

As city engineer, Chad Comes has had a hand in many of Madison's improvement and infrastructure projects.

Comes, 37, has been the city engineer for six years. In that position, he manages planning and zoning issues that occur in the city. When new industrial or residential sections are proposed, Comes works with developers to



**Chad Comes**

meet subdivision regulations and prepare to install utility lines and plat lots.

He also coordinates with the city's departments on infrastructure projects, such as the wastewater and water plant and the storm sewer system.

"We work with the other superintendents to keep track of the systems and to plan and know the state of the system as a whole," Comes said.

Arranging projects like these means organizing with grant programs, outside consultants and other levels of state government, Comes said. He works with Lake County when the asphalt roads in town need sealcoating as part of preventative maintenance.

As the building inspector works under Comes in the engineer's office, Comes gets a chance to connect with the public when people apply for building permits to make sure they comply with zoning regulations.

"We interact with the public in the review of those processes," Comes said.

He speaks with landowners when they are affected by a street closure or construction project, like the sidewalk inspection and repair program. Comes works with a citizen sidewalk committee that makes recommendations for sidewalk construction or maintenance in the city. The committee's recommendations are taken to the city commission for approval, Comes said.

He recognizes that putting in sidewalks causes an expense to the landowner, but his office is directed by the city commission to complete those projects.

Besides ongoing sidewalk improvements, projects currently under way are the downtown alley improvement project, the Harth Avenue reconstruction project and upgrades at the Westside Park complex, Comes said.

The downtown alley improvement project is in Phase II, he said. Overhead power lines are being removed and put underground on the west side of Egan Avenue

between 2nd Street North and 2nd Street South with new concrete laid in the alley. The same job was completed on the east side of Egan Avenue last year, Comes said.

The reconstruction of Harth Avenue between 1st and 2nd streets South is taking place as part of the renovation to East River Electric Power Cooperative's headquarters. Comes said this is a streetscape type of project because it includes some decorative concepts and landscaping features. The street will become a one-way street to make it pedestrian-friendly.

"It's meant to improve the aesthetics of that area," Comes said.

New tennis and basketball courts are expected to be installed at the Westside Park complex, Comes said. These improvements had been part of the park plan for quite some time, he said, and the parks department received a grant to assist with the costs.

Comes said a five-year infrastructure plan can be found on the city's website.

One of the perks of his position is to watch a project come to fruition and function well. Comes said he likes "being able to see some improvements made throughout the community."

The 3rd Street S.W. project is one of Comes' most memorable. It started as a gravel path that wasn't a dedicated road, he said. After utilizing grant funds and working with landowners, it is now a wide and paved road.

"That is fun to see when it comes from a concept to a final product," Comes said.

Comes attends all city commission meetings and answers questions that may come up from commissioners or the public. He said he always welcomes people to speak to him about their concerns.

"We're here for the public," Comes said. "We work for the commission and the public."

You can learn more about what's occurring in the office of the city engineer by visiting [www.cityof-madisonsd.com](http://www.cityof-madisonsd.com).

