	\$885,000
TOTAL Fitchburg + Operator Annualized Costs	\$1,054,000

*Center Director cost may not be actual depending on their staffing model.



Envisioned Daily Operations

Based on Feasibility Engagement Data

- ❑ Daily operating hours - school hours plus after school through 9:00pm was general thinking
- ❑ Anticipated 25% of Teens in the area to be served
- ❑ Interest from Operators - Yes

What Did Youth Say?

- ❑ Teens said the center should be **open during the school day to serve teens** who are unable to attend school, as a safe option for suspended students, and/or students who do not feel safe at school or home
- ❑ Teens said the center should be open until **9pm on weekdays, and 10pm on weekends**

What Makes the Teen Center Feasible

Recommendations

Next Steps

Questions

Options to Consider

Based on Feasibility Engagement Data

@Teen/Community Vision

Parameters	
Cost	\$5,800,000
Square Footage	+/- 8,000
City Costs	\$169,000
Operator Costs	\$885,000

@ City Budget

Parameters	
Cost	\$5,000,000
Square Footage	+/- 7,000
City Costs	\$ 169,000
Operator Costs	\$774,375

Feasibility

What makes the Teen Center feasible?

Teen Population

641 Verona Area School District Teens

Located in a Healthy Neighborhood Initiative Priority Area

Over 80% of Teens and Adults Support the Teen Center

Youth Population

22% of Fitchburg population is under the age of 18 years old

Accessible Location

Bus, bikeable, walkable, close to youth populations

Teen Involvement Is Vital

Evidence-based, transformative prevention model



Verbal Statements from Teen Interns, UW Fellows

Valuing Youth Voice

Meaningfully Involving Teens from Start to Finish

Promoting Youth Health, Well-Being, and Safety

Generational Change-Makers

“The more I grow, experience, and reflect on my upbringing, the more I realize how much of a positive difference a space like this would’ve made for me.....”

**Awa Phatty, Phase 1 Teen Intern, Phase 2 Fellow
UW-Madison**

“The Teen Center is so important and unique in its approach to supporting our youth because it has truly considered and acted on what teens actually want and need....”

**Neveah, Phase 1 & 2 Teen Intern
Verona Area High School**

“The Teen Center is a space where we can exercise the kind of independence and responsibility that will bring us success in life...”

**Joe, Phase 2 Teen Intern
West High School**

“Such a space not only provides security but also access to vital resources-things teens need but may be too afraid to ask for or unable to obtain.....”

**Simone, Phase 2 Teen Intern
West High School**



Next Steps

Phase 3 Needs, Recommendations

Start Up Actions...

- ❑ Council determines how to move forward
- ❑ Continue teen intern program, including justice-involved youth in engagement
- ❑ Identify an operator for the Teen Center
- ❑ Create a Fitchburg Youth Committee alongside the Council
- ❑ Friends of Teen Center start fundraising development efforts
- ❑ Prepare Phase 3 RFP
 - *Identifies a building or redeveloped space*
 - *Architect renderings of building and space*
 - *Finalize cost estimates for operations and building construction/renovation*

Thank You!

Questions, Comments



FITCHBURG COMMON COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 20, 2024