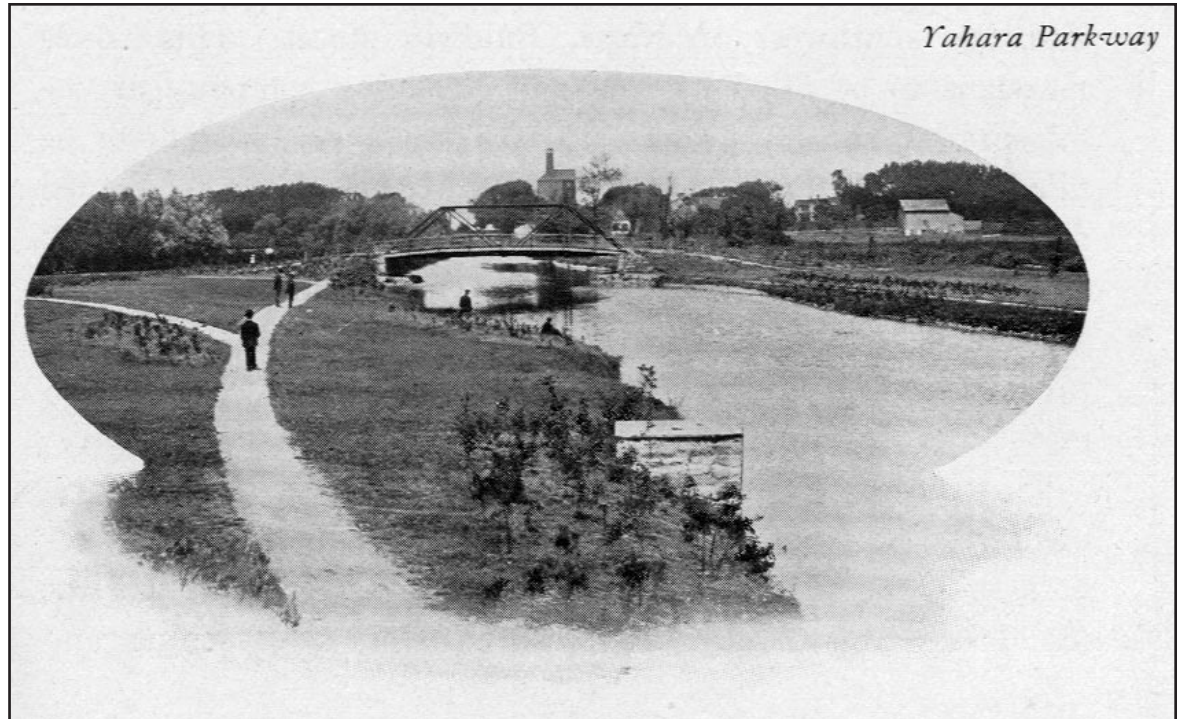

“One of the unique features of Madison and one possessing great possibilities for the beautifying of the city is the Yahara River. This river and its banks should be reclaimed for the people of this city.”

*Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association
Report of the Officers
April 1903*



Introduction

Community Resource and Setting

The Yahara River Parkway is a mile-long, community-wide resource situated on the easterly end of the isthmus that connects Lake Mendota to Lake Monona. This is the only segment of the Yahara River to traverse an urban setting in Madison. Few precious recreational resources provide so many unique opportunities for stewardship and transformation that are so close to so many people. The Parkway was created in the early 1900s under the sponsorship of the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association, with hopes to create open space with paths and carriage trails to enjoy views and vistas of the river and the lush

plantings along its banks. The ideals of health, beauty and democracy of the 19th-century park movement were embodied in the goals of the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association. The Association's legacy is still shaping our ideas of the park though they have been translated into our 20th-century vocabulary. The Yahara River corridor will be planned with that legacy and spirit in mind.

In 1996, *Money* magazine rated Madison the number one American city in which to live because of the many attributes available to citizens: bicycle and walking paths, water-oriented recreational opportunities, lake views, safety, friendliness, well-defined neighborhoods, and many others. The Yahara River corridor potentially embodies many of the qualities people find

charming and attractive about Madison. The planning effort will set a course in transforming and enhancing this area into a recreational jewel. It will also seek to add compatible housing and commercial development into the existing neighborhood over the next ten to fifteen years.



Jenifer Street Pedestrian Bridge is an example of the community working with the City to construct a quality pedestrian bridge in keeping with the character of the corridor

Why this renewed focus on the Yahara River Parkway? While citizens, civic groups, landscape architects, and urban planners have suggested planning concepts for the Yahara River Parkway for over a century, the Yahara River Parkway Concept Plan had its most recent beginnings in the 1994 *Marquette-Schenk-Atwood Neighborhood Plan* and the 1995 *Tenney-Lapham/Old Market Place Neighborhood Plan*. Both neighborhood plans identified the Yahara River corridor as a priority planning area and recommended a comprehensive study to identify potential ways to enhance the Parkway as an aesthetic, recreational, and social asset for neighborhood and City residents. In addition, both plans emphasize the importance of enhancing the Parkway as an

environmental and historic asset. Perhaps most importantly, both plans highlight the need to provide safe and convenient bike and pedestrian connections between all of the adjacent east isthmus neighborhoods, the Yahara River Parkway, and a user-friendly network of public parks. As both plans suggest, the key to making these connections is the Yahara River Parkway itself – a natural cross-isthmus connector between neighborhoods.

Yahara River Parkway Steering Committee. In July 1995, the City of Madison Common Council acted on the recommendations of these neighborhood plans by authorizing the creation of the Yahara River Parkway Ad Hoc Steering Committee (YRP Committee) to prepare a concept plan for the Yahara River Parkway in partnership with the Department of Planning and Development. After accepting nominations from citizens and community leaders, the Mayor appointed 10 YRP Committee members to seek extensive input from citizens and guidance from past planning efforts in developing the Yahara River Parkway Master Plan.

The Planning Philosophy

The planning philosophy and approach to the Yahara River environs falls into three basic concepts. These concepts were used throughout the planning process.

1. The plan will stay true to the *spirit of the original plan* developed in the early 1900's for the parkland.
2. A *comprehensive approach* will be utilized by integrating the open space and bike/pedestrian/vehicular circulation with land uses that will contribute and enhance the character and quality of the existing neighborhoods.
3. *Encourage public participation* to ensure the plan is representative of the wish of the citizens and three adjacent neighborhoods (see Public Participation section on page 9).