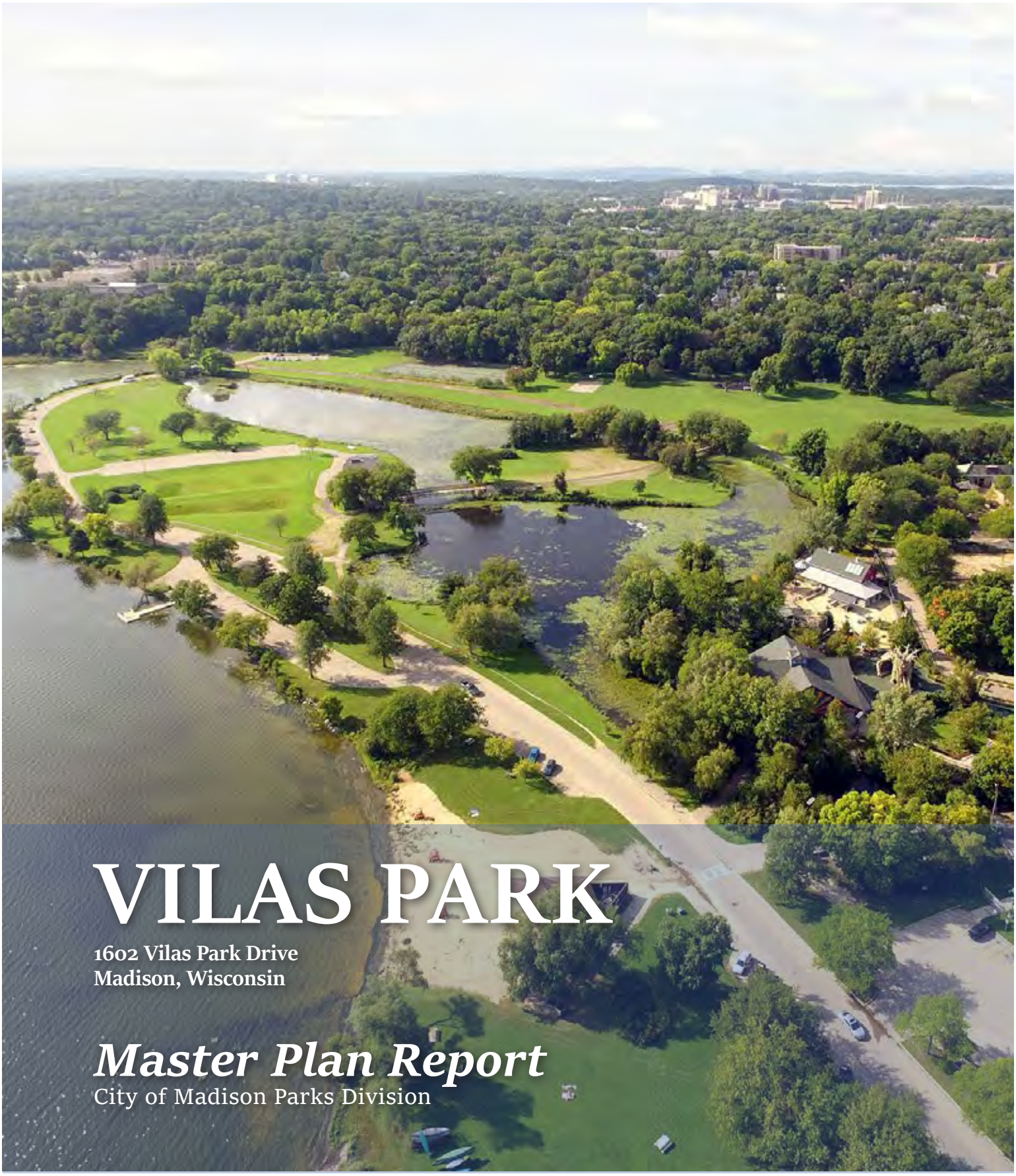


VILAS PARK

1602 Vilas Park Drive
Madison, Wisconsin

Master Plan Report

City of Madison Parks Division

Board of Park Commissioners
Adopted March 10, 2021

Prepared for the City of Madison Parks Division

Eric Knepp, Parks Superintendent
Kay Rutledge, Assistant Parks Superintendent
Lisa Laschinger, Assistant Parks Superintendent

Master Plan Staff

Kate Kane, Landscape Architect
Ann Freiwald, Planning and Development Manager

Prepared By

MSA Professional Services
Urban Assets
Quinn Evans

City of Madison Board of Park Commissioners

Al Martin
Chandra Miller Fienen
Emily R. Gnam
Madelyn D. Leopold
Moria Harrington
Paul E. Skidmore
Venus E. Washington
Zachary Henak

play MADISON PARKS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Vilas Park Master Plan seeks to strike a necessary balance between design best practices, the known needs of a large and ever-expanding park system and the myriad and often overlapping interests expressed through community input meetings, stakeholder group sessions, public comment and neighborhood associations. Since public engagement would play a key role in the development of the master plan, the development of a public engagement strategy was guided and informed by the City of Madison's Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative (RESJI) Comprehensive Tool. Use of the RESJI tool assisted in the development of the requirements for the comprehensive engagement strategy outlined in the Request for Proposals (RFP) used to solicit proposals from consultant firms to lead the master plan process. From that RFP, a consultant team, led by MSA Professional Services, Inc. was selected in early 2019 to perform historical research, parking lot counts, park use observations and intercept interviews, inventory and analysis of the site's existing condition, traffic counts and analysis, review of prior studies related to the park, and research into current regulatory requirements influencing park development.

This park master plan report summarizes the research, public comment and input meetings, which took place over the subsequent two years of time to arrive at the proposed improvements for Vilas Park. The influence on the project of the local arrival of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and subsequent COVID-19 pandemic must be noted as it relates to the project's efforts to effectively meet and discuss the project with individuals traditionally underrepresented in larger plenary efforts. However, despite in-person and on-site meetings being severely curtailed due to the pandemic, the in-person project meetings held with focus groups and on-site intercept interviews that occurred prior to March 2020 along with the findings from outreach work available through the 2018-2023 Park and Open Space Plan (POSP) and 2018 Comprehensive Plan provided important insights into citywide park system need and the importance of considering the needs of diverse populations and user groups in providing plans for park improvements intended to last 50 years or more. As with any project, opportunities for improvement exist and the Parks Division looks forward to working with the Board of Park Commissioners to refine future master planning efforts.

This report describes the project's "design drivers", which were utilized during the concepts, draft and final master plan phases to describe the larger design moves presented in the plan:

- Vilas Park Drive – the plan describes limiting vehicular access to the east side (1-way in/out at Orchard St); automobiles can access the park's southern and lakeshore amenities from the east side and through the park until the turn-around located at the main shelter; public input received during the project strongly supported the elimination of pedestrian/bicycle and vehicle conflicts and to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety to the extent possible throughout the park and the conversion of Vilas Park Drive to a multiuse path is one of the ways that the plan seeks to meet that interest;

- Main park shelter – the proposed shelter replacement sits generally on the footprint of the existing shelter, allowing for the current building to remain in-place while items that may be approached earlier for construction are being completed; the draft also proposes a series of additional picnicking opportunities – both through the addition of open-sided shelters and picnic nodes. The expansion of both sheltered and open picnicking opportunities at the park meets both a current need in that the single reservable picnic shelter is often fully booked during the season as well as a system-wide need described in the POSP.

- Parking - parking lots have been consolidated in the plan to recover greenspace within the park and to minimize vehicular travel; the lot to the south of the zoo adds a formal bus queueing area and protected passenger unload lanes to enhance safety and access for visitors arriving via yellow or charter bus; additional parking areas at the south bring visitors closer to key amenities along the lakeshore and lagoon such as the beach, fishing access points and main shelter. The lot to the north of the zoo has been expanded and the ingress/egress point has been moved opposite Campbell St to remove known pedestrian/bicycle conflicts at the Grant-Drake St exit point and the quasi-5 point intersection and entry to the zoo at the north that was formalized over time at Drake St and S Randall Ave. An expanded lot closest to the proposed tennis/pickleball/basketball complex offers spaces for players of those sports as well as those accessing an additional canoe/kayak launch point to the lagoon. Parks recognizes that additional study and consultation with City Traffic Engineering, Wisconsin State Historical Society and The Ho-Chunk Nation, as well as first responder agencies will be undertaken prior to the development of construction documents for the revised north parking lot and entryway.

- Open Space and Active Recreation – the plan recognizes the importance of the large open greenspace in the center area of the park and the significant views it offers to Lake Wingra by preserving this area for active and passive recreation. The sport court area to the west is proposed to include both dedicated tennis and pickleball courts as well as retaining full-court basketball and offering four square; an on-land ice hockey rink is included with proximity to the year-round shelter.

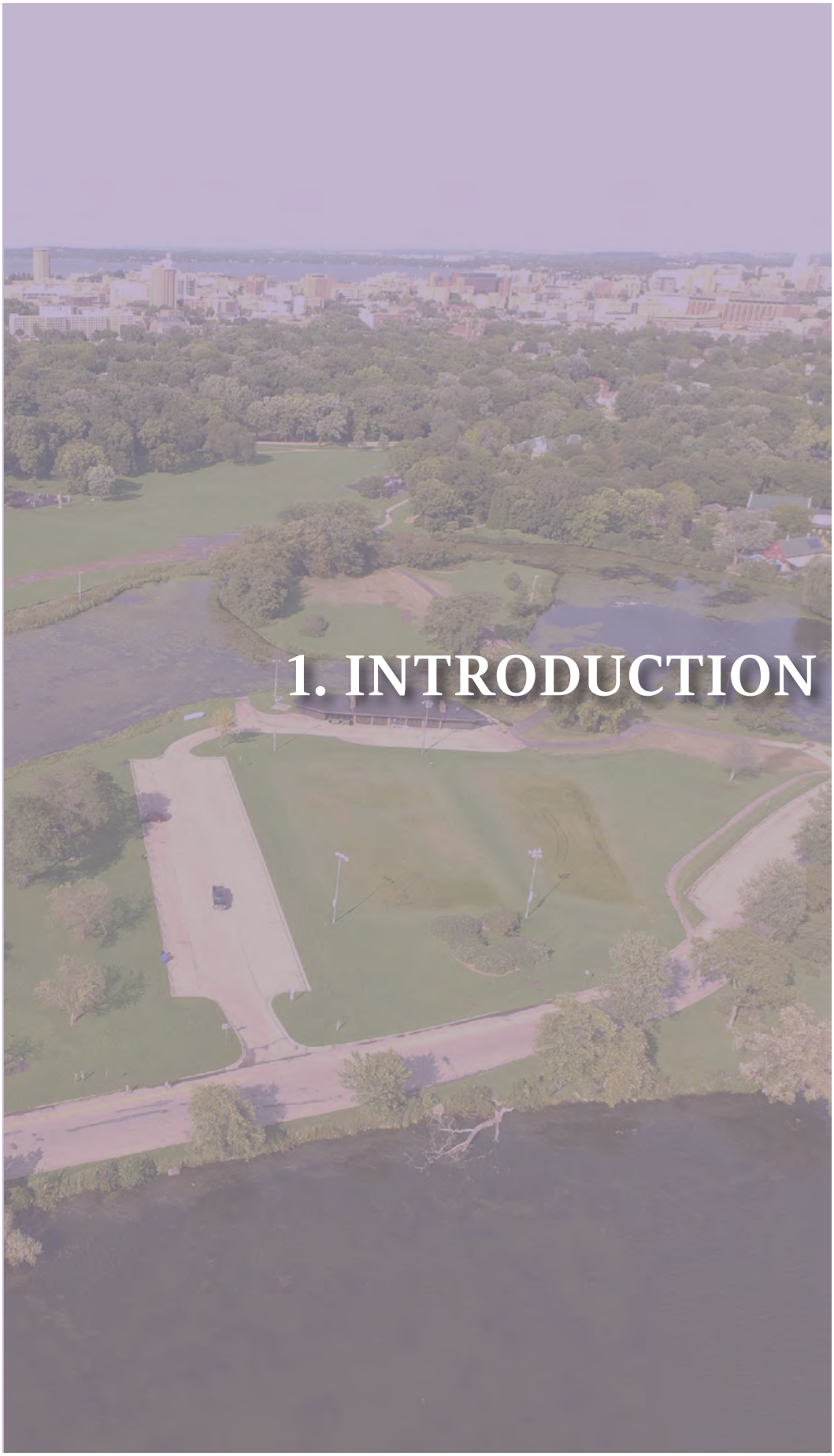
- Playgrounds - two playground areas are included in the master plan. The Shoe playground area is expanded to include areas for both 2-5 and 5-12 age range equipment which is the current standard for Community level parks in the system and a smaller nature-based play area is proposed on the western side of the park where a conventional playground currently is located. The playground to the north closest to Erin St is not returned in the master plan based on Parks' mound management policy and per discussions with The Ho-Chunk Nation that the focus of the mound sites will be to preserve and honor the sacred land in accordance with established standards – and that Parks, in its role as current and future stewards of the mounds within the City of Madison Parks system, it will not be placing children's play environments in proximity to mound sites.

- Lagoon and Lake Wingra - in Phase II of the project, three concepts for the lagoon were put forward to assist the project team in understanding the interest in maintaining an open-water condition at the lagoon – which, if left to its own devices, would continue to slowly fill-in through sedimentation and vegetation encroachment. The concepts offered three potentials for the lagoon: fully open water condition and the associated dredging and annual weed cutting that would be required along with a fully vegetated condition that would allow a slow return to a boggy/wetland type condition and a '50-50' option that offered a bit of each: on-lagoon activities such as skating and fishing could continue but the maintenance obligation of weed cutting operations and dredging might be reduced. The final plan moves forward this '50-50' option in recognition of the high-level of support on-lagoon activities received through public input and per discussions with WiDNR staff regarding habitat enhancement and invasive species management possibilities for the lagoon and lake. Further study to determine the optimal dredging depth to attain for the lagoon, as well as management discussion regarding the extent and nature of vegetation management, will be performed prior to the implementation of this option.

At the March 10, 2021 meeting of the City of Madison Board of Park Commissioners (BPC), Commission members considered the adoption of the Vilas Park Master Plan. The BPC discussed a number of topics including the number and the location of the proposed playgrounds, the amount of parking provided in the park, and the location of the proposed entrance/exit at the Campbell Street location. The Commission expressed a desire for certain recommendations of the plan to receive further study before implementation, these recommendations include: the changes to the lagoon and the changes to the north entrance/exit alignment (the proposed Campbell Street entry/exit drive). The lagoon studies would include additional study of the effect of proposed changes on water quality. Traffic and archaeological studies are recommended prior to moving forward on the proposed Campbell Street driveway. The Commission debated the location of the proposed playgrounds – in particular the selection of the west side of the park over the southern/beach area for a second playground location (the first location - the Shoe playground – was generally agreed upon). After over one hour of discussion and public comment, the BPC adopted the master plan as presented.

This plan, adopted by the Board of Park Commissioners, will guide development of Vilas Park and conforms to the Statement of Policy and Guidelines for Master Plan Activities within the Madison Parks System.

Page Intentionally Left Blank



1. INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Henry Vilas Park, hereafter referred to as Vilas Park (1602 Vilas Park Drive), at 45.67 acres, is one of Madison's oldest parks, dating to the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association era, initially designed in 1905 by landscape architect, O.C. Simonds. It is among the city's larger lakefront parks.

Vilas Park is located on the near west side of the city and is in close proximity to Edgewood College and Campus School, and to the University of Wisconsin – Madison campus and arboretum (Figure 1.1). The park property includes burial mounds that are a City of Madison Landmark (Landmarked in 1990) and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The property is also home to Henry Vilas Zoo, which is operated by Dane County. The zoo is not a part of the master plan project for Vilas Park (see Figure 1.2).

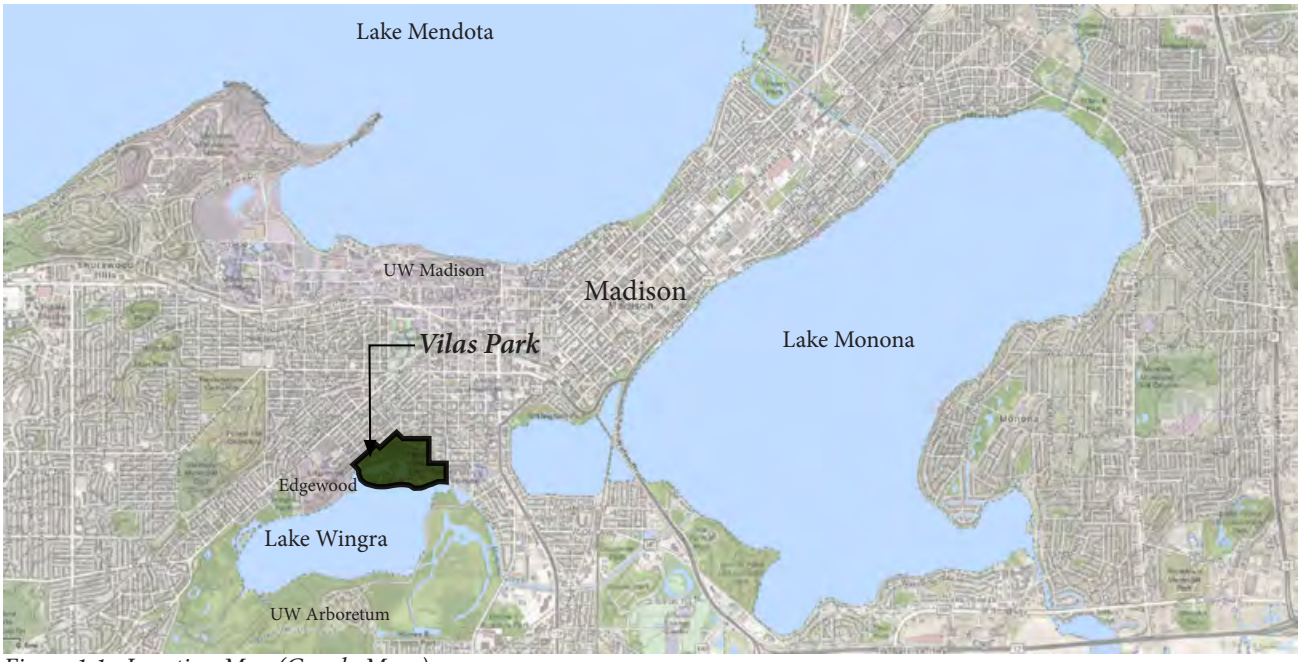


Figure 1.1. Location Map (Google Maps)

Vilas Park considered a "Community" level park within the park system, within which the most extensive level of services and amenities are typically found. The City of Madison Parks and Open Space Plan defines a community park as

> *"greater than 20 acres, these parks serve a broader purpose than a neighborhood park. They focus on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces."*[1]

1 City of Madison Parks Division 2018-2023 Park and Open Space Plan

Figure 1.2. Master Plan Study Area

As a "Community" park, Vilas has a service area radius of two miles (Figure 1.3). This area represents a broad cross-section of Madison neighborhoods, including Greenbush, Vilas, Dudgeon-Monroe, Bay Creek, and Burr Oaks. The park is within a 15-minute drive of most of the City of Madison and the surrounding suburbs

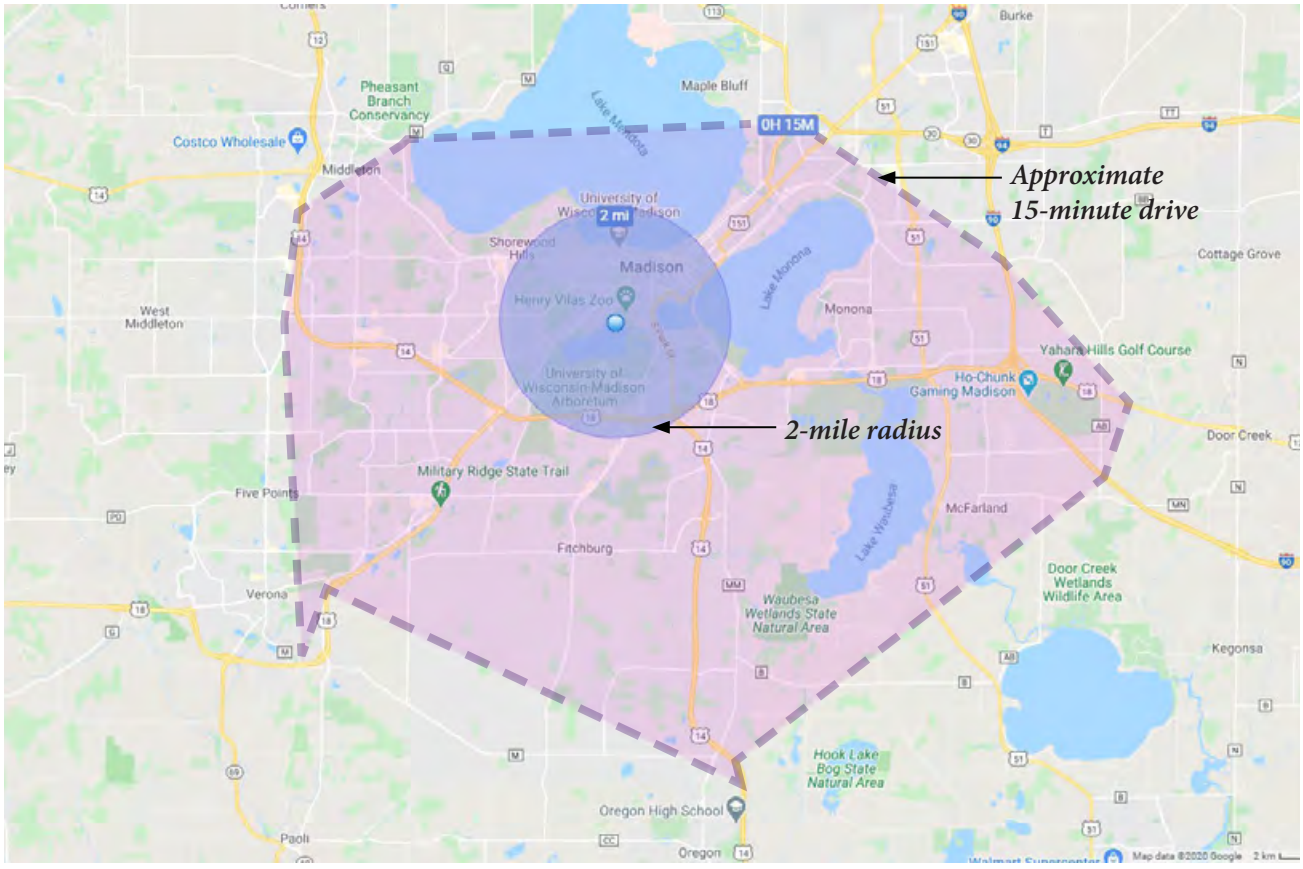


Figure 1.3. Service Area Map (Google Maps)

of Fitchburg, Oregon, Monona, Mcfarland, and Middleton. Additionally, the Henry Vilas Zoo is a regional destination that draws visitor from across Wisconsin and the surrounding Upper Midwest region.

The Vilas Park Existing Park Master Plan (Figure 1.4) further describes the major park features including a reservable all-season shelter, seasonally-operated beach house and swimming beach on Lake Wingra and interior lagoon connected to the lake.

Vilas Park has a variety of programmed and non-programmed activities for all ages. The park is used extensively for informal recreation such as walking, running, Frisbee, kickball, tennis, fishing, ice skating, swimming, picnicking, hammocking, sledding, bird watching, photography kite flying, and cross country skiing. It is also reserved for events and private parties as offering seasonal ice skate rentals.

Figure 1.4. Existing Park Master Plan

2. PLANNING PROCESS

PLANNING PROCESS

The City of Madison Parks Division initiated a Master Plan for Vilas Park to create a framework from which to identify future capital improvement projects after conducting a Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative (RESJI) analysis to help to inform the Request for Proposals (RFP) process to solicit proposals from eligible consultants in the fall of 2018.

The need for an updated master plan came through the recognition that nearly every built amenity at Vilas Park is reaching (or has already met) the end of its serviceable life.

- Most of the park's infrastructure dates to the early 1960s and is energy inefficient to operate; several key systems are failing (such as the fire hydrants utilized to flood ice skating);
- Multiple pedestrian and vehicle conflicts exist through the park from missing sidewalks (along Vilas Park Drive) and complex or dangerous pedestrian crossings (Drake Street at Randall Avenue and Drake Street at Grant Street/Garfield Street);
- The park's tennis courts have received six rounds of crack filling & resurfacing since 1977 –each with diminishing returns on longevity;
- Roadway and parking lot repairs are long overdue and most of the layouts do not meet current zoning or stormwater standards;
- Playgrounds in the City of Madison Parks system are eligible for replacement beginning at around 20 years - each of the playgrounds at Vilas features equipment dating to 1996 (making it 25 years old in 2021); and features older surfacing and site design standards requiring upgrades to provide a higher level of accessibility and site performance.
- The lagoon bottom has been filling with sediment in since at least the 1960s and is currently very shallow – making it difficult to maintain for ice skating operations and open-water condition which is generally preferable to anglers and for recreational use.

The purpose of the master plan is to identify locations for and describe park improvements to implement design solutions that will enhance the facility to meet the needs and desires of a variety of users. The proposed improvements seek to support a healthy community, and provide aesthetic improvements that instill an inviting and attractive presence for residents, neighboring businesses and visitors alike.

The Vilas Park Master Plan represents input gathered from diverse representatives from the community, regulatory agencies, city staff, and city officials. Online surveys, meetings, focus groups, public gatherings, group discussions and guided the development of a master plan by providing valuable input and collective wisdom.

This master plan provides a framework to make informed decisions, manage maintenance, and guide reconstruction. This report has reviewed the existing conditions and constraints, looking at opportunities and evaluating options to improve and maintain the park over the next 15-20 years. The future of the park developed with this master plan is intended to serve the City of Madison community for the next 50 years or more.

The scope of this project includes the following phases:

- Phase I: Site Analysis and Community Engagement
- Phase II: Design Development - Schematic Park Master Plans
- Phase III: Draft and Final Park Master Plan

Members of the selected consultant team (project team) included:

- MSA Professional Services, Inc. – landscape architecture and master planning, traffic engineering, civil engineering, and public engagement (Phase II and III)
- Urban Assets – public engagement (Phase I and II)
- Quinn Evans – historical site overview

The primary objective of Phase I included site inventory and analysis as well as neighborhood and community engagement, including planning, organizing, and facilitating public events, meetings, focus group discussions, online surveys, open public dialogue inclusive of all residents for an equitable planning process. The engagement process was informed by a thorough review and analysis of the existing conditions at the park and surrounding area and included research into options to make recommendations for traffic calming informed by conducting traffic counts and lagoon improvements and ongoing maintenance.

Additionally, two stakeholder groups were identified to encourage access and input to the process:

- a Resident Resource Group (RRG), which included citizens and organizational representatives from the neighborhoods surrounding Vilas Park including Greenbush and Vilas Neighborhoods.
- a Community Partners Advisory Group (CPAG) which included representatives from organizations that have a vested interest through a common organizational mission, commercial use of the park.

Phase II of the project focused on the development of schematic designs presented as three concepts based on the input received through the public participation efforts and prior analyses and research, including recommendations for location, design, and features of park and recreation elements with a focus on traffic patterns surrounding the various points of entry to the park and its relationship to the adjacent zoo and surrounding neighborhoods.

Phase III involved coalescing public feedback, professional experience and best practices, regulatory requirements and standard park operations related to the preferred concept plans into first a draft master plan and then refined into a final master plan. This document is the outcome of this overall process of planning, design and public engagement.

The analysis and outcomes of each of the phases of the master plan process are defined within the following sections of this report.

3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

In recognition of Vilas Park's role as Community park withing the City of Madison Park system, the community engagement process sought to collect input from a diverse cross-section of residents representing many different races, ages, abilities and genders. A primary goal of the Vilas Park Master Plan was to seek feedback from voices that are not often represented within larger plenary efforts. An additional goal was to reduce the perception that those stakeholders living closest to the park have outsize influence on decisions made during the master planning process.

The community engagement process was carried out in three phases. Phase I was characterized by surveys, comment cards and intercept interviews which asked questions such as, "what do you love most about Vilas Park?" and "what would you most like to change about Vilas Park?" and is the focus of this chapter. Phase II involved a period of schematic master plan development where information gained from Phase I engagement was developed into concept designs. These designs were made available for community review and feedback before further refinement resulted in the development of a final master plan report as part of Phase III.

The overall engagement strategy for each phase was informed by the City of Madison's Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative (RESJI). Community outreach and engagement was accomplished through a mix of tools and approaches designed to encourage and amplify traditionally underrepresented voices. The goal was to ensure

Figure 3.1. Community Information Meeting June 26, 2019 *Madison Parks Division*

that the Vilas Park Master Plan reflects the interests and needs of all residents within the City of Madison. The process involved in-depth dialogues with both residents representing the nearby neighborhoods and residents from the broader community through meetings, workshops and small group conversations designed to be highly interactive and hands-on. A Resident Resource Group (RRG), was formed which included citizens and organizational representatives from the neighborhoods surrounding Vilas Park:

- Greenbush Neighborhood Association
- Greenbush neighborhood residents (not members of Neighborhood Association)
- Vilas Neighborhood Association
- Dudgeon-Monroe Neighborhood Association
- Burr Oaks neighborhood residents
- Friends of Lake Wingra
- District 13 Alder Tag Evers
- District 14 Alder Sheri Carter

A Community Partners Advisory Group (CPAG) was also formed and included representatives from organizations that have a vested interest through a common organizational mission, commercial use of the park, or are a non-residential neighbor of the park:

- Clean Lakes Alliance
- Edgewood College
- Wingra Boats
- St. Mary's Hospital
- Union Sportsmen's Alliance
- Mad City Ultras
- Access to Independence

An Interagency Staff Team comprised of City of Madison staff from Engineering, Planning and Traffic Engineering along with representatives from the Henry Vilas Zoo, UW Arboretum and SSM Health met during each phase of the project to review and discuss plan proposals. IAS meeting invitations were extended to Fire, Police, Metro and Park Rangers for consultation on questions that arose from public input or during team discussions to obtain information from and share the plan with those agencies. Regulatory agencies including the WI DNR, Army Corps of Engineers and Ho-Chunk Cultural Resources Division were also consulted on matters under their jurisdiction.

Focus Group sessions were held to seek input on the project from members of the Hmong, LatinX and African American communities were held at the Bayview Community Center, the Boys and Girls Club and the Badger Rock Community Center. Youth engagement came through the Madison Parks Division assisted The Friends of Lake Wingra in conducting an on-site planning session with students from Midvale Lincoln Elementary School. Additionally, Resident Resource Group members from the Greenbush and Vilas Neighborhood Associations developed surveys, which were shared with neighborhood associations near the park and each group devoted time during their respective meetings to focus on the project and discuss future needs and desires for Vilas Park. (Additional Details on Community Engagement can be found in the Benchmark Engagement Report - Appendix B)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PHASE I - INPUT

Opportunities for engagement in the project Phase I included a community input meeting, comment cards placed in the park, an online public survey, and on-site interviews conducted during observations. These opportunities were in addition to the RRG, CPAG, IAS and focus group engagements. Questions asked on comment cards, during interviews and in focus groups are summarized below. A discussion of the community input meeting and online public survey follow these questions.

Comment Cards:

1. What should the Parks Division keep in mind when planning for the future of Vilas Park?
2. Which of the following activities do you participate in at Vilas Park?
3. Please select current or potential amenities in Vilas Park that are most important to you.

On-Site Interviews:

1. What brought you to Vilas Park today?
2. What do you love most about Vilas Park?
3. What are your favorite activities?
4. During which season(s) do you typically visit Vilas Park?
5. Where do you typically enter Vilas Park?
6. Where are the top 3 areas you use at the park?
7. How do you typically access Vilas Park?
8. Have you ever used the shelter?
9. What would you change at Vilas Park?

10. What is missing or not working well?
11. Do you feel that Vilas Park is a safe and welcoming space? Why or why not?
12. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Focus Groups:

1. How do you use Vilas Park today?
2. What would make using Vilas Park more enjoyable overall?
3. What are the greatest strengths of the park today? What do you love most? What should stay the same?
4. What are the biggest challenges of the park today? What could be expanded or improved? Added or changed?
5. What would help Vilas Park best serve our whole community as Madison grows and changes?
6. Is there anything else that the City should consider as it moves forward?

In Phase I, meetings focused on understanding current park uses as well as desired uses of the park, exploring regulatory requirements and zoning, and discussing potential improvements and amenities that could enhance recreational experiences. The following information summarizes content and discussion from these sessions and describes major themes that emerged. These themes provided a basis for the development of concept plans for the physical spaces of Vilas Park.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION MEETING

The first opportunity for engagement with the broader community was at a meeting held on June 26, 2019 at the Vilas Park shelter. This meeting served as a kick-off to the park planning project and provided an opportunity to introduce the project team, describe the intent of the project, the anticipated timeline and the planning process, while also soliciting input from attendees at the meeting. There were seven stations with informational displays: environmental, historical/culture, community context, traffic, community input and "what is a master plan." Participants could move between the stations and discuss the information with team members positioned at each location prior to the presentation. Following the presentation, attendees were invited to provide responses via post-it notes to questions centered around four topics. The topics and responses are summarized below.

Topic 1: What parks mean to you. What image, memory, place, or feeling first comes to mind when you think about time spent in a park (any park)?

There were 55 responses posted to this board. Nearly half (48%) of respondents said that open space and nature are what first come to mind when thinking about time spent in a park (Figure 3.1). The second and third most common responses were walking (13%) and ice skating (10%). These answers indicate that seasonal use is important. Kayaking, the beach and the playground were also among the responses. Many respondents specifically mentioned the lagoon, the historic bridge and the woodland borders at Vilas Park as areas where they have lasting memories.

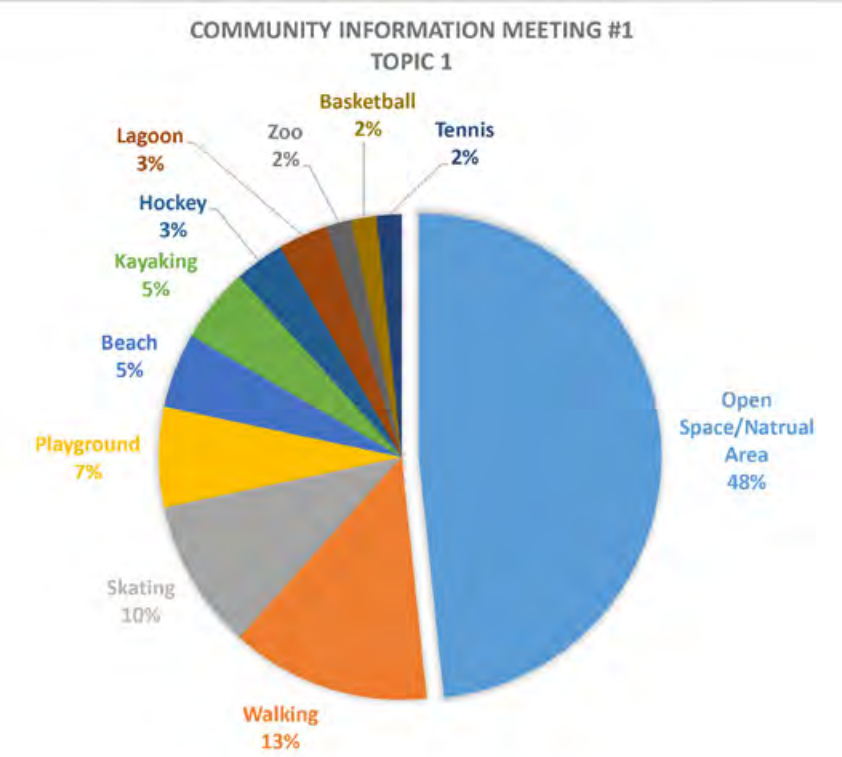


Figure 3.2. Community Information Meeting Topic 1 Results

Topic 2: What to maintain and enhance at Vilas. What 1 to 2 things do you love most about Vilas Park today? What draws you to Vilas Park?

There were 92 responses posted to the Topic 2 board. The highest percentage, 22%, answered that open space/natural areas are what draw them to Vilas Park and are what should be preserved and enhanced (Figure 3.2). This correlates with the high percentage of respondents who answered "open space/natural areas" under the Topic 1. Comments related to playgrounds received the next highest percentage (11%).

Specifically, respondents commented on the need to preserve the "Shoe." Comments related to beach and lagoon enhancement are reflected within several categories in Figure 3.2, including ice-skating, lake access and management of geese. Although the responses are in individual categories, a theme is developing that points to ecosystem improvements for the park, which are centered on the lagoon and Lake Wingra.

Several participants described walking as a favorite activity in the park but added that they have concerns with traffic passing through on Vilas Park Drive. Suggestions from respondent's discussion during the breakout time and in comments left on topic sheets included reducing traffic speeds and/or the amount of traffic on Vilas Park Drive.

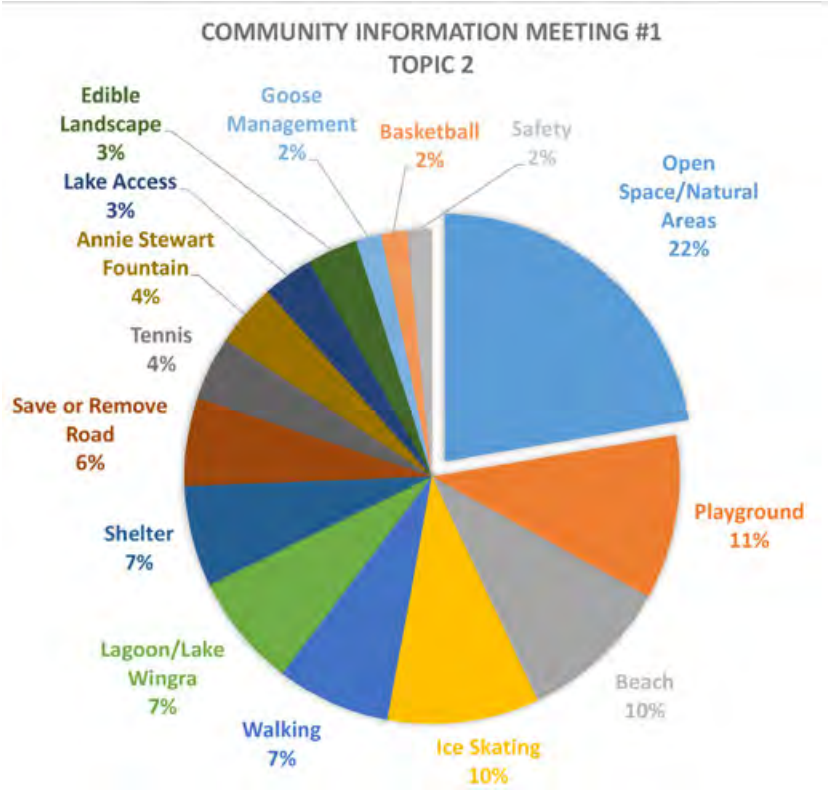


Figure 3.3. Community Information Meeting Topic 2 Results

Topic 3: What to improve at Vilas. What 1 to 2 things do you hope can change at Vilas Park? What is missing or not working?

There were 166 responses posted to the Topic 3 board. Allowing dogs in the park and/or creating a dog park and the issue of parking were the most common comments, both at 14% (Figure 3.3). The comments related to parking tended to focus on maintaining or reducing the current number of stalls throughout the park and condensing parking lots.

Like Topics 1 and 2, several comments mentioned cleaning or improving the quality of the lagoon and shoreline of Lake Wingra, which lends further support to the theme of ecosystem improvements. Respondents attributed the reduction in the quality of ice in the winter to the condition of the lagoon and its high levels of plant growth in the summer.

The words "parking," "traffic," and "road" appeared in 47 of the 166 comments. Many described concerns related to traffic on Vilas Park Drive. Some comments offered suggestions for improving traffic, such as reduced road width and separation of uses (i.e. bikes, pedestrians and vehicles). Traffic is an emerging theme from Topics 2 and 3, and also Topic 4 below.

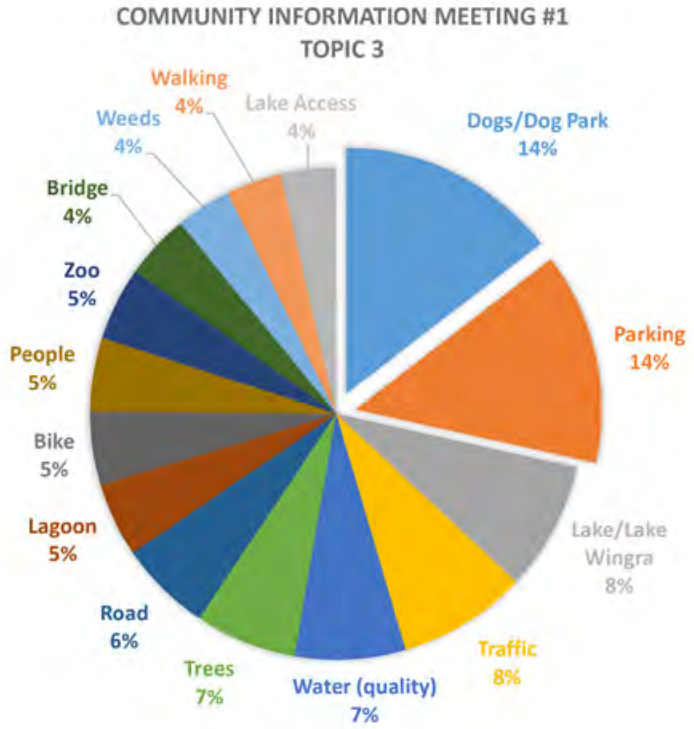


Figure 3.4. Community Information Meeting Topic 3 Results

Topic 4: Vilas as a community park. How can Vilas Park best serve our whole community over the long term as Madison grows? What values are important?

There were 60 comments posted to the Topic 4 board. Parking (20%) and modes of travel, including buses and shuttles (17%), were the two most common comments received (Figure 3.4). Many responses mentioned preserving existing parking stall numbers or reducing parking stalls in the park while providing more accessible paths and walkway connections. Access to the Madison Metro bus system was seen as important to making sure Vilas Park serves the whole community. However, some respondents did state that limiting buses to peripheral roads and allowing only short-term stopping points is highly desired.

The preservation and enhancement of the lagoon for ice-skating, green space, nature and trees were again common comments. The protection and improvement of the ecosystem of Vilas Park is an overarching theme from all four topic discussions.

Figure 3.5. Community Information Meeting Topic 4 Results

COMMENT CARDS

From June 2019 through November 2019, comment cards were available at several locations within the park and were available at several local businesses and at Madison Public Library branches throughout the city. During this period, 45 comment cards were collected.

When asked to select from a list of activities they participated in, the top responses were walking (40 responses), ice-skating on the lagoons (30 responses), birding/nature viewing (28 responses), playground (26 responses), swimming (26 responses) and running/jogging (24 responses). See Figure 3.6 for more information.

Respondents were also asked what current or proposed activities were most important to them. From the list supplied, top responses were walking paths (23 responses), nature (20 responses), ice-skating (16 responses), playground (15 responses), beach (10 responses), open field (9 responses), swimming (8 responses). See Figure 3.7 for more information.

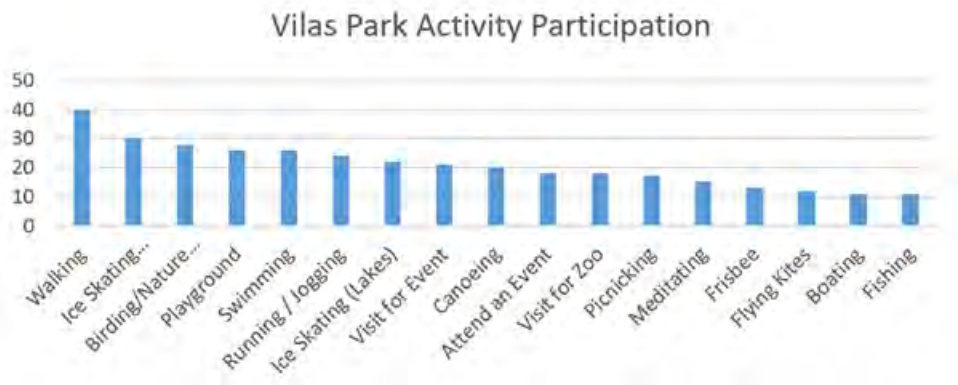


Figure 3.6 Vilas Park Activity Participation

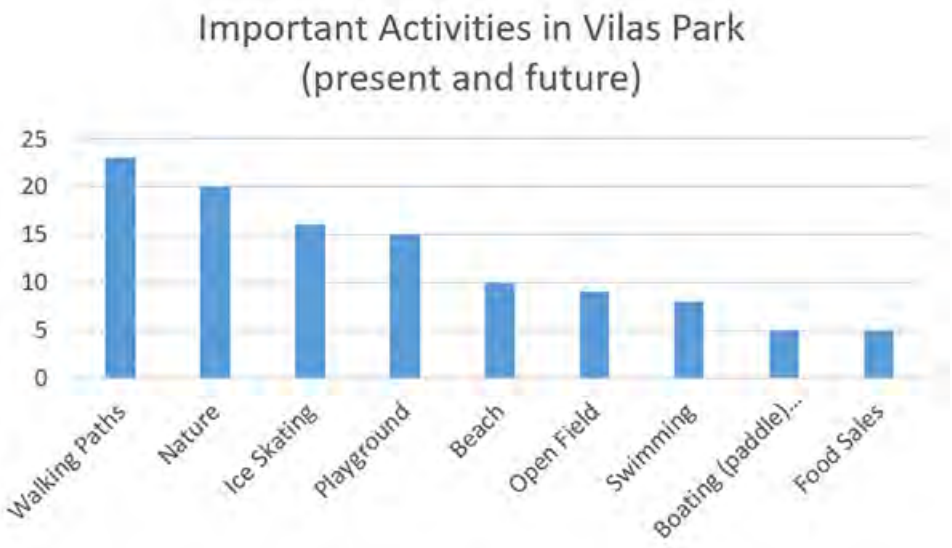


Figure 3.7 Important Activities in Vilas Park

An open comment question asked, "What should the Parks Division keep in mind when planning for the future of Vilas Park?"

Of the 45 comments received, 18 mentioned the importance of preserving or enhancing the natural environment within the park. These responses included:

- "Green space dividing street from Vilas Park - Preserve. No idle/no parking for busses on park streets. Preserve open space/walking space/greenway/lake access."
- "Keep it friendly for the many birds, other animals - turtles, fish - that live in the area and/or pass through."
- "Future rainfall - I realize it's a massive consideration but the rains for the past 3 years have taken large swaths of time and space from the park."

Activities, including playgrounds, sports and special events, were mentioned 11 times. Additionally, comments about safety, including traffic, parking and crime, were mentioned in 9 comments.

ONLINE PUBLIC SURVEY

From July 2019 until the end of January 2020, a public survey was available through a link posted on the City of Madison Parks Division Vilas Park Master Plan Projects website. The distribution of the survey link occurred through postings on city social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter and a blog), as a City of Madison website news item and during the initial round of community and focus group meetings. The link was also shared through email blasts to several City of Madison listservs including Neighborhood Resource Teams (NRTs). The survey was written and revised with assistance from Access to Independence and the City's Division of Civil Rights to ensure that the wording of questions and answers were reflective of a diversity of users, as well as those with a broad range of physical and mental capabilities. A total of 496 responses were received to the survey.

It should be noted that the Vilas and Greenbush Neighborhood Associations conducted independent surveys, the results of which are not included in this section but can be found in the Resident Resource Group subsection of this report. The focus of the neighborhood surveys was different from the online survey in that questions tended to be specific to issues surrounding the park, such as traffic impacts, parking, and the area of the park known to the neighborhood as the Wingra overlook.

Overall, demographic information provided by respondents suggested that the typical survey taker was White or Caucasian (87%) and between 30-39 years old (26.6%), which is not a direct reflection of the City of Madison demographics. According to Data USA, the highest percentage of residents are between 18-24 years of age (see Figure 3.8). Although the relative percentages of age groups from the survey did not correlate exactly to Madison's numbers, the survey was able to obtain input from a broad range of ages, from persons 10 or younger up to 70 or older (Figure 3.9).

The US Census Bureau lists Madison as 78.4% Caucasian, 9% Asian, 6.9% Hispanic or Latino, 6.8% Black or African American and 3.6% reported two or more races. By contrast, 87% of survey respondents were Caucasian, 1% were Asian, 1.6% were Hispanic or Latino, 0.2% were African American or Black and 2.3% were from two or more races.

A majority of respondents indicated that they visit Vilas Park an average of a few times per week (44.5%) or an

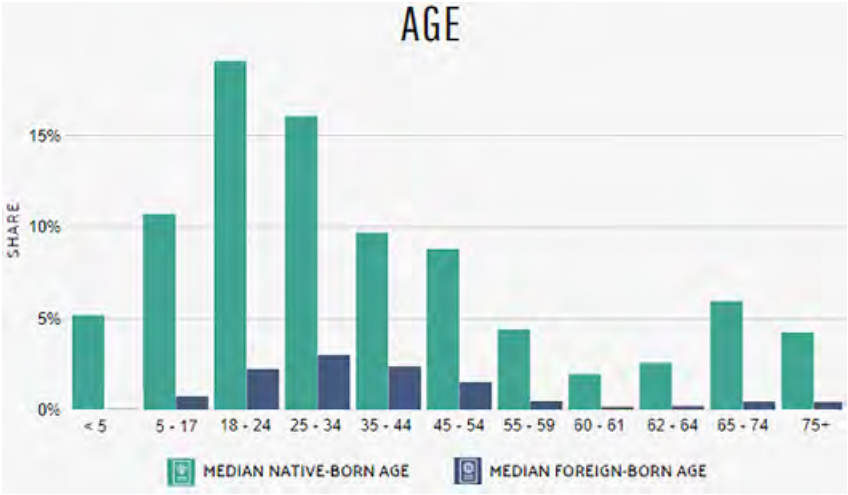


Figure 3.8. Madison Age Demographics 2017

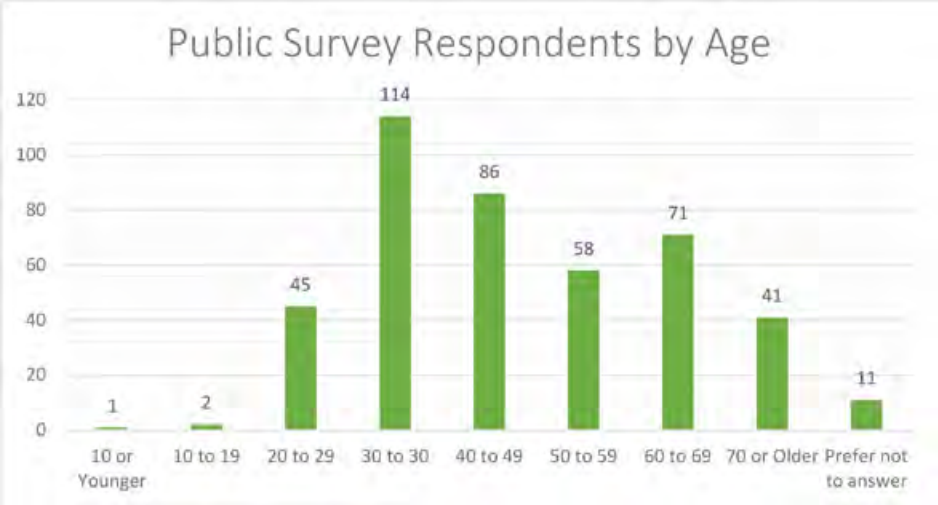


Figure 3.9. Public Survey Respondents by Age

average of once or twice during the season (40%). Of those people who visit Vilas Park, 94% said that they feel "safe and welcome" at the park. Several of the questions in the survey pertained to how respondents currently use the park. The survey asked, "Which of the following activities do you participate in at Vilas Park?" Out of 449 total responses to that question, the top activities were walking (75%), relaxing (62%), ice-skating (56%), playgrounds (51%), picnicking (49%), running and jogging (38%), birding/nature viewing (38%) and swimming (36%). Other uses like boating (34%), tennis (15%), basketball (5%), and volleyball (2%) are in less demand, but responses do show a need for consideration of those activities. See Figure 3.10 for more information.

The survey also asked about the perceived importance of certain amenities at the park. It asked, "What existing (if known) or potential amenities are important to have at Vilas Park?" The top ten responses, in order of preference, were walking, beach activity, ice-skating, open fields for games, playgrounds, the shelter,

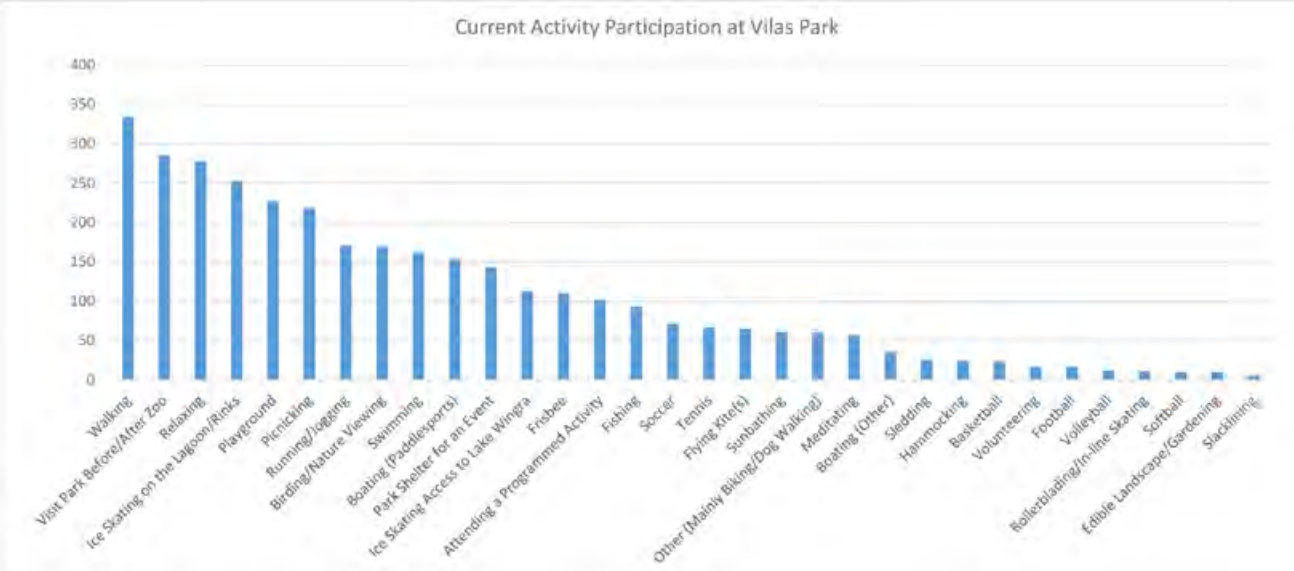


Figure 3.10. Current Activity Participation at Vilas Park

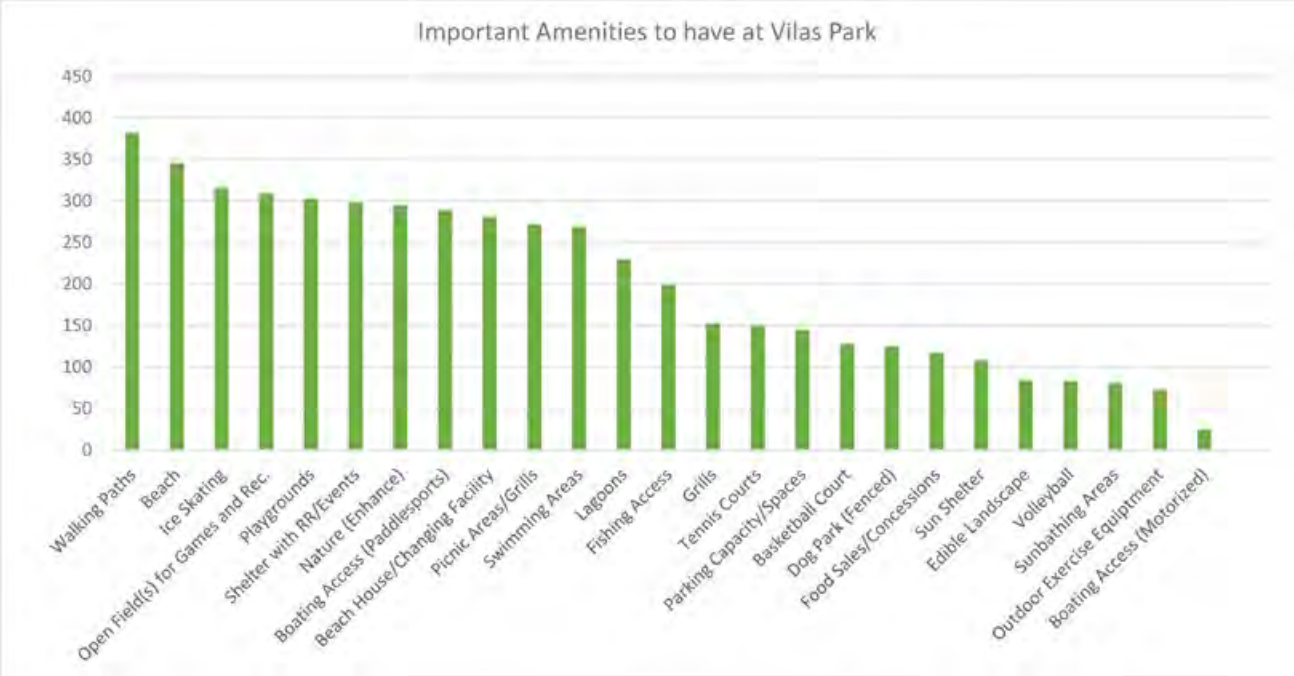


Figure 3.11. Important Amenities to have a Vilas Park

natural areas, access for paddle sports, the beach house and picnic areas (Figure 3.11). Additionally, a total of 32 persons with disabilities, including mobility-related, hearing-related and neurodiversity/Autism-related conditions, provided responses to the survey.

This survey lends additional support to the theme of improving the ecosystem in and around the park. Survey responses showed similar favor towards maintaining the natural amenities of Vilas Park as was seen in comments received at the community input meeting on June 26, 2019.

ON-SITE INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS

Observations and interviews began in June 2019 and were completed in May 2020. The park was divided into ten zones (Map 3.1) where observers monitored and recorded activities and the number of participants, specifically noting if users were alone or part of a group.

Map 3.1. Observation Zones

Site observations at Vilas Park occurred during four time frames: 5 a.m. to 11 a.m., 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., and 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Each time slot observation occurred every month with the intent of capturing park use for a full year through all four seasons. A total of 40 observations of the park were taken. The data is broken into seasons to describe the activity as the weather changes and schools are in or out of session. Additionally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the features within the park, other than trails, were closed starting mid-March and reopened in phases starting May 26, 2020. The zoo was closed from March 14, 2020 through July 2020.

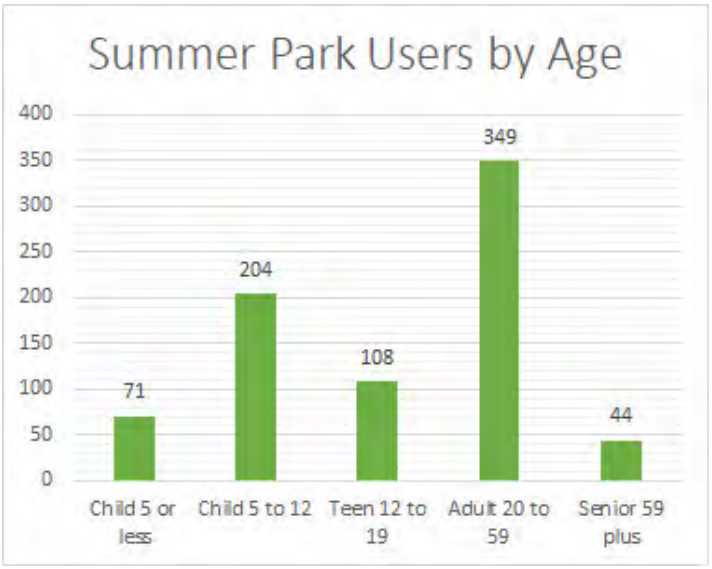
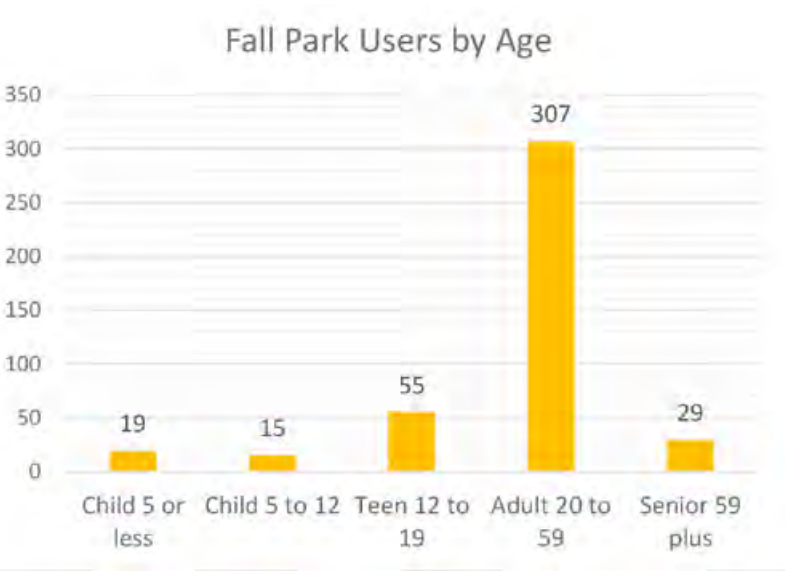


Figure 3.12. Summer Park Observation Results

During the summer months, June through August, the majority of use consisted of picnicking, using the playground, walking, using the beach and using the shelter. The summer park users tended to be younger, as can be expected with children and teens on summer break from school. See Figure 3.12 for a summary of summer month usage.



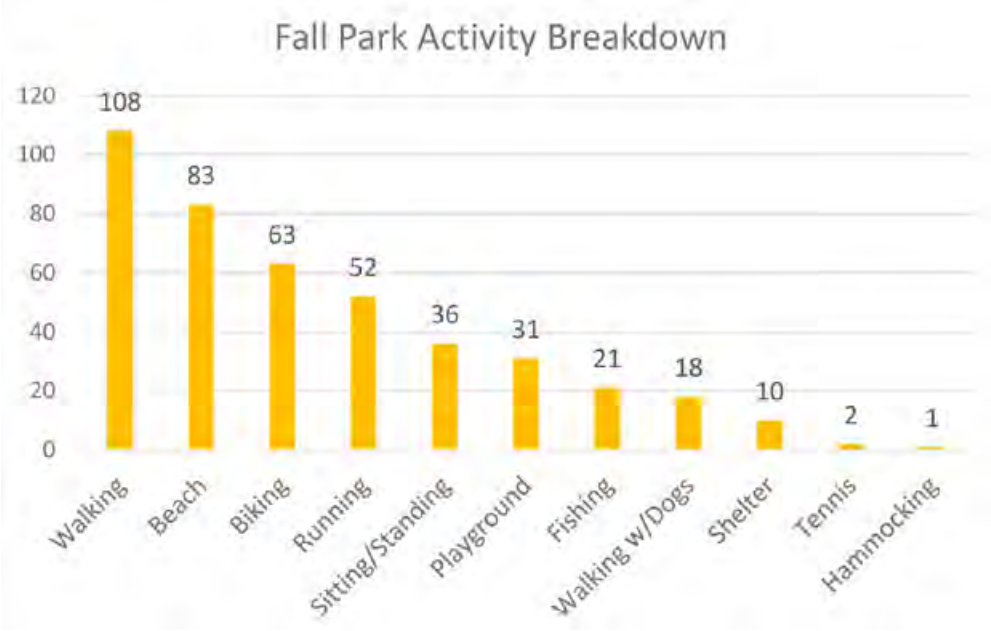


Figure 3.13. Fall Park Observation Results

With school in session in the fall, September through November, we saw the number of younger park users decline. The majority of users observed were adults. Walking, biking and running/jogging became the most popular activities (Figure 3.13). The beach was in use until mid-October when temperatures began to drop.

In the winter months, December through February, the earlier season uses, like running and biking, remained, with the addition of ice-skating/ice hockey, on the lagoon (Figure 3.14). The majority of observed winter users were adults. Walking was consistently at the top of park uses throughout the colder months, including people walking their dogs, despite dogs being prohibited in city parks at the time.

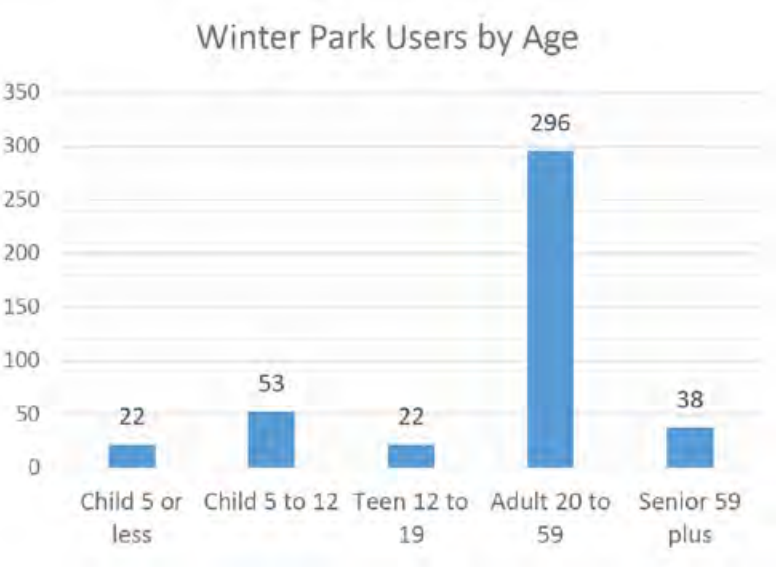
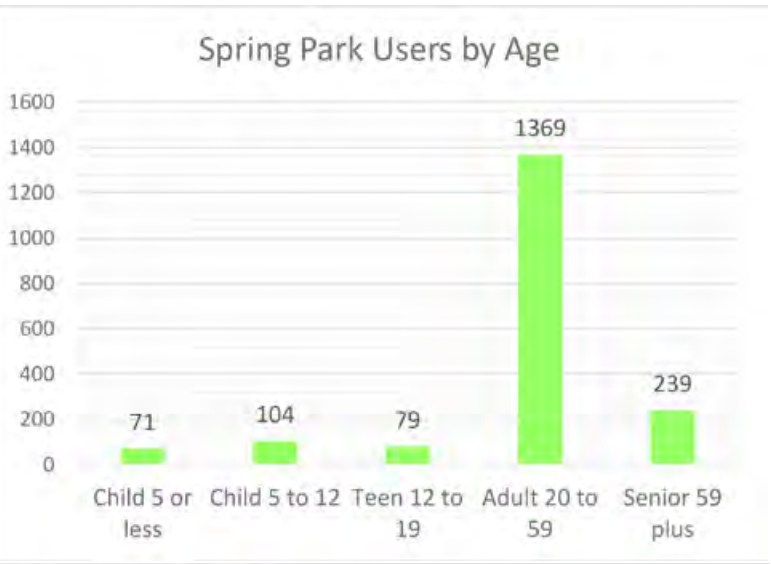


Figure 3.14. Winter Park Observation Results *MSA*

When the park observations were being conducted, the City of Madison was reviewing and updating its policy on dogs. In March of 2020, a new ordinance was adopted relating to dogs on city property. Under the ordinance change, all city parks and greenways will now, except where specifically designated as dog-free, allow for leashed dogs. Also, in March, the State of Wisconsin issued the "Safer at Home" order to quarantine the public from the spread of COVID-19. Use of the park initially fell, likely due to uncertainties regarding whether to what extent contact with others, even outdoors and at a distance, could be considered safe, but rose quickly as outdoor open space became a respite from an extended stay at home.

March through May, observations were directly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic; the shelter, playground, basketball, beach and tennis courts were closed for use most of spring. However, during the same time period, walking, biking and running topped the list of activities due perhaps, to participants undertaking those activities being able to maintain 6 feet of distance from others, as was suggested by Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Playground use also was directly limited by the quarantine, their closure limiting activities in the park available to the youngest users. Adults between the ages of 20 and 59 made up the majority of park users once again, as they did in every season. See Figure 3.15 for spring park observations.



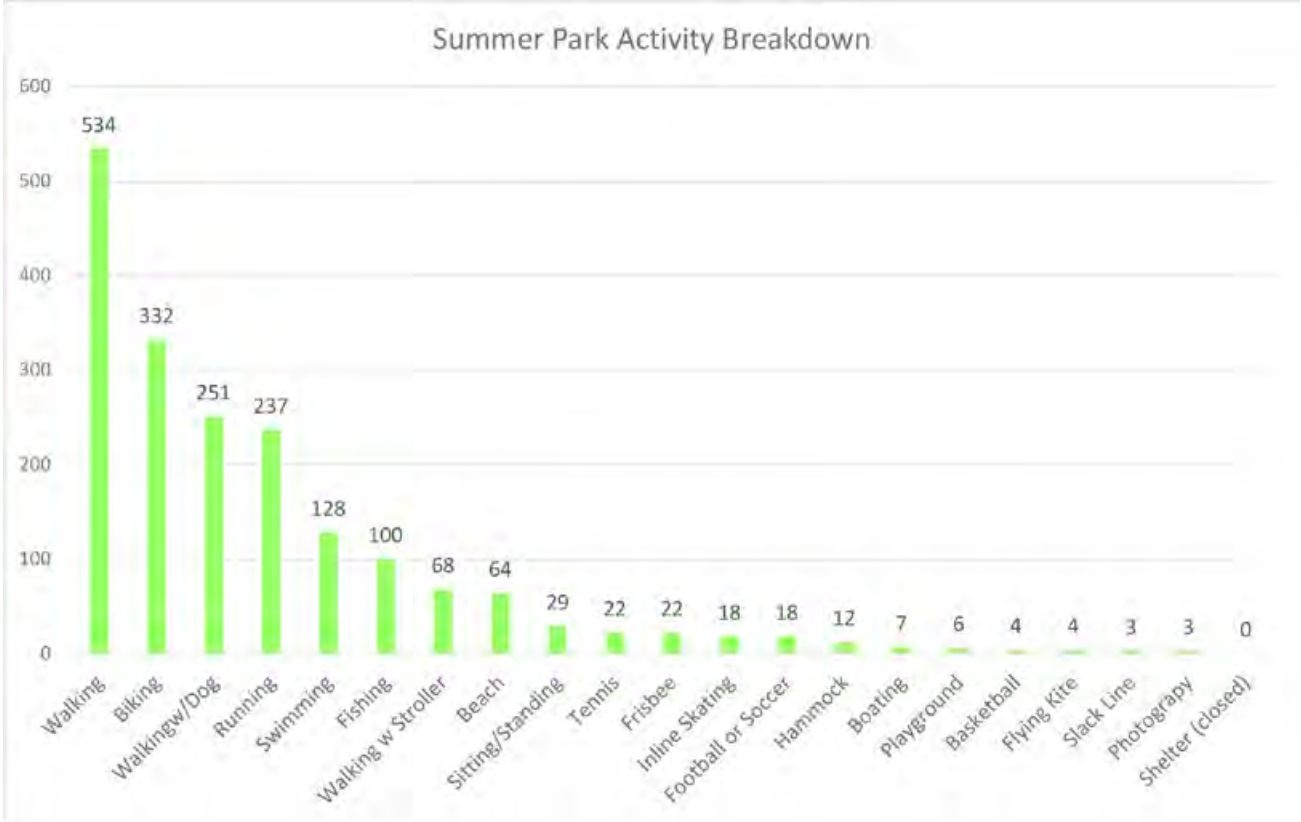


Figure 3.15. Spring Park Observation Results

Over the entire year of observations, 4,103 park users were observed. The highest use observed in the park by a large margin was walking. Walking was observed 1159 times, meaning approximately 28% of the number of people observed were walking. The second-most observed activity was the biking, at 542 observations, or 13%. The majority of the observed park users were estimated to be in the 20 to 59 age group with many families and small group gatherings supporting this majority. See Figure 3.16 for overall observations.

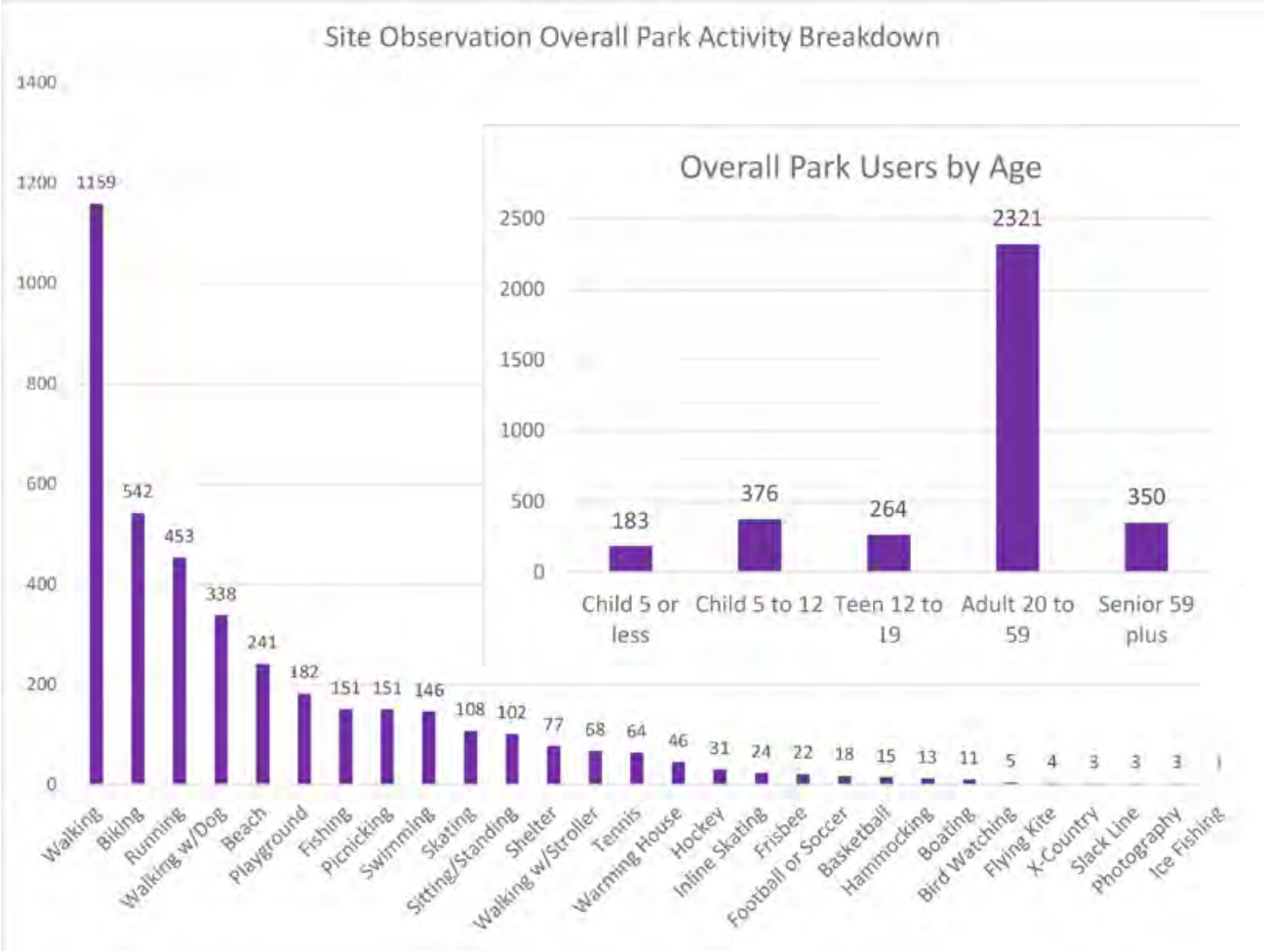
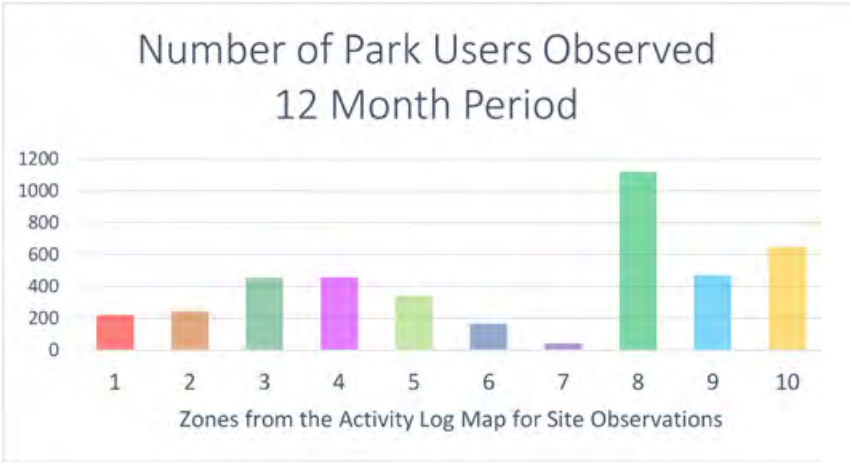


Figure 3.16. Overall Park Observation Results

The zones identified on the Activity Log Map for site observations were used to determine if certain areas of the park have more park users than others. The result shows that zone 8 of the map, mainly around the park shelter, recorded 27% of the total number of park users observed (Figure 3.17). The shelter is used both as a summer rental facility and the warming house for ice skating in winter. The zone around the beach followed with 16% of the total. Zone 7, the site of the mounds in Vilas Park, saw the least amount of observed use at 1%.



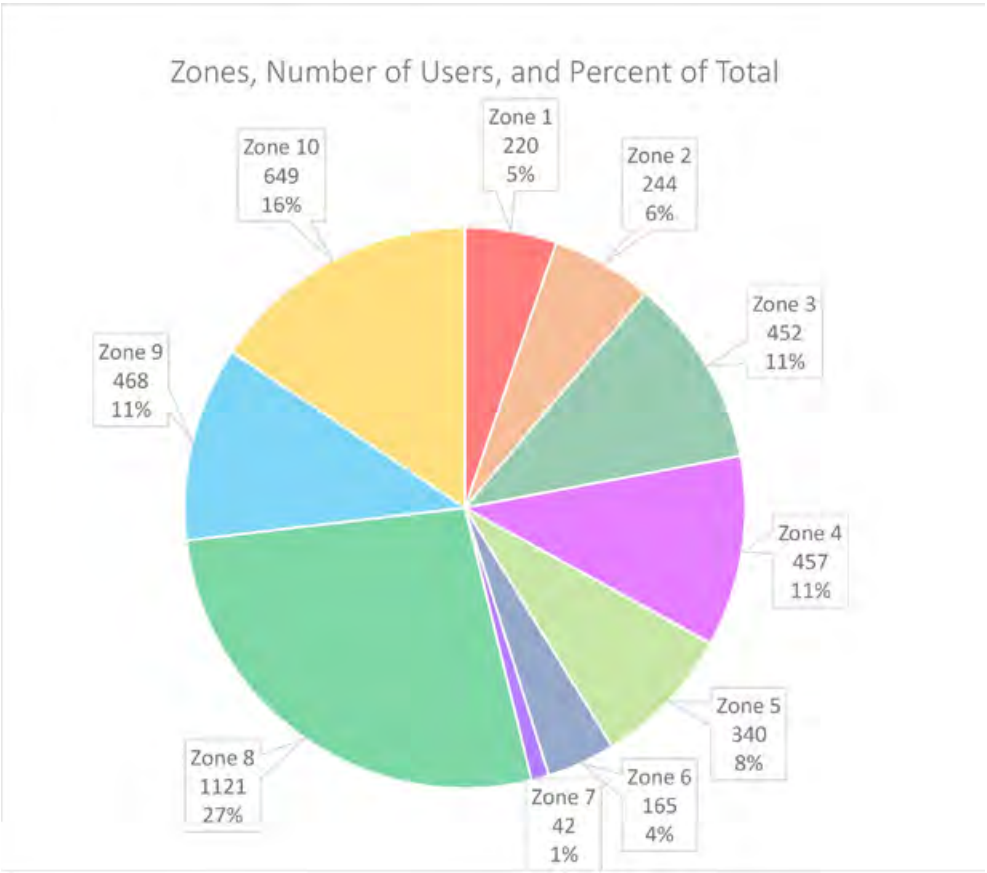


Figure 3.17. Park User Observations by Mapping Zone

In addition to observing activity within the park, intercept interviews were also conducted by the project team while on site. In these brief interviews respondents were asked several questions about how they were currently using the park and also asked about suggestions for improvements:

1. What brought you to Vilas Park today?
2. What do you love most about Vilas Park? What are your favorite activities?
3. What would you change about Vilas Park? (e.g.: shoreline, shelter, recreational amenities, etc.)
4. During which season(s) do you visit Vilas?
5. Have you ever used the shelter?
6. Do you feel that Vilas Park is a safe and welcoming space for everyone? Why or why not?
7. Is there anything else that you would like to add?
8. What is your age?
9. Do you identify as a person with a disability?
10. What is your zip code?
11. How do you identify your race/ethnicity?

A total of 36 intercept interviews were conducted between June of 2019 and January of 2020. Intercept interviews were stopped in February over concern about the spread of COVID-19. More than half of the people interviewed arrived at Vilas Park by car (Figure 3.18). Only two interviewees arrived by bus, highlighting that Vilas Park is several blocks from the nearest bus stop. Most interviewees liked Vilas for the natural setting of the park. Suggested improvements included access to Lake Wingra and the lagoon, updated restrooms, improved playground, added walks and benches, and more trees. When asked whether they felt Vilas Park was safe and welcoming, 86% (31) of the respondents said yes, they feel safe. However, 12 of those did add an additional comment such as "sometimes I get a little nervous in certain areas" or "it can be less safe at night." One respondent also commented, "plenty of space for kids and other groups (sic) need more playground activities for disabled children." The ethnicity of those interviewed is shown in Figure 3.19. Of the 36 people interviewed 61% identified as white. The intake sessions provided an opportunity for open dialogue on ways to improve park experiences from interviews with a diverse park user group.

Figure 3.18. Mode of Transportation

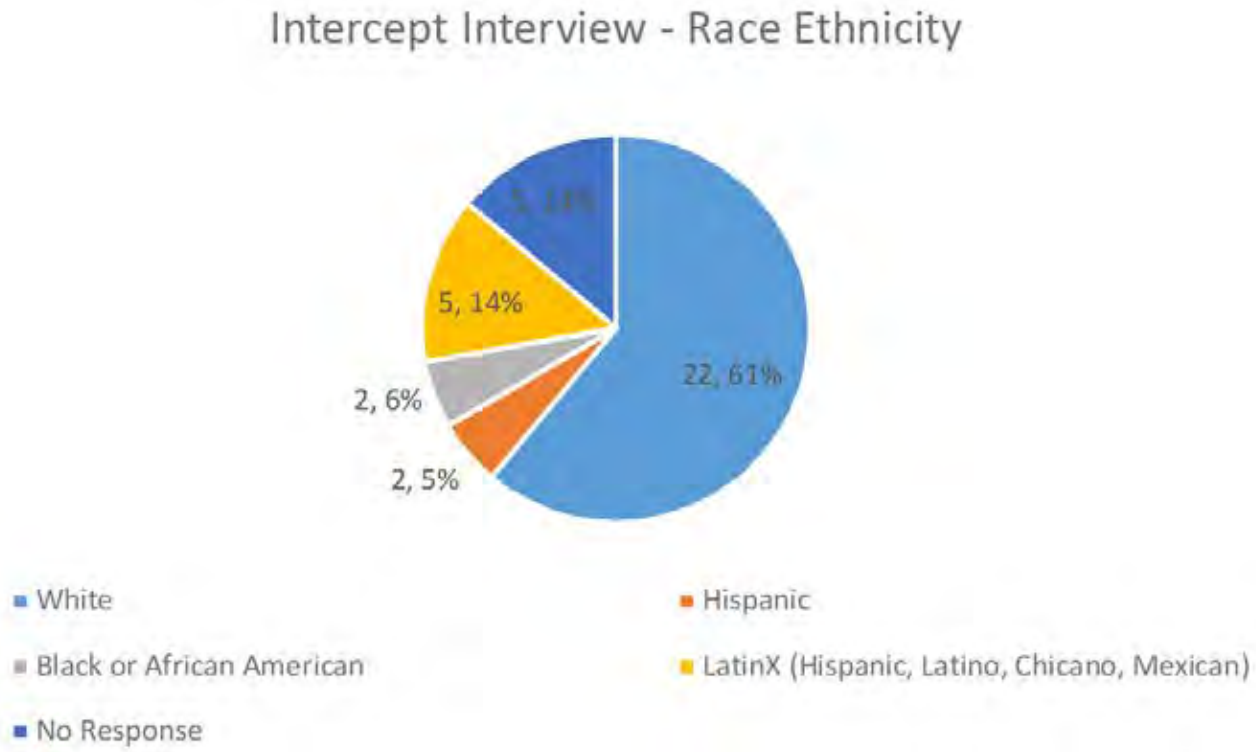


Figure 3.19. Ethnicity of Interviewees

STAKEHOLDERS

RESIDENT RESOURCE GROUP

The Resident Resource Group (RRG) met twice during Phase I and II and once as a combined session with the Community Partners Advisory Group (CPAG) to gather input on background information to support planning efforts of the park. The information presented included the history of the original O.C. Simonds plan and findings from other group discussions about desires for the park.

Participants in the first RRG meeting expressed concern for wildlife, particularly birds and amphibians. They identified limiting impacts to wildlife during any proposed improvements to the park as a priority. Similarly, there were discussions about the overall ecosystem and maintaining a viable natural open space. The protection of woodlands, the lagoon and other natural features of the park were important to the RRG.

The neighborhoods surrounding Vilas Park were also concerned about street parking and the amount of zoo parking overflow. The group felt that an important component of the master planning process was considering school bus traffic and parking issues.

Below is a list of key takeaways from the RRG meetings during Phase I:

- The park is attractive to a diverse population.
- The park is welcoming to people from outside of the area.
- The park is kid friendly.
- Retaining the character of the park is important.
- Open space, views and access to nature are important.
- Flexible space that allows for a variety of uses is important.
- The park should be suitable for recreation that does not require permanent structures.
- The city should upgrade and improve current space and facilities, including playground equipment, tennis courts and the shelter.
- The city should drain or fill frequently flooded and wet areas.
- The city should keep bathrooms clean, open and available for use.
- The city should avoid adding to the number of permanent structures, with the exception of new bathrooms with improved accessibility.

- Maintaining and improving the lagoon, vegetation and natural areas is important.
- There is strong support for expanding opportunities to connect paths and boardwalks to adjacent properties with the goal of creating a trail system around Lake Wingra.
- The city should not add parking to the park. The city should maintain or reduce the number of parking stalls in the park and improve access to public transit in order to reduce the need for parking.
- There is support for the idea of providing edible landscaping and public art in Vilas Park.
- There is support for the addition of a "Wingra overlook" feature at the upper level of the park.

During the first meeting, the Vilas and Greenbush Neighborhoods agreed to include a discussion of the park planning efforts at their next neighborhood association meetings. As part of that effort, representatives from the Greenbush Neighborhood Association developed and distributed a series of surveys that were shared with the Vilas Neighborhood Association and Dudgeon Monroe Neighborhood Associations. The surveys focused on topics of importance to the neighborhoods, including traffic, parking, pedestrian accommodations and protecting natural features.

The findings of these surveys are specific to interests within the context of their respective neighborhoods (Figures 3.20 and 3.21). While it is difficult to statistically connect answers received within these surveys to the questions from the Vilas Park Master Plan online survey, the information is beneficial to the planning

Below are features which have been suggested (in addition to the current playgrounds, playing fields, paths, etc.) for Vilas Park. What best represents your current view of each of these ideas?

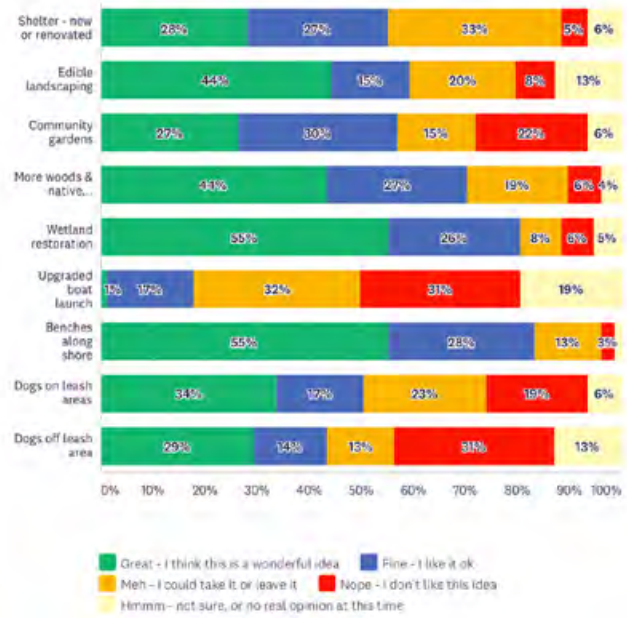


Figure 3.20. Greenbush Neighborhood Survey Responses

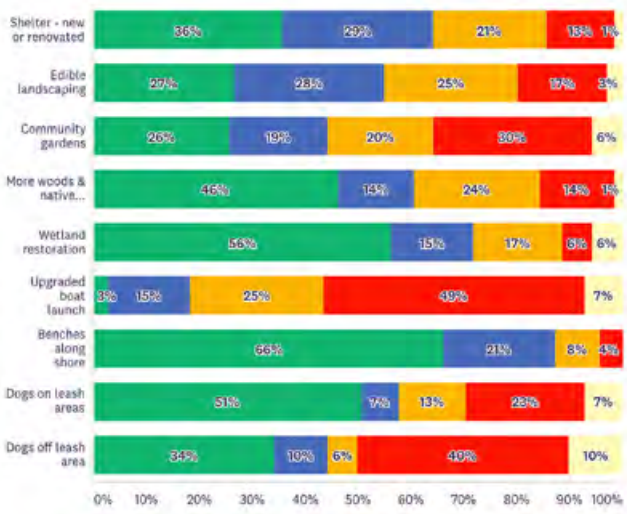


Figure 3.21 Vilas Neighborhood Survey Response

effort in that it represents the focus and concerns of the residents with the closest proximity to the park. One particular question asked what park features were important to people. The responses demonstrated the desire to maintain the natural setting of the lagoon, woodlands, and open meadow, which correlates to the information gained from the online survey and comment cards but differs from the responses received during intercept interviews, which tended to mention access improvements to the shoreline, increased pathway connections and improvements to facilities such as restrooms.

As you can see from Figures 3.20 and 3.21, 55% of survey respondents from the Greenbush Neighborhood and 56% of respondents from the Vilas Neighborhood supported wetland restoration; 55% and 66%, respectively, supported benches along the shoreline; 44% and 46%, respectively, supported more woodlands and native landscapes.

An additional theme that emerged from the Vilas and Greenbush Neighborhood Association meetings reflected concern about traffic and pedestrian interactions on Vilas Park Drive. This was similar to the comments received during the Community Input Meeting, on comment cards, during intercept interviews and from the Vilas Park Master Plan survey. Across the board, residents of these neighborhoods and parkgoers expressed strong concern for pedestrian safety throughout the park.

Additional information on the neighborhood surveys and detailed meeting minutes from the RRG can be found in the Appendix.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS ADVISORY GROUP

Community Partners Advisory Group (CPAG) members shared many of the same concerns expressed during the RRG meetings, the Community Input Meeting and within the online survey responses regarding traffic on Vilas Park Drive and the condition of the lagoon and Lake Wingra shoreline in its meeting during Phase I and II of the project. CPAG visions for Vilas Park Drive ranged from recreating the park and pleasure drive character (a road meant for leisurely park enjoyment in the early 1900's) to eliminating vehicular through-traffic all together, while enhancing bike and pedestrian access and safety.

CPAG members tended to identify with events in the park more strongly than the membership found on the RRG and they provided input on park use related to large group activities around the shelter and Lake Wingra shoreline. Additionally, a representative from Access to Independence provided insights and suggestions for accommodating users of different physical capabilities. One of these suggestions was to improve access to the

park via public transit. The CPAG also suggested adding more connections between the park and Lake Wingra with boardwalks, fishing piers and boat access to provide opportunities for anglers and water enthusiasts.

Below is a list of key takeaways from the CPAG meetings during Phase I:

- Accessible furniture should be provided, such as wheelchair accessible picnic tables.
- Consideration should be given to offering boat rentals or swan boats in the lagoon.
- Alternative uses should be found for the hockey rink in the summer (e.g., as a paved area for basketball).
- Use areas such as parking lots within the park should be consolidated to allow for more open space and natural areas
- The city should modify the ice-skating rink to be a loop around the island in the lagoon (the RRG also suggested this).
- Improvements should be made to the beach house that include separate shower/changing rooms.
- Native vegetation should be restored along the shoreline to improve water quality.
- Fishing piers and boardwalks should be added.

Additional information and detailed meeting minutes from the CPAG meeting are in the Appendix.

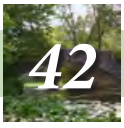
FOCUS GROUPS

Focus Groups sessions were held with the Bayview Neighborhood Center, Badger Rock Community Center, LatinX, Youth Workshop with Boys and Girls Club Dane County with the specific intent on obtaining input from communities not typically represented through the larger community meetings and surveys.

At a Bayview Neighborhood meeting and bingo night with the Hmong community, participants had the opportunity to draw and or write input directly onto a Vilas Park site map. In addition, the participants held a group discussion focusing on six topics concerning the current state of the park and future considerations for the park's master plan.

Below are the key takeaways from the Bayview Community Center meeting:

- Main uses of the park by the Hmong community are swimming, fishing, biking, picnics, and playgrounds.
- Residents would like to see additional parking, better accessibility around the park and more public transportation options.
- Residents want to maintain access to the zoo and the lake.



- Residents support preserving wildlife habitat and adding edible landscaping.
- Residents support the addition of outdoor activity rentals, include a fishing pier, and the addition of more playgrounds.
- Residents want to stay involved.
- There is strong support for increased park-wide accessibility and the addition of cultural influences from divergent park users.

During the focus group session held at the Badger Rock Community Center, participants were asked to respond to a series of questions in a curated discussion. Takeaway from the meeting include:

- Park is mainly used today for swimming, fishing, biking, picnics, and the playgrounds
- Would like to see additional parking, better accessibility around the park, and public transport options
- Keep access to the zoo and lake
- Preserve the wildlife in the park and add edible landscaping
- Improve accessibility issues, add outdoor activity rentals, include a fishing pier, and add more playgrounds
- Keep the community involved
- Strong support for park-wide accessibility and cultural influences

A Youth Workshops were held with middle school-age participants at the Dane County Boys and Girls Club, Taft St. location. During the session, the workshop facilitator was Rob Franklin (Madison Public Library Youth Instructor), with assistance provided by the master plan consultant team. The consultants led a short overview of the park site and afterwards the participants conducted three activities as described below:

1. The Pic or Draw (POD) activity broke the group into teams to complete a recreation-based scavenger hunt of items common to Vilas Park. The participants drew on Vilas Park plans celebrating the many activities they enjoy, such as swimming, playground, and basketball.
2. The Park It exercise was designed for participants to showcase how they use the park system, as well as gauge what amenities and activities would increase the appeal of the park to youth. While some amenities were location-specific, others were more general desires that youth wish to incorporate into the park. Some of the amenities on their list that do not already exist in the park included food/refreshments, a flower garden, public art, fire pits, Wi-Fi, movies in the park, a petting zoo, splash pads, and a band shell.

3. The final activity, Southside's Got Talent was an opportunity to engage participants in the creation of stories, song and dance about park activities. Narratives revealed unique park preferences and included ideas for improvements related to the beach and basketball courts.

INTERAGENCY REGULATORY MEETINGS

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI DNR), US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and the Ho-Chunk Nation Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) were all engaged in the planning effort during Phase I to provide regulatory input related to Vilas Park. Meetings focused on identifying current best practices per each agency's area of expertise as well as potential roadblocks or concerns related to permitting for future phases of the Master Plan build-out and on identifying sensitive cultural and natural resource areas that could be affected by park improvements.

The WI DNR and ACOE meetings specifically focused on permitting and regulations relating to modifications to the lagoon and the Lake Wingra shoreline. Both agencies agreed that dredging the lagoon could occur with appropriate permits in place. City of Madison Engineering staff helped coordinate testing services for the core samples taken from the lagoon by CGC, Inc. in February, 2019. Material sampling revealed elevated levels of arsenic, which is a fairly common contaminant found in sediment core samples in Dane County and PAHs (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons), chemicals that occur in coal, oil and gasoline. Given this information, sediment material dredged from the lagoon would need to be managed at a landfill or other controlled fill site. All agencies suggested that if dredging activities were still desired, conducting dredging in winter would be advised to reduce runoff.

Below are key takeaways from the ACOE and WI DNR sessions during Phase I:

WI DNR

- Removing mowed lawn at water's edge and replacing with taller plantings could help reduce geese populations.
- Modification of the shoreline to include wetland forebays or other native vegetation could help act as a natural filter for runoff from park.
- Suggested best management practices for dredging operations:
    - Silt curtains
    - Dredging in two phases
    - Dewatering before dredging

- Diverting the storm inlet during dredging
- Permitting may require justification for dredging and an alternatives analysis.

ACOE

- Any discharge (below plane of ordinary high water) from dredging operations in navigable waters of the United States would require a permit under section 404 of the Clean Water Act and section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1988. The type of impact that is proposed to occur determines what permit type is required.
- Modifications to the lagoon would require individual permits and reviews:
  - Timeline for review is 120 days.
  - A Class II public notice is required.
  - Mitigation would likely not be required due to the goal of improving water quality.
  - Applicable rules – National Historic Preservation Act, Sec. 106 and ACOE Small Navigation Project Study, Sec. 7.
  - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must review.
  - All phases of dredging could be applied for and approved under a single permit.

THE HO-CHUNK TRIBAL NATION

The Ho-Chunk Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), Bill Quackenbush was provided the presentation given at the CPAG and RRG meetings as an introduction to the scope of the Master Plan. He provided the following suggestions for the mounds and Vilas Park:

- Follow existing City of Madison Mound Management Plan regarding maintenance or disturbance, including the inadvertent discovery practice/protocol, around the existing mounds. A 25' management buffer is preferred.
- If neighbors are to assist in managing the mound, develop a release form to define guidelines and protocols.
- Consider using "dark sky" lighting within the park to protect the nighttime viewsheds of the mounds and other culturally sensitive sites.
- If replacement of the "dinosaur" playground equipment is required, the impacts due to excavating for the structure's footings needs to be considered. An Archeological report/investigation will be required for any new disturbance in the area.
  - The project would need to be discussed with the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office as concepts are developed.
  - Consider should be given to National Register designation and cataloging of the site.

CITY OF MADISON INTERAGENCY STAFF

At a local governmental level, interagency staff representatives from City of Madison Traffic Engineering, Parks (Ranger staff), Engineering and Planning Divisions, as well as representatives from the UW Arboretum, Henry Vilas Zoo, Metro Transit, Madison Police Department and City of Madison Fire Department met to review public comments and provide feedback and response on the feasibility of topics discussed and questions raised during the public meetings.

Below are key takeaways from the interagency staff meetings:

- Metro Transit: The closest transit stop is Route 4, which stops at Erin St. and Mills St. – better access along Erin Street could help without revisions to the route itself.
- Traffic Engineering: Vilas Park Drive closure is on the table but needs further analysis to determine the impacts on the neighborhoods and local road network.
- Henry Vilas Zoo: The zoo is aware that parking lots are used for Badger Games on Saturdays. The zoo feels that tailgaters are willing to pay tickets rather than find alternate parking. The Henry Vilas Zoo Master Plan and Strategic Plan are coming up for revisions in 2020. The zoo has user counts of 800,000 + per year.
- Fire Department: The existing Vilas Park boat launch is not necessary for servicing Lake Wingra for emergency purposes. The closure of Vilas Park Drive to through traffic would not influence EMS response times.

DESIGN DRIVERS FROM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As feedback from surveys and meetings accumulated, overarching themes began to surface. These themes addressed concerns, desires and goals for the future of Vilas Park. The themes are the basis for the development of concepts, and ultimately, the final Master Plan for Vilas Park. The themes are listed here:

MOBILITY AND SAFETY

- Improve pedestrian safety along the Vilas Park Drive corridor.
- Consider accessibility in design of new trails and park features.

ENVIRONMENT

- Improve lagoon water quality and shoreline access and aesthetics.
- Increase quality and size of natural areas within the park.
- Address stormwater issues in pedestrian areas.

COMMUNITY

- Continue engagement with neighborhoods and park users for improvements and programming changes.
- Provide space for local concerts or community events.
- Incorporate park's history into design and programming.

A PARK FOR EVERYONE

- Offer programmed active spaces for adults.
- Consider allowing dogs in some areas of park.
- Continue to offer amenities and activities that can be enjoyed year-round.

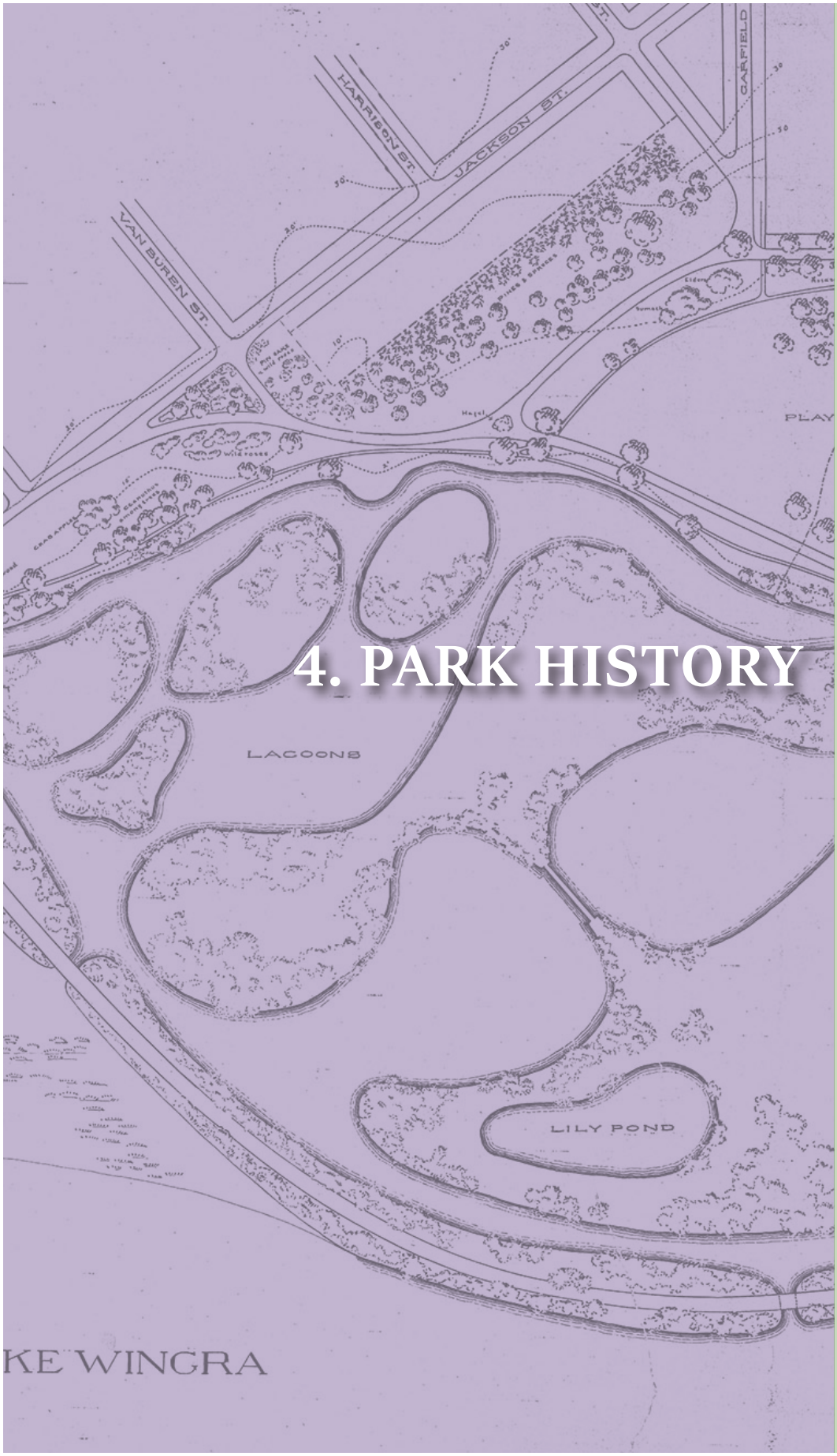
CONNECTIVITY

- Improve the interconnection between the park and Madison through increased multimodal options (i.e. public transit, bike/pedestrian trails, bike rentals, canoe/kayak access).
- Expand pedestrian connections within park.
- Improve wayfinding to alleviate traffic congestion during heavy traffic times.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PHASE II AND III - CONCEPTING AND MASTER PLAN

In Phases II and III of Vilas Park Master Plan development, concept plans were generated and a draft final master plan for the park was presented. The concepts and plans were presented to the RRG, CPAG, IAS, and focus groups for input and option preference discussions. These option preferences were not limited to concepts, but rather to specific site elements, like the shelter, tennis courts, parking lots, etc., within each concept. The goal was to identify highly preferred solutions for uses within the park to form a consensus plan. The findings from the Phase II and III engagement meetings are found in Section 6: Concept Plans and Section 7: Master Plan.

Page Intentionally Left Blank



4. PARK HISTORY

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION TO HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section includes an historical summary, landscape chronology, and a site plan that identifies key historic and cultural resources within the park. The historical summary includes a context for understanding Vilas Park within the larger City of Madison park system, as well as a history of the naming of the park, key designers, and major changes over time. The summary also includes a brief narrative of the park's historic significance, including the Vilas Park Mound Group listing in the National Register, and the potential listing of Vilas Park for its local significance in the history of Madison, the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association, and potential significance for its landscape architecture design of the early 20th century.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The place that would become Vilas Park was originally a wetland marsh along the shore of Lake Wingra, with a ridge of high ground to the east. The natural landscape provided habitat for nesting birds and fish, and the marshy ground supported the cultivation of wild rice by indigenous people. Beginning circa 700 AD through 1200 AD, earthen mounds were constructed on the ridge overlooking the lake. These included two bird effigies, a linear mound, and 8 conical mounds (as identified by Increase A. Lapham in 1850). The exact purpose and meaning of the mounds is unknown, but they are part of a much larger pattern of mound building that was prevalent in the Four Lakes region. This region was home to the Ho-Chunk Nation when American settlers arrived in the 1800s. The Ho-Chunk camped adjacent to Lake Wingra even as the city of Madison began to develop.

After the City of Madison was established in the 1830s and the urban population swelled, interest grew to develop scenic carriage drives and parks in and around the city. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, a horse-drawn carriage ride through the countryside was a favorite recreational activity. Often the roads were designed to emphasize a leisurely tour along a scenic route, referred to as "pleasure drives." The Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association (MPPDA) was established in 1894, to raise private funds for this purpose. Beginning with Tenney Park in 1899, the MPPDA quickly established other parks within the city.

Vilas Park was created out of a gift from Senator William Freeman Vilas and his wife Anna M. Vilas who donated 25 acres to the MPPDA to develop their land adjacent Lake Wingra as a park. The deed contained certain conditions that required the association to "within two years, cause a waterway to be constructed between Lakes Monona and Wingra."[1] The park was to be named Henry Vilas Park, in memory of the couple's

1 Madison Park and Pleasure Ground Annual Report, 1905.

son Henry who died young due to complications from diabetes. The Vilas' stipulated that the association, or eventually the city, would never be able to charge an admission fee. Community members quickly raised additional funds to enlarge and improve the park.

The MPPDA hired prominent Chicago-based landscape architect Ossian Cole (O.C.) Simonds to develop a plan for the park. His design incorporated a series of lagoons and islands to drain the marshy land. A pump was used to bring sand up from the bottom of Lake Wingra and fill the bog, bringing the total acreage of the park to 65 acres. The lagoon was complemented by a sweeping open meadow, playground, picnic area, and pleasure drive that circled the park. Simonds' design was in the emerging Prairie Style of landscape architecture that was inspired by nature, informed by local landforms, and used indigenous plant materials.

The park was modified in 1911 when the Henry Vilas Zoo was officially opened. It was established on 28 acres, carved out of the original park space. The zoo has gradually expanded in size since that time. In 1925, the Annie Stewart Fountain was completed as a pedestrian entrance feature, dedicated to Annie C. Stewart (1867 to 1905) who engaged in charitable activities in Madison. By 1937, the park's recreational amenities were well-established, and included tennis courts, ballfields, hockey rink, sand beach, boat launch, and playgrounds.

In the mid-1950s, a new master plan for the park would modify Simonds' original design over the next two decades. The lagoon was reduced in size to its current configuration, with the largest island being connected to the mainland. This modification accommodated a zoo expansion and additional parking in the southeast corner of the park. The Vilas Park Shelter was added to the large island in the 1950s, with adjacent parking. More recently, the park has added a basketball court, beach restroom facility, additional zoo exhibits, and additional parking along Vilas Park Drive.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Vilas Park Mound Group is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, as locally significant under Criterion D, for its ability to provide important information on the Late Woodland stage in southcentral and southwestern Wisconsin. The mounds are significant as one of the relatively few surviving Late Woodland mound groups in the Madison lakes area of Dane County.[2] The mound group is protected under Wisconsin state law as a protected burial place. The mounds are culturally important to contemporary indigenous groups, who continue to care for this ancestral ground.

2 Vilas Park Mound Group, National Register of Historic Places Registration, 1991.

Vilas Park is important for its association with the park planning and design movement in the City of Madison. The Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association was "the most influential voluntary organization in Madison's history."[3] From 1894 to 1938, the organization transformed Madison into a city with a wealth of parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, beaches and open space. The MPPDA changed the physical development and environmental character of Madison, and Vilas Park, as the second park in Madison, is part of that legacy. Vilas Park was established on the condition that no fee ever be charged for admission, and with this precedent, the development of public parks in the city grew with hundreds of citizens donating small annual gifts to the designation and improvement of public land.

The MPPDA set high aesthetic standards, hiring talented landscape architect O.C. Simonds. The park retains many components of his original design, including the lagoon, small island, large meadow, picnic areas, playground, and the organically curving carriage drive around much of the perimeter. The park retains its connection to the Prairie Style in landscape architecture, evidenced by native plant material placed in naturalistic groupings and picturesque views across the water and meadow. The park was designed to connect to other parks and drives in the city, as part of John Nolen's 1911 comprehensive design for Madison's parks (Figure 5.1). Today this network of parks and greenways that continues to enrich the lives of Madisonians.

Figure 4.1. John Nolen's plan for the City of Madison 1910 (Wisconsin Historical Society, 100762)

3 City of Madison Landmarks Commission, Tenney Park Landmark Nomination, City of Madison, 1994.

CHRONOLOGY

pre 700 AD - Madison is situated within the Eastern Ridges and Lowlands physiographic province. The topography is affected by ridges of resistant Paleozoic sedimentary rock ridges overlying a softer layer of less resistant bedrock, or cuestas. In Madison two resistant formations, the Galena-Black River and Lower Magnesian, alternate with the weaker St. Peters and Potsdam formations. Erosion caused by weathering, streams, underground water and wind have worn layers of the rock to some extent. Glaciation has had more dramatic effects.[4] The topography of the four lakes region was formed by the retreat of the glaciers approximately 13,000 years ago.

700 – 1200 AD ca. – Indigenous oral history and archeology document the presence of humans in the Madison region extending to the last glacial period. While people of European descent believe humans have been in the region for over 12 thousand years, Indigenous historians avoid dating human occupation. Most Wisconsin Indian nations' origin stories relay that the tribes have been here since "the beginning of time."[5]

> *During the transitional periods the Indigenous inhabitants witnessed many changes to the landscape and environment. As the glaciers receded, the mega-fauna and flora present for thousands of years were replaced by plants and animals previously unknown in the region. As the environment changed, humans adapted by studying and learning from the new conditions. Efficient utilization of plants and animals allowed ancient people to survive and thrive, becoming rich in population and culture. Today's modern American Indians are descendants of these ancient civilizations.*[6]

The tradition of mound building in the region initiated during a time when people become less mobile and larger communities came together to live in semi-permanent camps. People continued hunting and gathering but supplemented this with harvesting wild plants and gardening more intensively. Burial mounds tended to be located on elevated bluffs or near major bodies of water, while villages were often located to provide access to water and other resources. Madison had an especially high concentration of Indigenous mounds.

> *In no region of a similar area in the state are there to be found so great a number of ancient Indian earthworks as in that about the three lakes surrounding the city of Madison. Every attractive point or sweep of shoreline about these beautiful bodies of water is or was once the site of a group of mounds.*

4 L. Martin, The Physical Geography of Wisconsin. Third Edition. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965, 221.
5 Patty Loew, Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal, Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 2013, 2-3.
6 William Quackenbush, "Traditional Use of the Landscape by American Indians," in National Park Service, Effigy Mounds National Monument Cultural Landscape Report, 2016, 2.3-2.4.

Although many of these remarkable earthen monuments have now been needlessly destroyed, a large number of them yet remain to interest all who may desire to become acquainted with the archaeological history of the site of Madison.[7]

American Indians constructed mounds on a ridge overlooking the northeastern edge of Lake Wingra (future intersection of Erin and Wingra Streets). It originally consisted of eleven low (1 to 3 ½ feet) earthen mounds. These included two bird effigies, one linear mound, and eight conical mounds.[8] Most of what was then Vilas Park was a marsh, providing habitat for fish, birds, small game, and wild rice. Indigenous peoples lived in small villages and migrated from one to another based on the seasonal availability of natural resources.[9]

The Ho-Chunk, Hochungra, people have lived in Wisconsin for thousands of years. Their name means "People of the Big Voice" or "People of the Sacred Language."[10] The Ho-Chunk believe they originated at Moga-Shooch (Red Banks), on the south shore of Green Bay, the deep notch between thumb and fingers on today's map of Wisconsin.[11] Their homelands extended from upper Michigan to southern Wisconsin. Prior to European contact, the Anishinaabe (Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odaawa) began moving into Ho-Chunk territory along the shores of the Great Lakes.[12] The movement of the Anishinaabe pushed the Ho-Chunk to the south. Around 1570 part of the tribe moved into Iowa, and would eventually become the Iowa, Oto, and Missouri tribes. The remaining Ho-Chunk in Wisconsin concentrated into large villages near Green Bay for defensive purposes. The tribe was vulnerable to encroachment as a result of population decline and economic dependence on European trade goods that developed through participation in the fur trade.[13]

1800's - The Louisiana Purchase dramatically expanded American territory. Ho-Chunk homeland that was previously at the western edge of the United States, was now in the middle of the US territory. As larger numbers of Europeans trespassed on their territory, the Ho-Chunk joined forces with Tecumseh in an attempt to repulse white encroachment in the Ohio Valley.[14]

7 Charles E. Brown, "Prehistoric Indian Monuments on the University Grounds." The Wisconsin Alumni Magazine, 15 (9): 383
8 Vilas Park Mound Group, National Register of Historic Places Registration, 1991.
9 Steven Verburg, "Yahara lakes were home to dense and most varied native mounds." Wisconsin State Journal, August 1, 2018. Accessed 8/7/2019, madison.com/wsj/news/local/environment/yahara-lakes-were-home-to-dense-and-most-varied-native
10 Ho-Chunk Nation Heritage Preservation Department, The HoChunk Nation: A Brief History, Black River Falls: WI, The Ho-Chunk Nation, n.d.
11 Ho-Chunk Nation Heritage Preservation Department, The HoChunk and Green Lake, Black River Falls: WI, The Ho-Chunk Nation, n.d.
12 Patty Loew, Indian Nations of Wisconsin, 2013, 45
13 Patty Loew, Indian Nations of Wisconsin, 2013, 44-46
14 Patty Loew, Indian Nations of Wisconsin, 2013, 46

1820's - Removal of the Ho-Chunk begins. The 1825 Peace and Friendship Treaty was signed at Prairie du Chien, with hopes that firm boundaries would be established, protecting the rights of the tribal nations of the region. This was not the case, and tensions continued to mount as encroachments multiplied.[15]

1832 – The Ho-Chunk offered shelter to the Sauk peoples during the Black Hawk War and were punished for their compassion. They were forced to cede lands south of the Wisconsin and Fox Rivers to the Rock River, including De Jope (Madison) and were removed to Iowa and Minnesota. But some members of the Ho-Chunk nation did not leave their homeland, and others returned as soon as they could.[16]

1894 – The Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association (MPPDA) incorporated and raised private funds to develop and maintain scenic carriage drives and parks in and around Madison. Over the next 44 years the organization developed popular city parks including Tenney Park, Vilas Park, Brittingham Park, Glenway Golf Course, and Olin Park.

1889 - The Wingra Park neighborhood was the first of Madison's modern suburbs to be created in response to residents' desires to escape the increasingly crowded conditions on the Isthmus. The 106-acre farm purchased for the neighborhood was a largely open, well-drained property that adjoined the western edge of the city. Sales of the lots were slow at first, stalled by a slow national economy and lack of street car service.[17]

1902 – A Sanborn Insurance map indicates that the property that would become Vilas Park was platted with a grid of streets, just outside Madison City limits.[18]

1903 - By 1903 the Wingra Park neighborhood was connected to downtown by a streetcar service and had electric streetlights installed. It was considered one of Madison's finest residential districts.[19]

1904 – Senator William Freeman Vilas and his wife Anna M. Vilas contributed $18,000 to the MPPDA for the purchase of land for a park. It was named in memory of the couple's son, Henry, who died at a young age five years earlier due to complications from diabetes.[20] William Vilas moved to Madison when he was ten years old. He studied at the University of Wisconsin and received a degree in law from the Albany,

15 Patty Loew, Indian Nations of Wisconsin, 2013, 48-49
16 Patty Loew, Indian Nations of Wisconsin, 2013, 49-51
17 City of Madison, Neighborhood Profiles. Accessed 8/7/2019, www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/national-register-of-historic-places/1602/
18 Sanborn Insurance Company, Map of City of Madison, 1902.
19 City of Madison, Neighborhood Profiles. Accessed 8/7/2019, www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/national-register-of-historic-places/1602/
20 Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association Report, 1904. Accessed 8/7/2019, digital.library.wisc.edu/1771dl/WI.JohnOlinArchives

New York Law School. After serving in the Civil War, he returned to Madison to begin a successful law practice, teach at the University of Wisconsin Law School, serve in the State Assembly and on the University Board of Regents. In 1884, President Cleveland appointed Mr. Vilas Postmaster General and three years later Secretary of the Department of The Interior. He was elected United States Senator in 1890. Of his many civic commitments, the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association benefited with his donation to establish Henry Vilas Park[21]

In 1904, the MPPDA hired O.C. Simonds to develop a plan for Henry Vilas Park. Between 1904 and 1906 he developed 3 plans for Vilas Park (Figure 4.2), due to the variable site conditions. When the land for the park was purchased, the 25 acres of high ground was separated from the lake by a bog. "It was the plan to covert the whole of this bog into park area, but careful examination disclosed that some fifteen acres of it was underlaid by soft material to such depth as to make the filling of it impractical."[22] Simonds' plan was to create a series of lagoons to manage the water, and to convert portions of the bog into dry parkland.[23]

Figure 4.2. O.C. Simonds' plan for Vilas Park, 1904 (City of Madison Parks Division)

The lagoons and islands along the shoreline of Lake Wingra would be connected by bridges with a circular drive around the entire park. The plan called for native plants in large groupings, including "Pin Oaks and

21 Madison Park and Pleasure Ground Annual Report, 1904.
22 Madison Park and Pleasure Ground Annual Report, 1905.
23 Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association Report, 1904. Accessed 8/7/2019, digital.library.wisc.edu/1771dl/WI.JohnOlinArchives

Wild Roses" and "Ceanothus among trees with herb plants, white clover, wild strawberries, etc." The plan also included a wading pool, playground, picnic area, and lily pond.[24]

1905 – In January1905, Simonds revised the plan for Henry Vilas Park (Figure 4.3). The revised plan included Edgewood Park to the southwest at the edge of Lake Wingra. The lagoons seen in the earlier plan were removed in favor of a large island, separated from the mainland by a sinuous channel of water. Plantings indicated were similar to the previous plan, with willows, "native alders," "wild gooseberries," and "red branched dogwood." "[25]

Figure 4.3. O.C. Simonds' plan for Vilas Park, 1905 (City of Madison Parks Division)

In the spring of 1905, construction had begun on Henry Vilas Park. The La Crosse Dredging company commenced work filling the bog of Lake Wingra. During construction, the location of the lagoons was modified from the plans, adding an extra 3 or 4 acres along the outer shoreline.[26]

1906 – Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association acknowledges the gift from Mary C. Stewart to be used in construction and erecting as some appropriate place within the City of Madison a drinking fountain in memory of her deceased daughter Annie C. Stewart.[27]

24 O.C. Simonds Landscape Gardeners, Plan of Henry Vilas Park, Madison Wisconsin, July 20, 1904.
25 O.C. Simonds Landscape Gardeners, Plan of Henry Vilas Park, Madison Wisconsin, January 1905.
26 Madison Park and Pleasure Ground Annual Report, 1906.
27 Madison Park and Pleasure Ground Annual Report, 1906.

1906 – In March of 1906, the Park and Pleasure Drive Association paid $146.75 to Simonds for a "new design for Henry Vilas Park"[28] (Figure 4.4). Simonds revised the plan for the park to reflect the actual location, shape and size of lagoons and size and outline of the park that occurred during construction. The design was similar to the previous two, and utilized small groupings of similar plants, including a grove of pines and spruces at the edge of the park on the northwest; poplar, birches, and lindens along the lakeshore; goldenrods and asters; larches at path intersections; grove of elms; and "oaks in variety." A broad carriageway circled the park, and walking paths followed the carriageways and lake edge.[29] In April 1906, Simonds gave a speech entitled, "Landscape Gardening - Illustrated" at the banquet of the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association.[30]

Figure 4.4. O.C. Simonds' plan for Vilas Park, 1906 (City of Madison Parks Division)

By October 1906, another plan was created that showed development of the park, designed by Mr. Emil T. Mische, landscape designer and park superintendent. This plan represented the "as built" condition at that time.[31] This plan followed Simonds' design in form, retaining the large and small islands and lagoon, and circular carriageway around the park. The playground, picnic area, and wading pool were removed in this

28 Madison Park and Pleasure Ground Annual Report, 1906.
29 O.C. Simonds Landscape Gardeners, Plan of Henry Vilas Park, Madison Wisconsin, March 29, 1906.
30 Madison Park and Pleasure Ground Annual Report, 1906.
31 Madison Park and Pleasure Ground Annual Report, 1907.

plan, in favor of a large meadow "Wingra Meadow." A formal, straight entrance into the park was designed to be at the corner of Drake and Warren Streets. T he planting design seems simplified in this plan as well – it is unknown if the more detailed design of Simonds was followed during construction or not.[32] Two stone and concrete bridges over the lagoon, costing $5,000, were donated by Mr. Vilas in 1906.

By the end of 1906, 40.8 acres of former bog had been filled to create the park, while 23.2 acres were on the "high ground" making the total area of the park 64 acres.[33] Construction of the carriage road adjacent to the Vilas Park Mound Group damaged some of the mounds.[34]

1907 – The Annual Report of the Park and Pleasure Drive Association describes that the planned construction of the bridges in 1906 was postponed and funds were to be used, instead, to prepare the 'high ground' and filled area for seeding and planting (approximately 44 acres in total). Senator Vilas heartily approved the proposed change.[35]

Figure 4.5. View of Henry Vilas Park, 1908 (Wisconsin Historical Society, 3088)

1908 – The Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association hired landscape architect and city planner John Nolen to create a plan for laying out Madison city parks. His design created a comprehensive approach that

32 General Plan, Henry Vilas Park, Madison Wisconsin, Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association, October 1906.
33 Madison Park and Pleasure Ground Annual Report, 1906. 40
34 *Vilas Park Mound Group*, National Register of Historic Places Registration, 1991.
35 Madison Park and Pleasure Ground Annual Report, 1907.

linked Vilas Park with others throughout the city.[36]

1911 – Anna M. Vilas gives $25,000 to the city of condition that it would purchase additional land for Henry Vilas Park, fill the low portion of the park, build a drive on the island and build bridges across the lagoon.[37]

The Henry Vilas Zoo officially opened. Created out of 28 acres from the park, animal exhibits included nine deer, three woodchucks, and an American eagle, amongst others.[38] The exhibits were linked with gravel paths lined with shrubs formed sinuous pathways.

1912 – The 1912 Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association Report includes, "under the conditions of the gift the Association is required, on or before November 1, 1912, to cause the lands acquired to be improved as a part of and as an addition to the Henry Vilas Park in accordance with the lands and designs furnished by some competent landscape architect approved by the directors of the Association."[39]

1913 – The Park and Pleasure Drive Association secures options on two properties acquiring all of the land in the condition of the 1911 Anna M. Vilas gift; fill operations using 30,000 yards of material and commence in the low areas of the main park and the extension area.

1915 – The Vilas Park Mound Group was marked with a plaque in 1915 by the Wisconsin Archeological Society in a ceremony attended by representatives of twelve American Indian tribes.[40]

1917 – Park and Pleasure Drive Association invites suggestion and models for the Annie C. Stewart fountain design; its location is considered desirable for its sightlines and ability to conduct water to the zoo.[41]

1924 – An aerial photograph shows Vilas Park with an open meadow, circular carriageway, and formal entrance at the corner of Drake Street and Randall Avenue (Figure 4.6). The zoo is visible in the foreground. Portions of the park closest to the lake edge appear to have several dying trees. The large meadow is framed by groupings of mature shade trees.

1925 – The Annie Stewart Fountain was completed as a pedestrian entrance feature for Vilas Park and the Henry Vilas Zoo. Dedicated to Annie C. Stewart (1867 to 1905) who engaged in charitable activities in Madison, her mother bequeathed a gift of $2,000 to the Madison Park & Pleasure Drive Association

36 City of Madison Landmarks Commission, Tenney Park Landmark Nomination, City of Madison, 1994.
37 Madison Park and Pleasure Ground Annual Report, 1907.
38 Henry Vilas Zoo History, accessed online 8/7/2019: https://vilaszoo.org/about-us/history.
39 Madison Park and Pleasure Ground Annual Report, 1912.
40 Vilas Park Mound Group, National Register of Historic Places Registration, 1991.
41 Madison Park and Pleasure Ground Annual Report, 1917-1918.

Figure 4.6. View of Henry Vilas Park, 1924 (Wisconsin Historical Society, 31273)

to commission a drinking fountain in memory of her only child.[42] The gift was to be used to construct a drinking fountain and in the will it stipulated that Annie's name was to be visibly inscribed on the fountain and that it be erected at an appropriate place in Madison. The fountain was designed by Frederick J. Clasgens, Cincinnati, Ohio, with figures in marble following a nautical theme, including a mermaid, dolphin, two Tritons, and a cornucopia.[43] The Tritons were set on the edge of the basin, and emptied water from their conch shells into smaller basins containing drinking fountains. A paved path circled the fountain. The fountain faced Erin St. and was an entrance feature at the southeast end of Vilas Park (Figure 4.7).

1929 – The zoo's first primate house was built. (Henry Vilas Zoo History, accessed online 8/7/2019: https://vilaszoo.org/about-us/history)

1931 – The John L. Bourke drinking fountain was constructed at the edge of the Vilas Park playground.

42 Wisconsin State Journal Vol. 107 No. 14 | April 17, 1906 | "New Gifts for Madison's Beauty"

43 Annie Stewart Fountain Conservation/Preservation Plan. Prepared by InSite Consulting Architects, prepared for Parks Division, City of Madison, 2017.

Figure 4.7. The Annie Stewart Fountain, 1926
(Wisconsin Historical Society, 51976)

The hexagonal-shaped fountain was constructed of cobblestones set on a concrete base. The fountain was designed by Fred Winkelmann, Director of the Henry Vilas Zoo. Bourke was secretary of the Park and Pleasure Drive Association.[44]

1931 – In the summer of 1931, two boys seriously damaged the Annie Stewart Fountain, breaking off one of the triton's arms with a hammer.[45] The two tritons are no longer part of the fountain.

1936 –A wooden footbridge (Figure 4.8) was constructed that connected the mainland with the small island in the lagoon. Constructed of 6x6 wood posts, the bridge spanned 94-feet across the lagoon with abutments of rubble stone.[46]

1937-1938 - The City of Madison assumes ownership of the zoo, Vilas Park, and other parks from the Madison Park & Pleasure Drive Association (Figure 4.9). (Henry Vilas Zoo History, accessed online 8/7/2019: https://vilaszoo.org/about-us/history)

44 Historic Image, Wisconsin Historical Society, WHS 19018
45 Wisconsin State Journal Vol. 138 No. 84 | June 24, 1931 | "Claim Boys Smashed Vilas Park Fountain"
46 Plan, West Foot Bridge for Henry Vilas Park, Madison, Wisconsin. Madison Board of Park Commissioners, September 22, 1936.

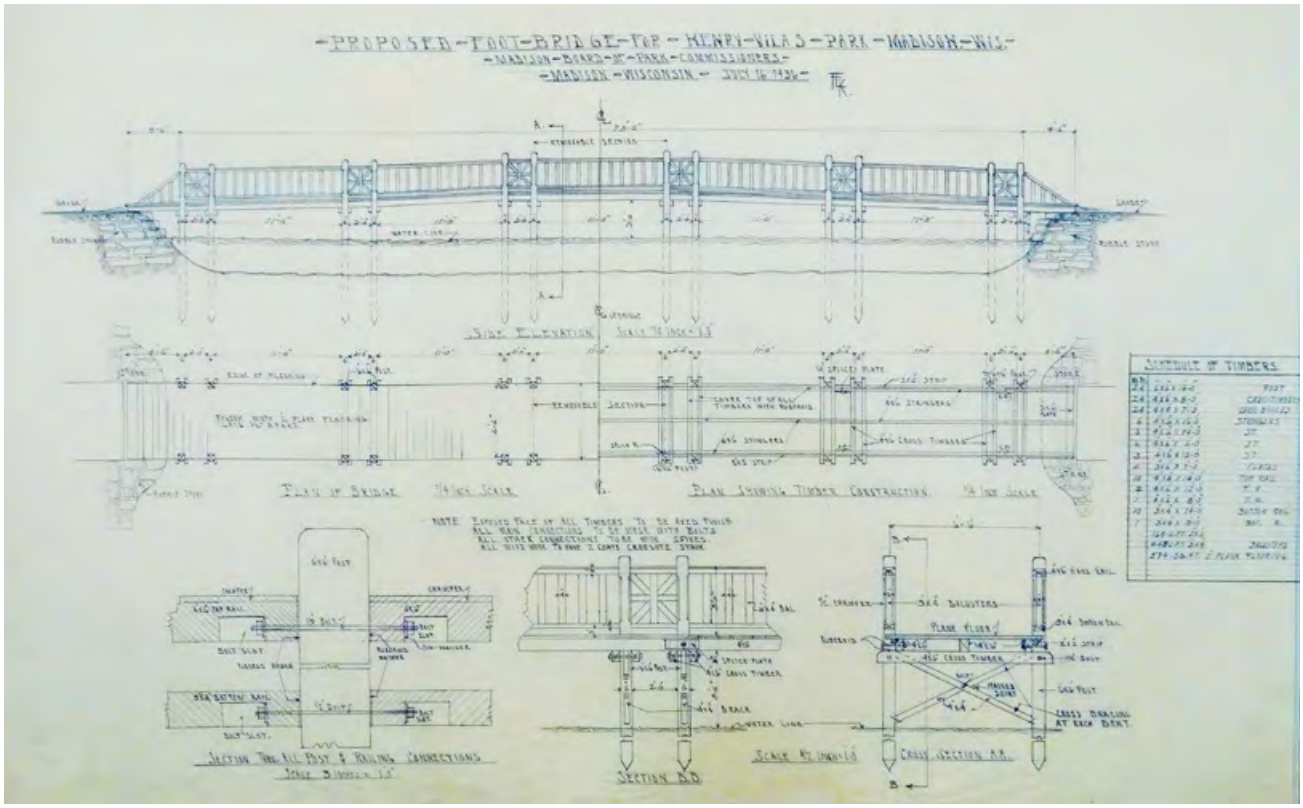


Figure 4.8. Proposed Foot Bridge, 1936
(Wisconsin Historical Society, W46)

Figure 4.9. Aerial photograph of Henry Vilas Park, 1937
Visible are six tennis courts, four baseball fields, and a hockey rink. A broad beach is on the edge of Lake Wingra, and nearby parking area along the road.
(University of Wisconsin Historical Society)

1939 – Plans were drawn for an "Island Theater" to be located on the small island in the lagoon. Plans included a stage flanked by twin restrooms/dressing rooms and lawn seating and bleachers for the audience.[47] The Island Theater was never actually constructed.

1950, May – More than 150 Madison high school pupils recruited through the Madison Youth Council helped plant trees and shrubs on the Vilas Park island.[48]

1951 ca. – The Vilas Park Shelter was added.[49]

1955 – A plan was drafted with proposed revisions to the park, by A.L. Johnson.[50] The plan illustrates expanded parking north of the zoo, tennis courts, hockey rinks, a shelter, and the summer theater on the island of the lagoon, bath house adjacent to the beach and wide parking area, and an overlook adjacent to the mounds (Figure 4.10). Portions of this plan were implemented in the mid-1906s, when the lagoon would be modified to a smaller size and the lakeshore modified, in order to accommodate an expansion of the zoo, and increased parking area.

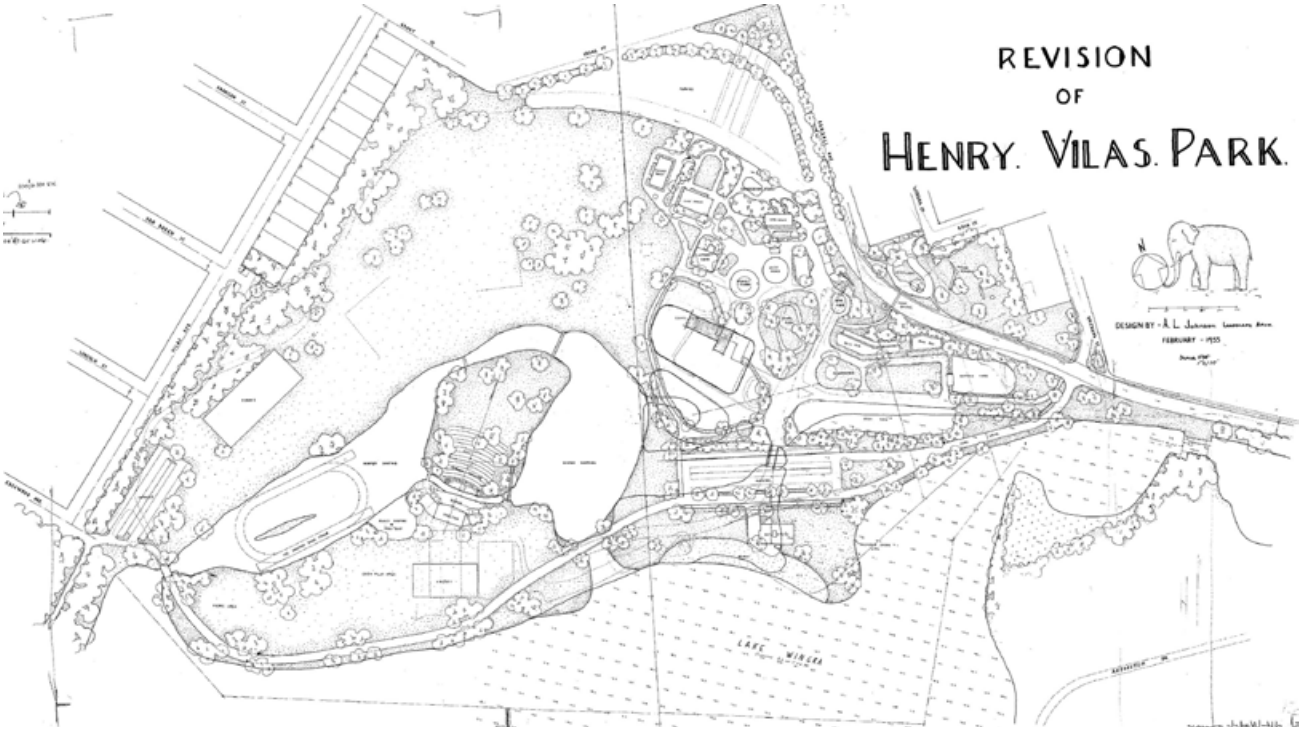


Figure 4.10. Master Plan for Vilas Park, 1955
(City of Madison Parks Division)

47 Preliminary Plan for An Island Theater, Henry Vilas Park, Board of Park Commissioners, November 1939.
48 Historic Image, Wisconsin Historical Society, WHS 65355
49 Historic Image, Wisconsin Historical Society, WHS 73474
50 Revision of Henry Vilas Park, Design by A.L. Johnson, Landscape Architect, February 1955.

Figure 4.11. "Old Woman in a Shoe", 2019 (MSA)

1962 - The "Old Woman in a Shoe" slide was built in 1962 as a gift to the Madison community (Figure 4.11). Members of the Madison Lathers Local 111, Madison Operative Plasterers and Cement Masons Local 204 donated the labor and materials. Warren Walder oversaw construction of the slide, which was dedicated to George Morrell, a lather/contractor who had died several years earlier.[51]

1964 - A master plan was developed for the zoo that proposed expansion of the exhibits to the south and east.[52]

1964 – A visitor map to the Henry Vilas Park Zoo indicates features within the park included a canoe house on the island in the lagoon, and a band stand located in the meadow on the mainland.

1975 – The City of Madison Parks Planning developed a master plan for Vilas Park. A proposed parking area accommodating 147 vehicles was located west of the tennis courts, and a children's zoo was added on a new island in the lagoon. Bike lanes were to be added to the road along the lakeshore.

51 George Hesselberg, Wisconsin State Journal, "Vilas Park Slide was Gift and Work Of Tradesmen" July 13, 2014.

52 Hugh A Dega Associates, Master Plan Henry Vilas Zoo Prepared under the direction of the Joint Master Plan Committee of the Madison Board of Commissioners and the Henry Vilas Park Zoological Society, 1964.

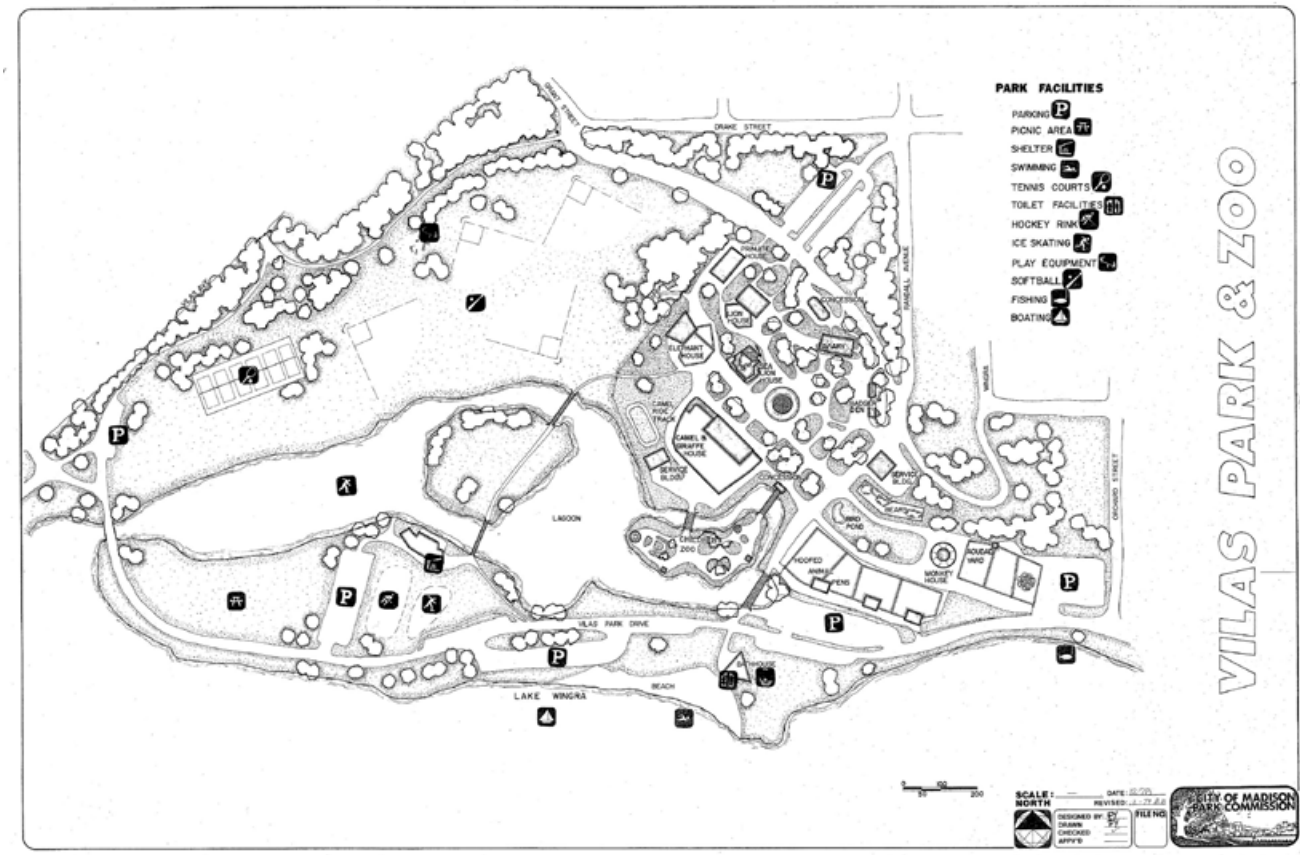


Figure 4.12. Plan of Vilas Park, 1979
(City of Madison Parks Division)

1983 - Ownership of the zoo is transferred from the City of Madison to Dane County, a process that takes a decade to complete.[53]

1991 – Vilas Park Indian Mounds was designated a City of Madison landmark on May 7, 1990.[54]

2010 – Sidewalks were added and some were replaced, adjacent the Vilas Park Mound Group.[55]

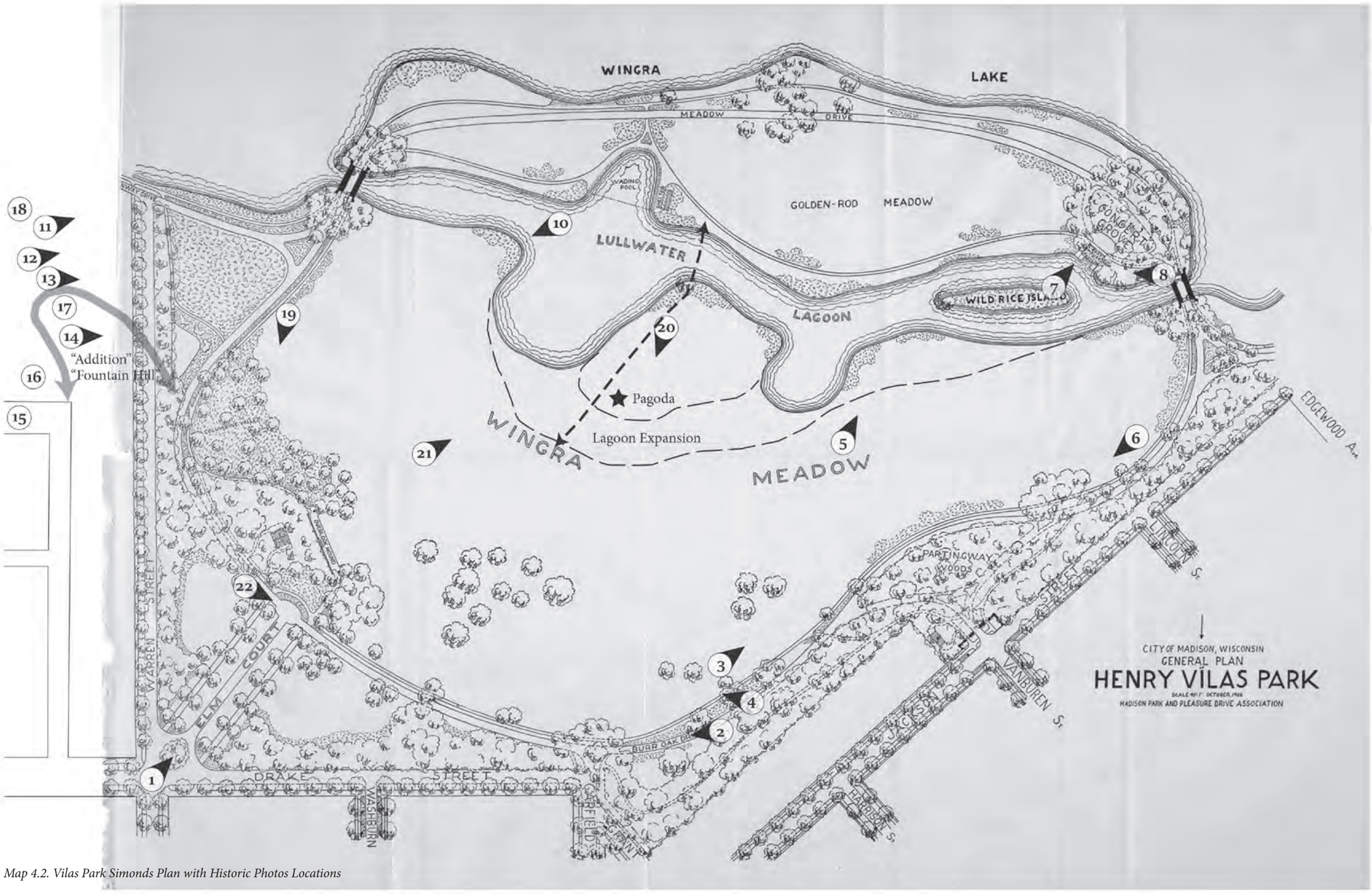
2013 – Vilas Park Drive was modified by angled parking added to the edges.[56]

2015 – The Arctic Passage was completed at the zoo, the largest renovation in the zoo's history. The new exhibit complex modified the direction of visitor access into the zoo, and gated off the former entrance area.

53 Henry Vilas Zoo History, accessed online 8/7/2019: https://vilaszoo.org/about-us/history
54 Vilas Park Mound Group, National Register of Historic Places Registration, 1991.
55 Compilation Topographic Survey of Vilas Park Mounds Area Plan, 2010.
56 City of Madison, Vilas Park Drive Preliminary Design Drawing, 2013-03-08.

Map 4.1. Vilas Park Historical Resources Map

Page Intentionally Left Blank



Map 4.2. Vilas Park Simonds Plan with Historic Photos Locations

Page Intentionally Left Blank

MADISON PARK AND PLEASURE DRIVE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT PHOTOS
See Map 4.2 for location of photos

1 Elm Court - 1908

2 Wingra Meadow - 1910

3 Burr Oak Drive - 1913

4 Wingra Meadow - A Sane Fourth - 1911

4 Wingra Meadow - 1910

5 Lagoon Dredging - 1906

6 Waiting for the Tableaux - 1912

7 Boat Landing - 1907

8 Wild Rice Island - 1919

9 Vilas Park from Edgewood - 1910

10 Lagoon - 1911

11 Vilas Park from Additions (Mounds) - 1909

12 Vilas Park from Fountain Hill - 1919

13 Vilas Lagoon (Bog) - 1907

14 Vilas Park and Lake Wingra from Addition (Mounds) = 1913

15 Erin Street Entrance - 1921

16 Mounds on Fountain Hill - 1919

17 Auto Parking Place (Overlook) - 1916

18 Wingra Street walk to Mounds - 1921

19 Plant Bed - 1913

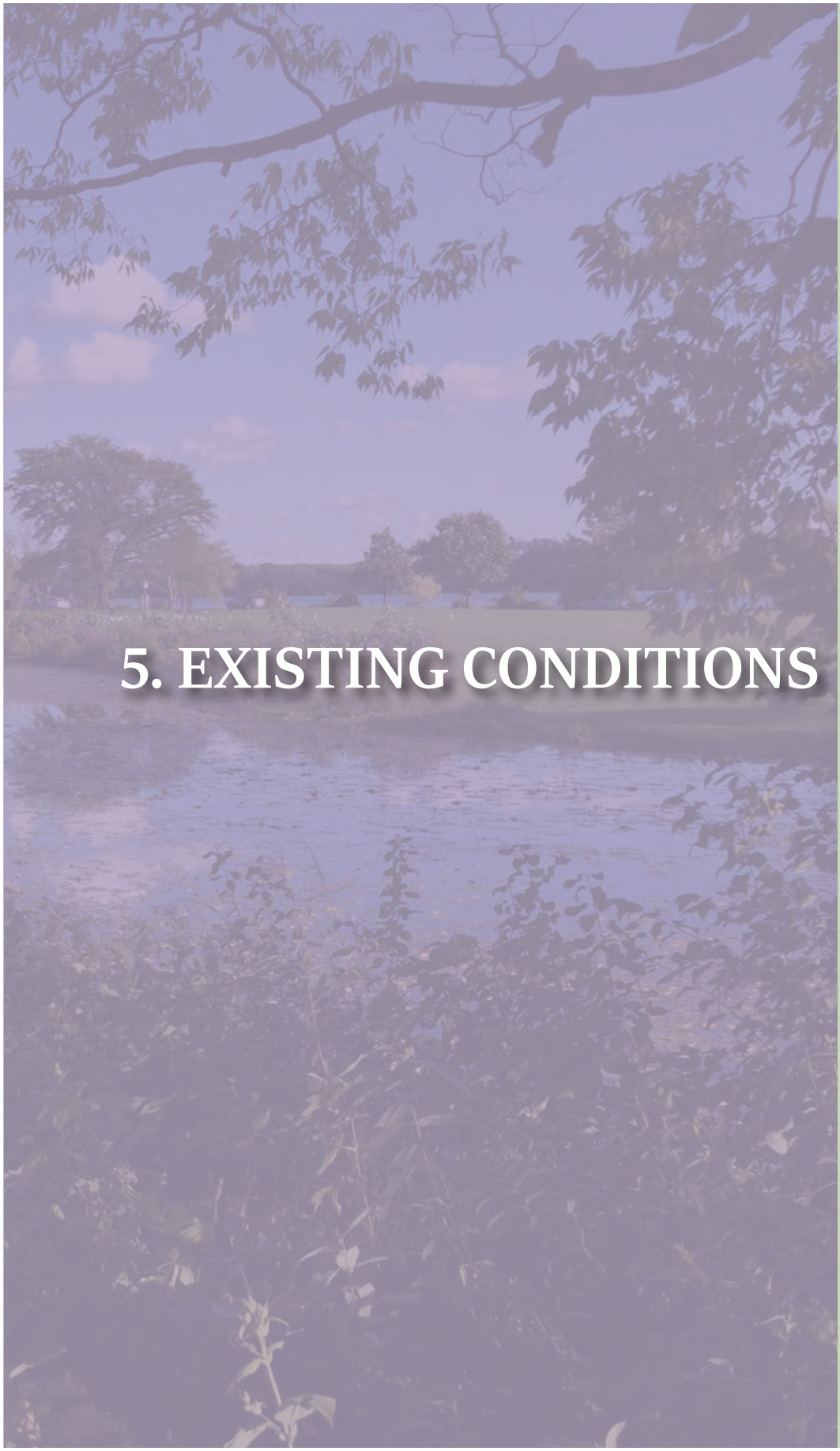
20 Pagoda and New Walk, Small Island - 1919

21 Small Island - 1919

22 Burr Oak Drive at Elm Court - 1908

Henry Vilas Park - 1917

Page Intentionally Left Blank



5. EXISTING CONDITIONS

CURRENT USE ANALYSIS

The current use analysis provides an overview of the current conditions of facilities at Vilas Park. These uses are examined in these sub-section; Structures, Playgrounds and Other Activities, Drinking Fountains, Historic Stonework, Annie Stewart Fountain, Roads and Parking, Bridges, Paths, Signs and Wayfinding, Edible Landscape, and Children's Memorial Benches. Some of these facilities are at the end of their expected life and should be considered for repair or replacement and others are in good condition and may last for some time. This analysis is based on visual inspection coupled with background information provided by the City.

For the current condition of pavement, the City of Madison rates asphalt through the University of Wisconsin-Madison Transportation Information Center manual called the Pavement Surface Evaluation Rating (PASER).[57] The PASER Asphalt Manual rating is a 10-point system[58] as follows:

- Rating 9 & 10 – Not maintenance required
- Rating 8 – Little or no maintenance
- Rating 7 – Routine maintenance, crack sealing and minor patching
- Rating 5 & 6 – Preservation treatments (sealcoating)
- Rating 3 & 4 – Structural improvement and leveling (overlay or recycling)
- Rating 1 & 2 - Reconstruction

The City evaluated Vilas Park pavement in 2018 and those ratings are listed in each section of the current use analysis where asphalt pavement exist.[59] This includes Vilas Park Drive, parking lots, basketball courts and all asphalt walks.

The current use analysis for Vilas Park is as follows:

STRUCTURES

Main Park Shelter

The main shelter building was constructed in 1951 and has been repaired through the years to address varying levels of structural issues. The building is constructed of brick and wood on a concrete slab (Figure 5.1). The brick work has been tuckpointed including several large cracks (Figure 5.2). The foundation slab extends past the exterior columns on the lagoon side and consist of concrete steps which have several large cracks (Figure 5.3).

57 University of Wisconsin-Madison Transportation Information Center, www.apa-mi.org/docs/Asphalt-PASERManual.pdf
58 PASER Asphalt Road Manual, page 14
59 Data from the City of Madison Parks Division


Figure 5.1. Main Shelter


Figure 5.2. Shelter Tuck Pointing


Figure 5.3. Steps at Shelter


Figure 5.4. Water Ponding on Roof


Figure 5.5. Hockey Rink near Shelter


Figure 5.6. Inside Shelter as Warming House

Ponding of rainwater is evident from aerial views of the building (Figure 5.4). The roof will need replacement in 3 to 5 years. The building provides a covered open-air picnic and gathering space in the warm months and a warming house in winter for ice-skating on the neighboring lagoon (Figure 5.5). Temporary wood doors are placed between columns in the winter to create an enclosed space. The doors need replacement. There is a concession stand within the building that is only open in the winter (Figure 5.6). There are old restroom facilities and two unused fireplaces in the building. The shelter has electrical, water and wastewater services as well as access to propane from an adjacent tank. The electrical system could be updated to be more efficient. There have been requests for improved lighting in the building. The plumbing fixtures and pipes are well past useful life but functioning. Fixtures are not water saving models. The building has HVAC which needs frequent repair and will need full replacement soon. The surrounding pavement connects to paths and the parking lot. The asphalt has been patched and is cracked, a PASER of 6.

Bathhouse

The original beach bathhouse was built around 1956 or 1957 on an area of fill that was once Lake Wingra. The original building was replaced with the current structure around 1979 along with a matching bathhouse at Tenney Park (Figure 5.7). Both buildings have a triangular shaped footprint and consist of restrooms with open-air outdoor changing areas that have shower heads (Figure 5.8). There is storage and small concessions maintained by lifeguards on the side of the building facing the beach (Figure 5.9). The concessions area of the building can be closed and locked with two metal garage doors. The building is mainly constructed of

wood and is in relatively good shape structurally, however functionally the facility does not meet the needs of the current beach operations. Overall, the roof, doors, electrical and plumbing are in good condition. The bathhouse is connected to Vilas Park Drive and to parking with an asphalt path (Figure 5.10). There are potential accessibility concerns. The remainder of the site has bike parking racks on a concrete pad on the north side of the building and beach access on the Lake Wingra side.

Figure 5.7. Beach Bathhouse and Beach

Figure 5.8. Beach Bathhouse

Figure 5.9. Bathhouse from Beach

Figure 5.10. Access to Beach

Figure 5.11. Pump House in Winter

Figure 5.12. Pump House in Summer

Pump House

The pump house was built in the 1990's to provide a water source for winter maintenance of the lagoon for ice-skating. The structure was recently replaced with a new building (Figure 5.11). The pump house is wood clad, on a concrete slab and is in good condition. The building is connected to the asphalt path running north-south through the park (Figure 5.12).

PLAYGROUNDS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Playgrounds

There are three playgrounds in Vilas Park. The west playground is near the multi-use trail and is connected to it by an asphalt path (Figures 5.13 and 5.14). The surface material is rubber mulch over a gravel base. This playground was manufactured by Miracle[60] and placed in 1994.

A small playground is located near the mounds in the upper park along Erin Street. This playground is known as the "Dinosaur Playground" due to the dinosaur-themed equipment (Figure 5.15). The equipment is Landscape Structures[61] and was also installed in 1994. The surface is rubber mulch over gravel with no connection to the surrounding walkways. The equipment is not compliant with current ADA guidelines.

Figure 5.13. West Playground

Figure 5.14. West Playground

Figure 5.15. Dinosaur Playground

Figure 5.16. Shoe Playground

Figure 5.17. Old Woman in a Shoe

60 www.miracle-recreation.com
61 www.playlsi.com

A large playground is across the meadow from the west playground and is the location of the "Old Woman in the Shoe" (Figures 5.16 and 5.17). The shoe is on a concrete slab and in good condition. As with the other playgrounds, this equipment was installed in 1994 and was manufactured by Game Time.[62] The surface is rubber mulch over gravel as well with access to the path from the north parking lot. The surface is also rubber mulch over gravel with access to a path from the north parking lot.

In accordance with City of Madison Parks typical maintenance practices, replacement of equipment generally occurs between 20 and 25 years after installation. This replacement schedule is in part to difficulty in obtaining replacement parts and general wear and tear. All of the Vilas Park playground equipment is past due (26 years old) but is scheduled to be replaced as early as 2021/2022.[63] At 26 years old the equipment is past the end of its serviceable life.

Tennis Court

The tennis courts were an early addition to Vilas Park. The tennis courts are in the lower area of the park which was originally a bog. Initially, only four courts were built. A 1937 aerial photo of the site appears to show they were constructed with grass turf.[64] An additional two courts were added in 1977. Once paved, the courts have been resurfaced six times. Filling cracks and surfacing typically occurs every 7 to 8 years, after which a mill/overlay is required.[65] The last repair of the courts occurred in 2017 and they are already showing cracks in 2020. The foundation of the courts continues to settle causing the surface to form puddles and crack easily (Figure 5.18). The surrounding fence shows areas of rust with the mesh still taught between post (Figure 5.19). Access is not compliant with ADA guidelines. The courts stand alone in a meadow and are not directly connected to any accessible route or trail system in the park. There are also no bike parking areas which causes players use the fence to secure bikes during play.

Figure 5.18. Tennis Courts

Figure 5.19. Tennis Courts and Fence

62 www.gametime.com
63 Information provided by the City of Madison Parks Division
64 Data from Dane County GIS 1937 aerial photography
65 Data from the City of Madison Parks Division

Basketball Court

The basketball court was added to the park sometime in the 1980's. The court is also in the meadow and has no connection to any accessible route or trail system (Figure 5.20). The basketball court is asphalt with some minor cracking and the paint markings are heavily faded, but it has a PASER of 8. The backboards are metal and are attached to metal posts which are in fairly good shape with some minor rusting and peeling paint (Figure 5.21).

Figure 5.20. Basketball Court

Figure 5.21. Backboard

Backstops

Baseball has been an amenity in the park since the early 1900's. The original backstops were fences with wood framing. Over time, they were replaced with metal fence backstops. The park once had four ballfields[66] that have since been reduced to two. Both existing fields are informal areas of lawn with no infields. The existing backstops are in fair condition. The east backstop is near the path connecting to the north pedestrian bridge and is just south of the shoe play structure (Figure 5.22). The west backstop is near the west playground and is in the meadow near the multi-use trail (Figure 5.23).

Figure 5.22. East Backstop

Figure 5.23. West Backstop

66 1937 Aerial Photo - Dane County Land and Information Office

DRINKING FOUNTAINS

There are three drinking fountains in the park. A fountain is located between the basketball and tennis courts (Figure 5.24). Another fountain is located near the north zoo entrance along the parking lot which exists to Drake Street (Figure 5.25). The third is on the north side of the beach bathhouse (Figure 5.26). All three fountains are concrete with exposed aggregate surface and are in fair condition. They lack the high-low configuration required by current ADA guidelines. The fountain near the basketball court is on a concrete pad in the lawn and not connected to the multi-use trail. The other fountains have direct access to paths.

Figure 5.24. Fountain at Tennis

Figure 5.25. Fountain at North Zoo Entry

Figure 5.26. Fountain at Beach

HISTORIC STONEWORK

There are a few remnant stonework elements from the initial construction of Vilas Park. The John L. Burke drinking fountain is a limestone fountain that was constructed in 1931 (Figure 5.27). It is located near the basketball court and is not operational, but the stone is in good condition. Near the Burke fountain is a stone step system (Figure 5.28). These located west of the tennis courts along the woodland edge near the multi-use trail. The stone is in good condition, but the steps have shifted and become uneven. Vegetation is also overgrowing the steps which creates unsafe conditions.

Figure 5.27. Historic Drinking Fountain

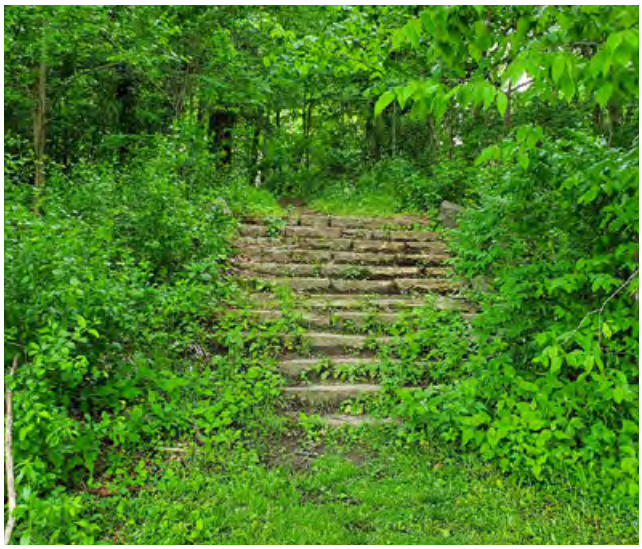


Figure 5.28. Stone Seat Wall/Steps

ANNIE STEWART FOUNTAIN

The Annie Stewart Fountain was completed in 1925 for the pedestrian entrance to the park addition at Erin Street. The fountain was heavily vandalized in 1931. The fountain is constructed of marble and concrete and has significantly deteriorated (Figure 5.29 and 5.30). The fountain has not had flowing water for most of its existence. The fountain is connected to the park and city walk system in the Greenbush Neighborhood. A preservation report was completed in 2017[67] that outlines the steps needed to preserve the fountain. The report noted much of the fountain needs to be replaced and it is unexpected that it will ever function as a fountain again. The City has started a separate planning effort to determine the future of the fountain.

Figure 5.29. Anne Stewart Fountain in Summer

Figure 5.30. Anne Stewart Fountain in Winter

ROADS AND PARKING

Roads

Vilas Park Drive extends most of the length of the park along Lake Wingra. There is a short segment of Edgewood Drive that enters the park and intersects with Vilas Park Drive. The pavement of Edgewood Drive is in fair condition and the City does not have a PASER for that road segment. The Vilas Park Drive asphalt is cracked and patched (Figure 5.31). The entire length of Vilas Park Drive received a 2 to 4 PASER in 2018, meaning potential reconstruction. The asphalt surface drains to lawn areas, asphalt trenches leading to Lake Wingra and some storm sewer pipes (Figures 5.32, 5.33, and 5.34). The edge of the road has a segmented concrete curb that has shifted in places or has been removed altogether (Figure 5.35). Overall, the curb is in poor condition (Figure 5.36).

As Vilas Park Drive extends eastward toward the zoo and beach, there are linear parking lots where parked vehicles must back directly into the drive lane when exiting the parking space. The asphalt continues to show longitudinal and transverse cracks with asphalt patches. Ponding of stormwater is found along Vilas Park

67 Insite Consulting Architects - 2017 Annie C. Stewart Memorial Fountain Conservation/Preservation Plan

Figure 5.31. Longitudinal Cracks

Figure 5.32. Drain Trench to Lake

Figure 5.33. Shoreline along VPD

Figure 5.34. Storm Drain at VPD

Figure 5.35. VPD Curb

Figure 5.36. VPD Curb

Drive near the south parking lot and zoo edge. The profile of Vilas Park Drive is flat with significant rutting and has drainage issues during winter snow removal and freeze/thaw conditions (Figure 5.37).

There is a pinch point along Vilas Park Drive at the zoo where the cross section of the road leaves little space for pedestrians. The curb and pavement show damage from heavy vehicles using the zoo service entries along Vilas Park Drive. The pavement is showing signs of transverse, longitudinal and slippage cracks and the asphalt pavement and curb are in poor condition extending to the intersection of Orchard Street and the edge of the park (Figures 5.38 and 5.39).

Figure 5.37. VPD in Winter

Figure 5.38. Transverse Cracks

Figure 5.39. Slippage and Longitudinal

Parking Lots

The analysis of parking lots begins on the north end of the park going counterclockwise around the site. The north parking lot and the north parking entry drive, mainly utilized by zoo visitors, is in fair condition with cracks and patches (Figures 5.40 and 5.41). The lot has a PASER of 6. The exit road returning to Drake Street has alligator cracks (Figure 5.42). Like Vilas Park Drive, the curb has segments that are cracked and separated.

Figure 5.40. North Entry to Parking Lot

Figure 5.41. North Parking Lot

Figure 5.42. Parking on Exit to Drake

The west parking lot near the tennis courts is in fair condition with a PASER of 7.5 (Figure 5.43). The are no major cracks. The parking lot is connected to the multi-use trail but does not have any paved connections to the tennis courts. There is no curb at this parking lot and runoff flows south directly to the lawn toward the lagoon.

The main shelter parking lot is in fair condition with a PASER of 5.5 to 6 (Figure 5.44). There are longitudinal and transverse cracks. The lot has curbing around all sides except for the north end where there is paved access to the lagoons for the weed cutter and ice grooming equipment.

There are three linear parking lots on Vilas Park Drive. A lot on the north side of Vilas Park Drive has angled stalls accessed directly from the road (Figure 5.45). Another linear lot is along the Lake Wingra shoreline with connections to the accessible pier. This lot is separated by a landscape island from Vilas Park Drive (Figure 5.46). The third lot serves the beach bathhouse and has direct access to Vilas Park Drive (Figure 5.47). All 3 lots have cracks and poor curbing. The lots have a PASER of 3 and need replacement.

Figure 5.43. West Parking Lot

Figure 5.44. Main Shelter Parking Lot

Figure 5.45. VPD North Linear Lot

Figure 5.46. VPD South Linear Lot

Figure 5.47. Beach Linear Parking

Figure 5.48. Drainage issues at South Lot

The parking lot near the south entrance to the zoo is in poor condition (Figure 5.48 & 5.49). The pavement has many patches and is oversized for a typical parking lot design (Figure 5.50). The parking lot received a very low PASER of 2. The lot near Orchard Street is also in poor condition with cracking and has a PASER of 4 (Figure 5.51). Both parking lots have failing curbing along most edges. Both lots also have connections to walks.

Figure 5.49. VPD South Parking Lot

Figure 5.50. South Parking Lot

Figure 5.51. Parking Lot at Orchard

BRIDGES

A structural load rating analysis for the historic bridge at the west end of Vilas Park Drive was performed by Strand Associates in 2012. The bridge was constructed in 1915 and has a wood pile foundation (Figure 5.52). The Strand analysis estimated a load capacity of approximately 11.1 tons (capable of safely supporting a bus) for the bridge. The stone façade of the bridge is in good condition, but the masonry joints need tuck pointing (Figure 5.53). The concrete arch support has several cracks and gaps also in need of masonry work (Figure 5.54).

Figure 5.52. Historic Bridge

Figure 5.53. Stonework of Bridge

Figure 5.54. Bridge Structure

The City of Madison recently replace the two pedestrian bridges that cross to the island located in the lagoon (Figures 5.55 and 5.56). The bridges are prefabricated steel structures with a concrete walking surface. The abutments are large glacier stones and riprap. The paths leading up to the bridges were repaved in asphalt and are in good condition. The slope of the paths to the bridges meet current ADA accessibility guidelines.

Figure 5.55. Pedestrian Bridge

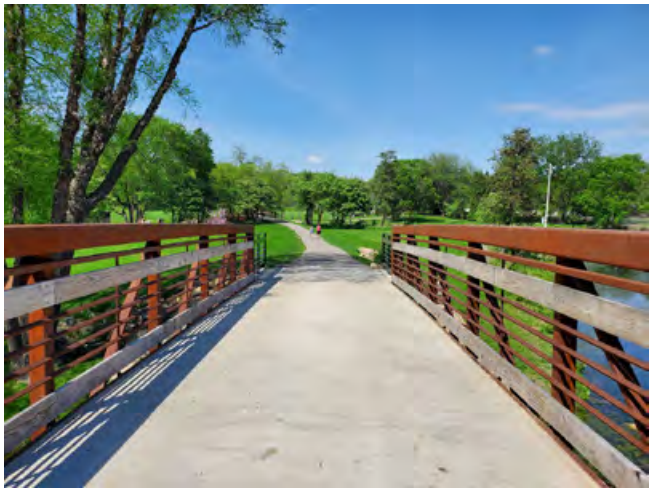


Figure 5.56. Bridge Concrete Surfacing

PATHS

There are four trail and path systems in Vilas Park. There are walks which parallel Drake Street and the exit road from the north lot. There is a multi-use trail that runs the extent of the west boundary of the park. There is also a north-south connection through the center of the park that extends from the north parking lot to Vilas Park Drive over the pedestrian bridges and island. And, there are walks connecting the upper park mounds and Annie Stewart Fountain to the lower park.

The sidewalk in the Drake Street right-of-way was recently added (Figure 5.57). From the Drake Street sidewalk, there is a connection to a walk that extends along the entry road to the north parking lot (Figures 5.58 and 5.59). All the concrete is in good condition and maintained in the winter. The asphalt path that is parallel to the exit road from the north parking lot to the intersection of Grant and Drake Streets is also in good condition with a PASER of 8 (Figure 5.60).

The asphalt path that is parallel to the exit road from the north parking lot to the intersection of Grant and Drake Streets is in good condition (Figure 5.60). The PASER is an 8 for this walk.

The multi-use trail extends from the Grant and Drake Street intersection along the west boundary of the park to Edgewood Drive (Figures 5.61, 5.62 and 5.63). The asphalt pavement has a PASER of 8 and is in good condition. The trail is the widest paved pedestrian path in the park at 10 feet. The multi-use path is plowed regularly during the winter as a heavily used commuter route (Figure 5.64). There are connections to Vilas

Figure 5.57. Drake Street Walk

Figure 5.58. Connecting Walk

Figure 5.59. Walk along Park Engtry Road

Avenue along the route. The main connection is directly across from the Van Buren Street intersection with Vilas Avenue. There are also several informal connections through the woodland edge of Vilas Avenue to the multi-use trail (Figure 5.65). These connections range from asphalt to dirt paths. They are in poor condition and mostly non-ADA compliant.

The main north to south path through the park begins at the north parking lot running near the west fence line of the zoo to the pedestrian bridges to just east of the main shelter to Vilas Park Drive (Figures 5.66 to 5.70). The path is heavily used and is accessible along its entire length. The pavement is asphalt and is in varying conditions. The path from the north parking lot to the east backstop has a PASER of 5. There is rutting, ponding and cracking in the pavement (Figure 5.67). From the backstop to Vilas Park Drive, the asphalt has a PASER of 10 since that portion was installed with the new pedestrian bridges in 2017. There is a

Figure 5.60. Path along North Exit Road

Figure 5.61. North Multi-Use Trail

Figure 5.62. Central Mult-Use Trail

Figure 5.63. South Multi-Use Trail

Figure 5.64. Multi-Use Trail in Winter

Figure 5.65. Informal Path Example

short connection to the former west entrance to the zoo which is poor condition and is no longer used (Figure 5.68). The path on the island extending to Vilas Park Drive also serves as an access for park maintenance (Figures 5.69 and 5.70). The entire length of the path is cleared of snow in the winter.

Once the central path terminates at Vilas Park Drive there are no paved connections east or west other than the road. There is a worn dirt foot path along the lagoon shoreline to the south entrance of the zoo (Figures 5.71 and 5.72).

Figure 5.66. Path near Shoe Playground

Figure 5.67. Path at Backstop

Figure 5.68. Path to Closed Zoo Gate

Figure 5.69. Path on Island

Figure 5.70. Path at Vilas Park Drive

There are three short asphalt paths connecting the south zoo entrance, the beach and the kayak launch to Vilas Park Drive (Figures 5.73 to 5.75). These paths provide accessible connections to use areas but are in poor condition. There has not been a formal assessment of these paths. The south zoo connection is the only link maintained in the winter.

There are no pedestrian walkways along a narrow corridor of Vilas Park Drive where the south zoo fence is near the Lake Wingra shoreline (there is only 44.5 feet from the fence to the top of the shoreline slope). There are worn footpaths on both sides of Vilas Park Drive here. The north side dirt path is adjacent to the zoo fence (Figure 5.76). On the south side, there are two worn paths between the curb and rip-rap shoreline (Figure 5.77). The corridor is used by people on foot during the winter and is hazardous (Figure 5.78).

Figure 5.71. Dirt Path along Lagoon

Figure 5.72. Dirt Path along Vilas Park Drive

Figure 5.73. Path to Zoo Entrance

Figure 5.74. Path at Beach

Figure 5.75. Path to Kayak Launch

At the upper park along Erin Street there are concrete walks connecting to the City walk system and down to the lower park (Figure 5.79). The concrete is in good condition, but the walks exceed an 8% slope in several locations, especially from the top of the hill down to Randall Avenue (Figure 5.80). This condition is not compliant with ADA guidelines. Handrails and landings every 30-feet would need to be added to meet minimum compliance. The walks are cleared in the winter (Figure 5.81). Due to the sensitivity of the mounds, any improvements to the walks are subject to review by the State Archaeologist.

Figure 5.76. Dirt Path at Zoo Fence

Figure 5.77. Dirt Path at Lake Wingra

Figure 5.78. Corridor in Winter

Figure 5.79. Walks at Mounds

Figure 5.80. Walk down to Randall

Figure 5.81. Walk in the Winter

SIGNS AND WAYFINDING

Vilas Park does not have a park sign identifying the facility typical of other parks in the system. There are Henry Vilas Zoo signs at the entrance to the north parking lot and another at the south entry to the zoo (Figure 5.82). There is an information kiosk in the center of the park near the north pedestrian bridge at the lagoon that offers a map with amenities and information on other events and public notices (Figure 5.83). Once in the park, there are several wayfinding signs in parking lots and along Vilas Park Drive (Figure 5.85). These are typical road signs but are difficult to read from cars even though patrons in cars are the intended users. There is primarily vehicle related information and the signs are utilitarian in appearance.

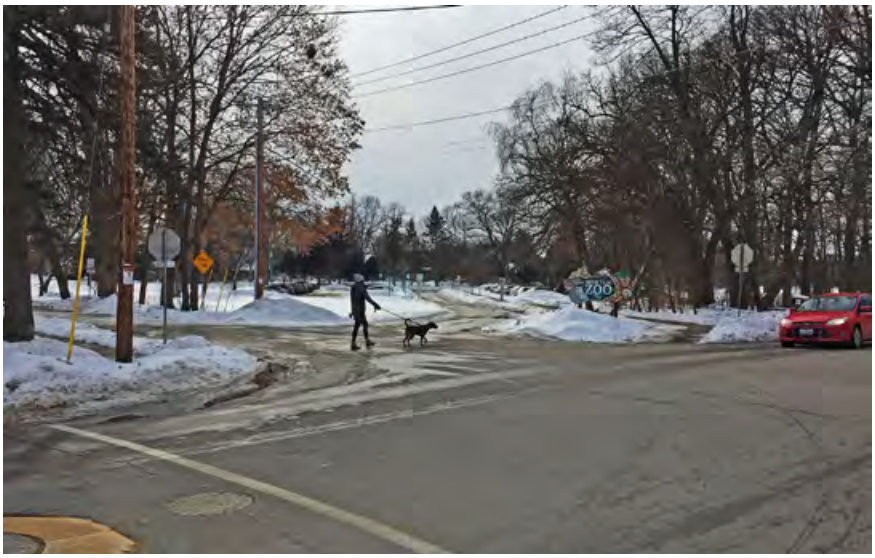


Figure 5.82. Zoo Sign at the Entrance to Vilas Park and the Norht Parking Lot

Figure 5.83. Park Kiosk

There is a sign with photographs and information about the history of Vilas Park near the shoe playground along the zoo west fence (Figure 5.85). The sign is in good condition and has information that users may find interesting. There is also a plaque about William Vilas and his role in creating the park on a stone near the main shelter (Figure 5.86).

Figure 5.84. Vehiclular Wayfinding Signs

Figure 5.85. Vilas Park History Sign

Figure 5.86. William Vilas Plaque

There are several signs and plaques throughout the park that honor, dedicate and inform park users of significant events and causes that have occurred in the park. The plaques are on stone and in good condition. There is a sign made of recycled plastic dedicated to supporters of the park that flanks the stone with the William Vilas plaque (Figure 5.87). Nearby, there are two signs honoring the Olympic Speed Skaters from Madison whose use of the lagoon was instrumental in their learning to skate. The names of skaters are on both the plaque and a wood sign (Figures 5.88 and 5.89). A second plaque was added as more skaters participated in the Olympics.

There is a plaque near a grove of trees dedicated to the leaders of the National Woman's Relief Guard to the Grand Army of the Republic (Figure 5.90). The stone marker is located near the basketball court and grove of trees. Another plaque in proximity to the grove is dedicated to Alma and Karl Taeuber and their relationship with Regent Soccer and Madison Areas Youth Soccer Association (MAYSA) (Figure 5.91). The plaque is in

Figure 5.87. Park Supporters Sign

Figure 5.88. Olympians

Figure 5.89. Olympic Speed Skaters Sign

the center of the landscape island between the connections of the multi-use trail and Vilas Avenue at Van Buren Street. Finally, there is a plaque at the foot of the mound complex at Erin Street describing the Native American mound system and village site at Vilas Park (Figure 5.92). All the plaques on stone are in good condition and well maintained.

The Henry Vilas Zoo is a shared space with the park and has north and south entrance features. Even though the park and zoo are separate entities, these entrances are important to the relationship of both facilities. The existing signs are dated, and the zoo is currently conducting a master plan which includes their replacement.

Figure 5.90. Nat'l Woman's Relief Plaque

Figure 5.91. Taeuber Plaque

Figure 5.92. Indian Mounds Plaque

The north sign is a gateway structure which will be replaced and relocated to align with the entry road from the Drake Street and Randall Avenue intersection (Figure 5.93). The south zoo entrance is the former east historic bridge which was built in 1915 as a companion to the park bridge on Vilas Park Drive (Figure 5.94). The bridge walls were extended, and columns were added many years ago to create a gateway into the zoo. There is a small remnant of the lagoon system that provides a pool of water for a garden at that entrance. The bridge and garden are maintained by the zoo.

Figure 5.93. North Zoo Gateway

Figure 5.94. South Zoo Entrance and Bridge

EDIBLE LANDSCAPE

There is a small area that is dedicated to an edible landscape along the path connection from the central path to the former west zoo entrance (Figure 5.95). There are trees along the north shoreline of the lagoon. This location is a good area for expansion of the garden due to being somewhat secluded from the main thoroughfare. The space is triangular and can be easily identified as a garden. The ground is near the lagoon with good access to groundwater for plants.

Figure 5.95. Fruit Trees Along the Lagoon at the Former West Zoo Entrance

CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL BENCHES

The Madison Area Chapter of The Compassionate Friends (TCF) has memory benches in and around the "Old Woman in the Shoe" playground. (Figures 5.96 and 5.97). The benches are not placed on an ADA accessible route. The benches are metal frames with recycled plastic slats. Custom memorial plaques are fastened to the slats. According to the Compassionate Friends Website[68] "Since 1994, almost 900 names of beloved children have been added to these memory benches."

Figure 5.96. Memory Bench at "Old Woman in the Shoe"

Figure 5.97. Memory Benches Around Playground

68 The Compassionate Friends Madison Chapter

TRAFFIC AND PARKING ANALYSIS

TRAFFIC DATA COLLECTION

MSA Professional Services, Inc. collected turning movement counts at five intersection locations (Figure 5.1) surrounding Vilas Park to evaluate existing traffic conditions on perimeter roads to the park. Count dates were April 24, 2019 and June 29, 2019 to capture a typical weekday with school in session and on a weekend with pleasant weather. Morning and afternoon peak hours, between 6-9 a.m. and 3-6 p.m., were counted during the week; and on the weekend, the 14 hours from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. were counted. Vehicle classification for the count data includes passenger vehicles, buses, motorcycles, articulated trucks, single-unit trucks, pedestrians, and on-street and off-street bicycle traffic. The following intersections were used for the analysis (Figure 5.98):

1. South Randall Ave. & Drake St., including primary zoo parking access
2. Drake St. and Grant St. including the zoo Exit
3. Edgewood Ave. and the multimodal Path intersection
4. South Orchard St. and Vilas Park Dr.
5. North Wingra Dr. and South Mills St./North Wingra Dr.

In addition to turning movement counts, the City of Madison Traffic Engineering Division and MSA collected information about the number of vehicles entering and exiting the park and summarized vehicle speeds at three locations along Vilas Park Dr. to determine the speed profile of vehicles using this section of roadway through the park. Speed data was collected during two time periods, once during the summer on August 12, 2019, and the other during the fall on November 7, 2019 – again to capture data while school was both in- and out-of-session.

Figure 5.98. Aerial Photo of Vilas Park with Data Collection Points (Google Maps)

Figure 5.99. Intersection of Drake Street and Randall Avenue 1

Figure 5.100. Intersection of Drake Street and Grant Street 2

Figure 5.101. Intersection of Edgewood Avenue and Multimodel Path 3

Figure 5.102. Intersection of Orchard Street and Vilas Park Drive 4

The total number of vehicles using Vilas Park Dr. during this period of study falls around 1,300 to 1,700 a day on weekdays and slightly less on weekends. City of Madison Traffic Engineering maintains a web-based traffic count application.[69] The app obtains a daily average for certain street locations in the City. As a comparison, for the intersection of Drake St. and Randall Ave., the daily average is 4,600 vehicles utilizing Drake St. and 1,600 utilizing Randall Ave.[70] At the intersection of Vilas Park Dr. and Mills St.,[71] the average is 4,450 at Mills St., but there is no historical data for Vilas Park Dr.

TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

Peak hours at the study intersections were found to be 7:30-8:30 a.m. and 4:00-5:00 p.m. during the week and 9:00-10:00 a.m. and 2:00-3:00 p.m. during the weekend. Pedestrian and bicycle traffic were counted separately from vehicles at the intersections to show heavily used crosswalks around the park. Pedestrian activity was the highest during the weekend, with the greatest number of pedestrians utilizing the multi-use path at Edgewood Dr. and Vilas Park Dr., at Vilas Park Dr. and Orchard St., and at the zoo entrance at Drake St. and Grant St. A summary of peak-hour vehicle and pedestrian traffic movements at the five study intersections can be found in the weekday (Figure 5.104) and weekend (Figure 5.105) intersection activity diagrams, Figure 5.103 provides a description of the activity diagram content.

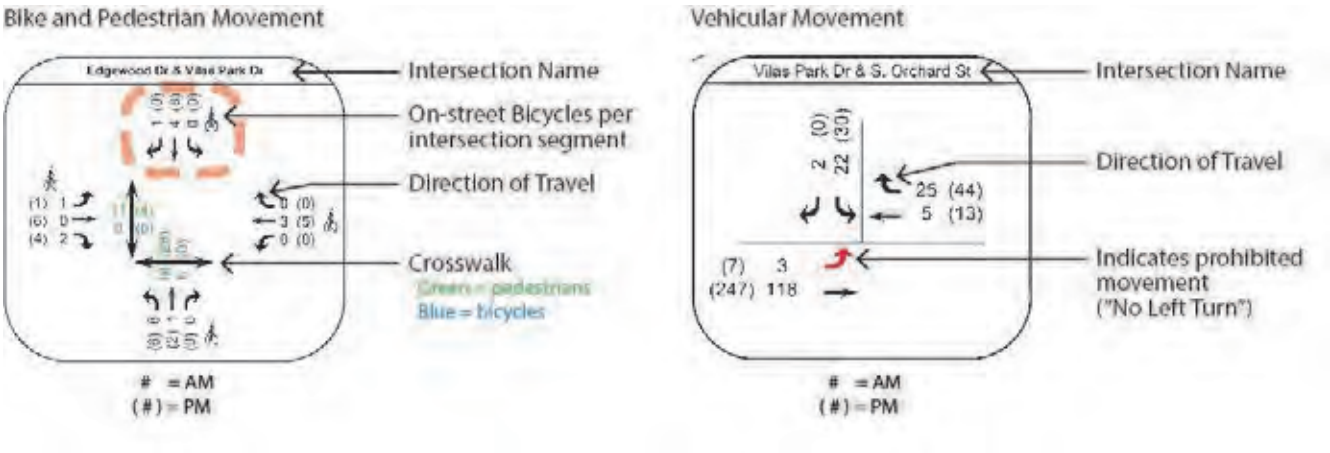
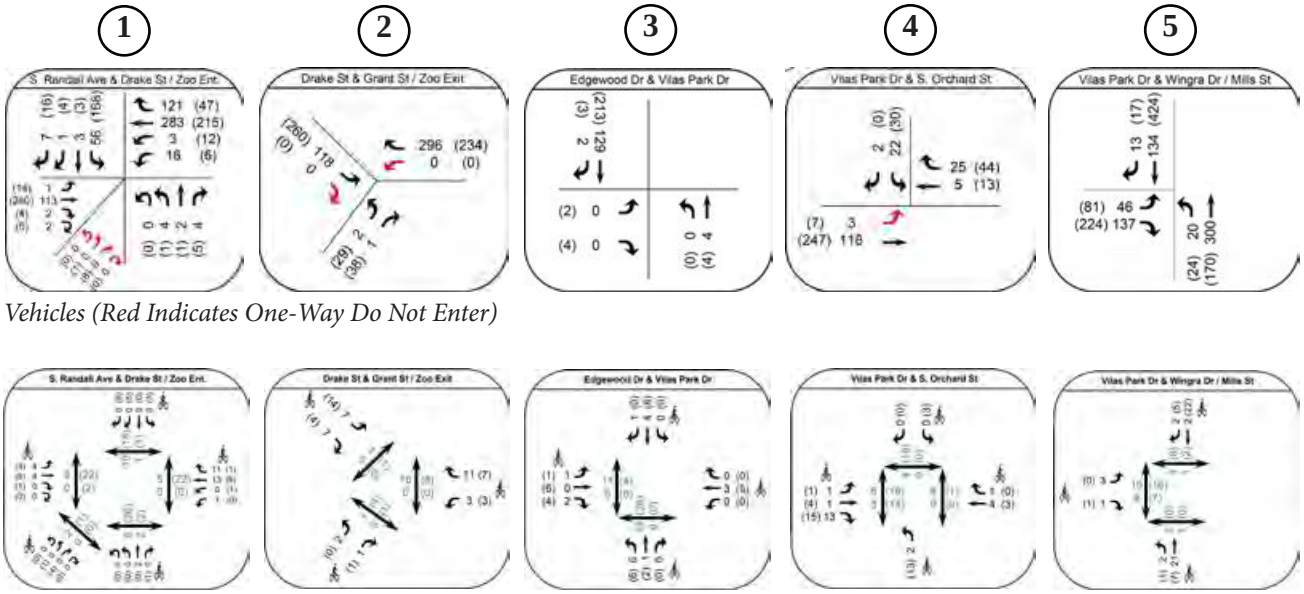


Figure 5.103. Intersection Activity Diagram Description

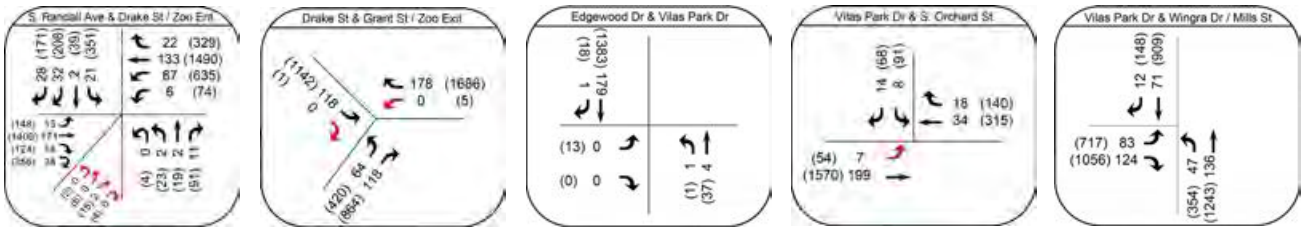
69 City of Madison Traffic Engineering, www.cityofmadison.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer
70 For the year 2017
71 For the year 2015



Vehicles (Red Indicates One-Way Do Not Enter)

Bike/Pedestrian (Blue Indicates Pedestrian, Green Bikes)

Figure 5.104. Weekday Intersection Activity



Vehicles (Red Indicates One-Way Do Not Enter)

Bike/Pedestrian (Blue Indicates Pedestrian, Green Bikes)

Figure 5.105. Weekend Intersection Activity

Analysis of the intersections data also indicates that Vilas Park Dr. may be serving as a shortcut through-route for drivers leaving Edgewood and Monroe Street area, from the west going east. In addition, the lack of east-west transportation routes in this part of the city may contribute to pass-through traffic for destinations on S Park St. or Fish Hatchery Rd. as well. Vilas Park Dr. is one-way from the intersection with Edgewood Ave., eastbound, to the parking lot near the southern entrance to the zoo. The turning movement counts, all collected on the same day, provide a conceptual estimate of the number of pass-through trips that may be occurring. The data (Tables 5.1 and 5.2) is used to estimate the number of pass-through trips by taking the difference between the number of vehicles entering Vilas Park from the west at Edgewood Ave. and the

number of vehicles exiting to the east at Orchard Ave. for each of the 15-minute intervals counted. The assumption is that vehicles intending to visit the park and enter from the east at Orchard St. are likely staying at the park for longer than 15 minutes.

Table 5.1 illustrates the estimated number of commuter vehicles using Vilas Park Dr. without parking or stopping to use park facilities during a weekday. The Table 1, "Trip Difference" column, shows a larger negative trip difference (more vehicles leaving the park to the east than arriving from the west on Vilas Park Dr.) in the later afternoon; specifically, between 3:15-4:30 p.m. (Figure 5.106). This could be due to a combination of students using the Vilas Park parking lots during the school day and exiting the park in the afternoon, as well as zoo guests exiting the zoo parking lot. After school hours, the data shows a small jump in potential pass-through trips around 3:15 p.m. The traffic count data suggests that there is a significant number of vehicles traveling on Vilas Park Dr. that are utilizing the route as a pass-through bypassing the park.

Table 1 - Weekday Calculated Vehicle Pass through Trips on Vilas Park Drive

Time	Edgewood Ave & Vilas Park Dr	Orchard St & Vilas Park Dr	Estimated Pass Through Trips	Trip Difference	Estimated Pass Through Trip %
AM	EB Vehicles Enter	EB Vehicles Exit	EB Vehicles	Vehicles	
6:00 AM	4	4	4	0	100%
6:15 AM	11	11	11	0	100%
6:30 AM	11	8	8	3	73%
6:45 AM	14	15	14	-1	100%
7:00 AM	24	24	24	0	100%
7:15 AM	26	25	25	1	96%
7:30 AM	39	37	37	2	95%
7:45 AM	48	42	42	6	88%
8:00 AM	25	27	25	-2	100%
8:15 AM	19	15	15	4	79%
8:30 AM	26	25	25	1	96%
8:45 AM	23	24	23	-1	100%
PM					
3:00 PM	44	51	44	-7	100%
3:15 PM	43	57	43	-14	100%
3:30 PM	50	66	50	-16	100%
3:45 PM	51	58	51	-7	100%
4:00 PM	53	62	53	-9	100%
4:15 PM	57	70	57	-13	100%
4:30 PM	52	68	52	-16	100%
4:45 PM	57	54	54	3	95%
5:00 PM	61	66	61	-5	100%
5:15 PM	57	52	52	5	91%
5:30 PM	53	45	45	8	85%
5:45 PM	47	45	45	2	96%

Notes: *Intersection Counts Completed 4/24/19*
Trips include vehicles only, does not account for bikes on road
Assume westbound vehicles entering/existing Vilas Park are staying longer than 15 minutes
- *Occupants are either parking and walking to Edgewood, or parking and using Vilas Park and Zoo*

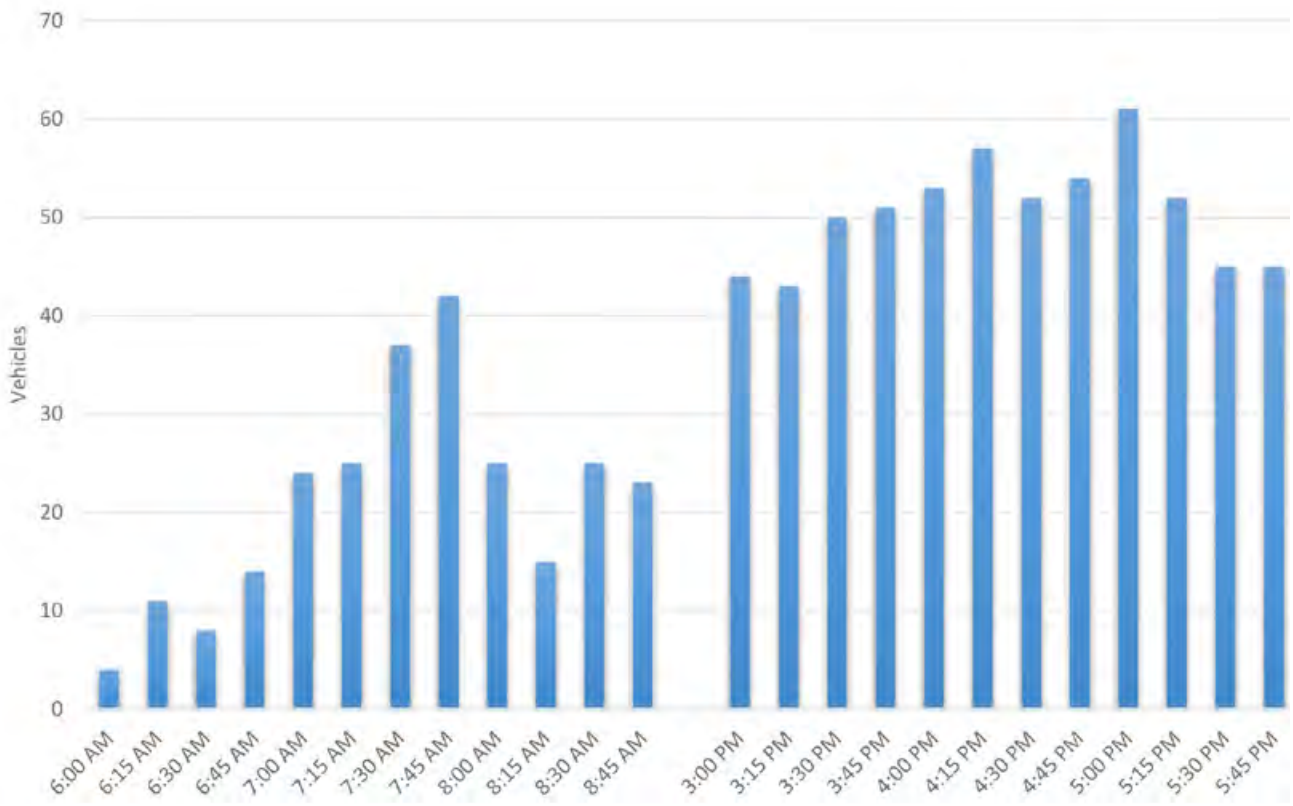


Figure 5.106. Graph of Weekday Calculated Vehicle Pass through Trips on Vilas Park Drive (MSA)

SPEED STUDY AND ANALYSIS

There is currently no posted speed limit on Vilas Park Dr. through Vilas Park. Vilas Park Dr., within the park property boundary, is considered a "pleasure drive" and does not fall within a city street right-of-way. Collection of speed data from three locations (shown in Figure 5.107) along Vilas Park Dr. from August and November 2019 provides information on the speeds of vehicles using this road. Speed data was obtained by City of Madison Traffic Engineering from August 12 to August 18, 2019. The fastest speeds during that study period occurred outside of the park, at the entrance to Vilas Park on Edgewood Ave. (location 9107 on Figure 5.5). The 85th percentile speed at this location was 31 mph. This location also saw the largest percentage of drivers, 22%, traveling over 30 mph when compared to the other locations in the park. Speeds at the two other locations (9108 and 9109) fell between 24 and 26 mph.

MSA conducted a second speed study from November 7 to November 15, 2019. During that study period, the road tubes were cut by snowplows midway through data collection. Data that was affected by this incident was removed from the study. The results of this study showed that 85th percentile speeds were relatively consistent at the three sites, at approximately 29, 30 and 27 mph, respectively. Only 10% or fewer of the vehicles were observed to be traveling greater than 30 mph through the park. Figure 5.111 shows the speed data from both the August and November data collections.

Figure 5.107. Aerial Photo of Vilas Park with Tube Count Locations (Google Maps)

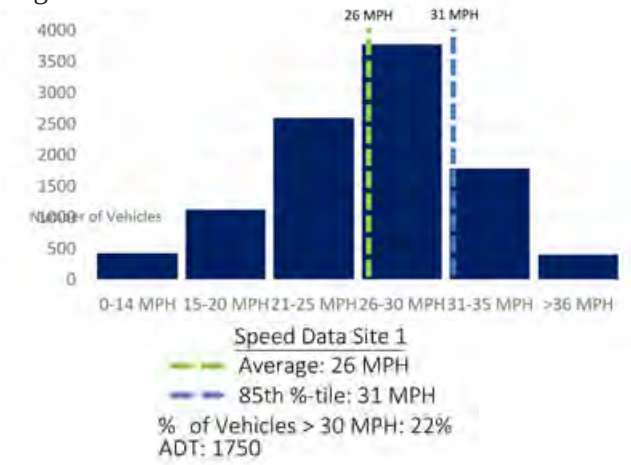
Figure 5.108. Site 9107 Edgewood Avenue

Figure 5.109. Site 9108 Vilas Park Drive on Peninsula

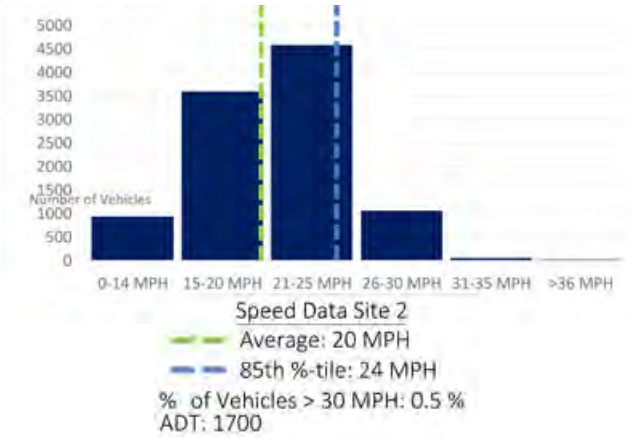
Figure 5.110. Site 9109 Vilas Park Drive at Zoo

AUGUST 2019

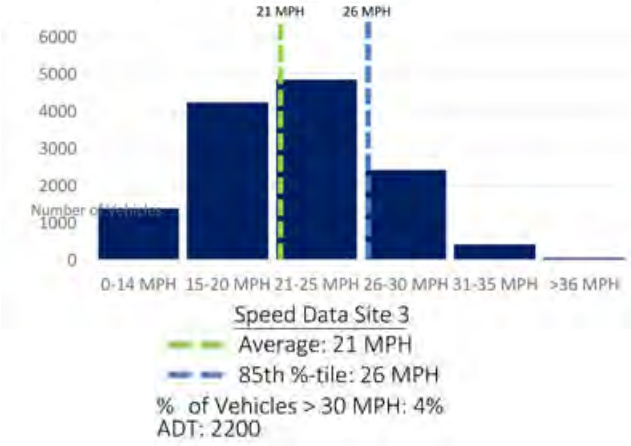
Edgewood Avenue: Site 9107



Vilas Park Drive: Site 9108

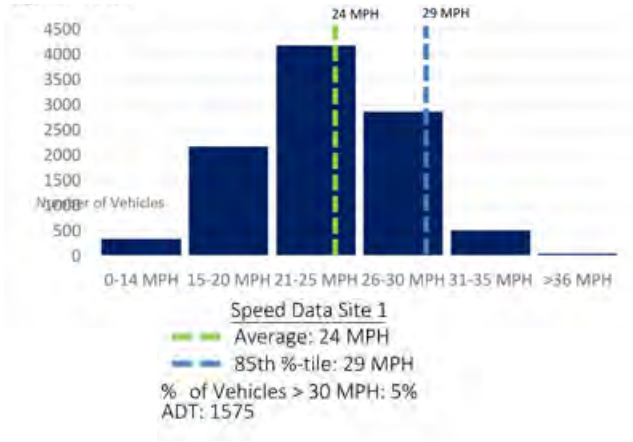


Vilas Park Drive: Site 9109



NOVEMBER 2019

Edgewood Avenue: Site 9107



Vilas Park Drive: Site 9108

Vilas Park Drive: Site 9109

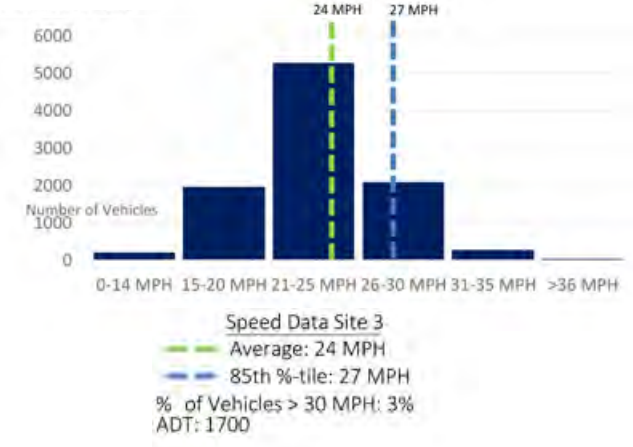


Figure 5.111. Speed Data for Edgewood Avenue through Vilas Park Drive to Orchard Street Intersection

PARKING COUNTS

Counting of parked vehicles in all of the park's lots occurred in conjunction with site observations to provide a snapshot of the number of users arriving by vehicle during differing times, days and seasons. The park was subdivided into ten smaller study areas for a more manageable site observation and parking count (Figure 5.112). Not all ten areas of study identified in the park have off-street parking lots. The city streets that border the park were also included in the study to account for potential utilization of those opportune spaces that have direct access to the park.

The parking lots and bordering street spaces are as follows in these study areas.

- Area 1 includes the small lot just west of the tennis courts and on-street parking along Vilas Ave.
- Area 4 includes parallel parking on Drake St. and Randall Ave. and three northern parking lots.
- Area 7 includes parallel parking on Erin St. in the upper area of Vilas Park at the Annie Stewart Fountain.
- Area 8 includes parallel parking on Vilas Park Dr. just east of the historic bridge and west of the park shelter lot.
- Area 9 includes angled parking on Vilas Park Dr. between the shelter an beach and the fishing pier.
- Area 10 includes angled parking north of the beach house, the south lot at the zoo entrance and the small lot at the intersection of Vilas Park Dr. and Orchard St.

Note: There are no parking lots in areas 2, 3,5 and 6.

Figure 5.112. Site Observation Study Areas with Parking (P) Identified

Figure 5.113. Parking along Vilas Park Drive

Figure 5.114. Area 1 - Tennis Courts

Figure 5.115. Area 1 - Vilas Park Drive Closed to Traffic

Figure 5.116. Area 8 - Vilas Park Drive Parallel Parking

Figure 5.117. Area 8 - Vilas Park Drive Parallel Parking

Figure 5.118. Area 8 - Shelter Parking

Figure 5.119. Area 8 - Shelter Parking

Figure 5.120. Area 9 - Vilas Park Drive Angled Parking (North)

Figure 5.121. Area 9 - Vilas Park Drive Angled Parking (South)

Figure 5.122. Area 9 - Vilas Park Drive Linear Parking Lot

Figure 5.123. Area 10 - South Parking Lot at Zoo Entrance

Figure 5.124. Area 10 - Parking Lot at Orchard and VPD

Figure 5.125. Area 7 - Erin Street Parking

Figure 5.1206 Area 4 - North Parking Lot at Zoo

Figure 5.127. Area 4 - North Parking Lot at Zoo

Figure 5.128. Area 4 - Parking along Exit Road

As the master plan project was beginning in earnest, Parks expressed interest in generally maintaining the existing amount of parking spaces within the park – in recognition that it would be unreasonable to expect that the park's parking capacity could grow – especially to attempt to accommodate peak zoo visitorship – and that greatly reducing the count would, in turn, shift the burden to accommodate additional spaces to the adjacent residential streets. Additionally, more efficient layout of parking would help reduce the overall amount of pavement within the park.

There are 395 parking stalls within Vilas Park including the 8 parallel spaces on Erin St. (Table 5.2). Erin St. is the only street with on-street parking that is specifically identified and signed as Vilas Park parking. The parking counts shown in Table 5.3 are from a 12-month study of Vilas Park-associated parking demand. The table lists the date, time, weather conditions and temperature to give a sense of how the parking demand varies throughout the year. The percentage of spaces utilized provides another perspective as to how full parking lots and streets are at differing times.

Table 5.2 - Total Amount of Parking Stalls in each of the Areas with Parking Identified on the Site Plan

Vilas Park Total Parking Stalls per Area

Area 4	Drake St	4A	4B	4C	Randall	Total	Max	Percent used
Total Stalls	32	28	30	30	17	137	137	100%
Area 1	Vilas Ave	1A				Total	Max	Percent used
Total Stalls	40	25				65	65	100%
Area 8	VPD	8A				Total	Max	Percent used
Total Stalls	28	56				84	84	100%
Area 9	9A	9B	9C			Total	Max	Percent used
Total Stalls	21	21	17			59	59	100%
Area 10	10A	10B	10C	10D		Total	Max	Percent used
Total Stalls	55	18	22	36		131	131	100%
Area 7	Erin St					Total	Max	Percent used
Total Stalls	8					8	8	100%

Table 5.3 - Parking Counts on Date and Time with Weather Conditions

Vilas Park Parking Counts 6/20/2019

Thursday Partly Cloudy Temp 74

Area 4	Drake St	4A	4B	4C	Randall	Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	22	20	29	30	25	126	137	92%
Area 1	Vilas Ave	1A				Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	0	11				11	65	17%
Area 8	VPD	8A				Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	0	16				16	84	19%
Area 9	9A	9B	9C			Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	14	19	17			50	59	85%
Area 10	10A	10B	10C	10D		Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	52	16	20	33		121	131	92%
Area 7	Erin St					Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	8					8	8	100%

Vilas Park Parking Counts 6/28/2019

Friday Rain Temp 67

Area 4	Drake St	4A	4B	4C	Randall	Total	Max	Percent used
7:30:00 AM	0	0	0	3	14	17	137	12%
8:30:00 AM	0	1	1	3	13	18	137	13%

Area 1	Vilas Ave	1A				Total	Max	Percent used
7:30:00 AM	0	4				4	65	6%
8:30:00 AM	0	5				5	65	8%

Area 8	VPD	8A				Total	Max	Percent used
7:30:00 AM	0	20				20	84	24%
8:30:00 AM	0	37				37	84	44%

Area 9	9A	9B	9C			Total	Max	Percent used
7:30:00 AM	0	2	0			2	59	3%
8:30:00 AM	0	2	0			2	59	3%

Area 10	10A	10B	10C	10D		Total	Max	Percent used
7:30:00 AM	0	0	0	1		1	131	1%
8:30:00 AM	4	0	0	1		5	131	4%

Area 7	Erin St					Total	Max	Percent used
7:30:00 AM	2					2	8	25%
8:30:00 AM	1					1	8	13%

Vilas Park Parking Counts 7/11/2019

Thursday Sun Temp 81

Area 4	Drake St	4A	4B	4C	Randall	Total	Max	Percent used
4:30:00 PM	11	9	17	5	8	50	137	36%
6:00:00 PM	1	4	0	3	6	14	137	10%

Area 1	Vilas Ave	1A				Total	Max	Percent used
4:30:00 PM	0	11				11	65	17%
6:00:00 PM	0	15				15	65	23%

Area 8	VPD	8A				Total	Max	Percent used
4:30:00 PM	3	12				15	84	18%
6:00:00 PM	2	37				39	84	46%

Area 9	9A	9B	9C			Total	Max	Percent used
4:30:00 PM	1	5	6			12	59	20%
6:00:00 PM	3	3	5			11	59	19%

Area 10	10A	10B	10C	10D		Total	Max	Percent used
4:30:00 PM	30	9	2	9		50	131	38%
6:00:00 PM	9	7	0	4		20	131	15%

Area 7	Erin St					Total	Max	Percent used
4:30:00 PM	2					2	8	25%
6:00:00 PM	2					2	8	25%

Vilas Park Parking Counts 8/6/2019

Tuesday Sun Temp 76

Area 4	Drake St	4A	4B	4C	Randall	Total	Max	Percent used
7:00:00 AM	0	0	1	2	14	17	137	12%
8:30:00 AM	1	0	0	2	16	19	137	14%

Area 1	Vilas Ave	1A				Total	Max	Percent used
7:00:00 AM	0	10				10	65	15%
8:30:00 AM	0	7				7	65	11%

Area 8	VPD	8A				Total	Max	Percent used
7:00:00 AM	0	1				1	84	1%
8:30:00 AM	0	2				2	84	2%

Area 9	9A	9B	9C			Total	Max	Percent used
7:00:00 AM	0	0	1			1	59	2%
8:30:00 AM	0	0	1			1	59	2%

Area 10	10A	10B	10C	10D		Total	Max	Percent used
7:00:00 AM	1	0	0	2		3	131	2%
8:30:00 AM	6	0	0	0		6	131	5%

Area 7	Erin St					Total	Max	Percent used
7:00:00 AM	0					0	8	0%
8:30:00 AM	0					0	8	0%

Vilas Park Parking Counts 8/28/2019

Wednesday Sunny Temp 78

Area 4	Drake St	4A	4B	4C	Randall	Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	28	29	30	29	24	140	137	102%
Area 1	Vilas Ave	1A				Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	0	20				20	65	31%
Area 8	VPD	8A				Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	0	21				21	84	25%
Area 9	9A	9B	9C			Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	14	18	1			33	59	56%
Area 10	10A	10B	10C	10D		Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	52	15	18	30		115	131	88%
Area 7	Erin St					Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	5					5	8	63%

Vilas Park Parking Counts 9/27/2019

Friday Rain Temp 66

Area 4	Drake St	4A	4B	4C	Randall	Total	Max	Percent used
4:00:00 PM	2	4	1	14	3	24	137	18%
6:00:00 PM	0	7	0	6	3	16	137	12%
Area 1	Vilas Ave	1A				Total	Max	Percent used
4:00:00 PM	0	8				8	65	12%
6:00:00 PM	0	6				6	65	9%
Area 8	VPD	8A				Total	Max	Percent used
4:00:00 PM	1	2				3	84	4%
6:00:00 PM	0	2				2	84	2%
Area 9	9A	9B	9C			Total	Max	Percent used
4:00:00 PM	0	1	1			2	59	3%
6:00:00 PM	0	0	1			1	59	2%
Area 10	10A	10B	10C	10D		Total	Max	Percent used
4:00:00 PM	8	1	4	0		13	131	10%
6:00:00 PM	11	1	2	0		14	131	11%
Area 7	Erin St					Total	Max	Percent used
4:00:00 PM	2					2	8	25%
6:00:00 PM	2					2	8	25%

Vilas Park Parking Counts 11/5/2019

Tuesday Partly Cloudy Temp 30

Area 4	Drake St	4A	4B	4C	Randall	Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	22	0	11	1	23	57	137	42%
Area 1	Vilas Ave	1A				Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	0	15				15	65	23%
Area 8	VPD	8A				Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	2	2				4	84	5%
Area 9	9A	9B	9C			Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	0	2	1			3	59	5%
Area 10	10A	10B	10C	10D		Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	5	0	0	0		5	131	4%
Area 7	Erin St					Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	0					0	8	0%

Vilas Park Parking Counts 11/22/2019

Friday Cloudy Temp 34

Area 4	Drake St	4A	4B	4C	Randall	Total	Max	Percent used
4:00:00 PM	0	0	6	5	14	25	137	18%
5:30:00 PM	0	0	3	0	13	16	137	12%
Area 1	**Vilas Ave**	**1A**				**Total**	**Max**	**Percent used**
4:00:00 PM	0	4				4	65	6%
5:30:00 PM	0	4				4	65	6%
Area 8	**VPD**	**8A**				**Total**	**Max**	**Percent used**
4:00:00 PM	0	0				0	84	0%
5:30:00 PM	0	0				0	84	0%
Area 9	**9A**	**9B**	**9C**			**Total**	**Max**	**Percent used**
4:00:00 PM	0	1	1			2	59	3%
5:30:00 PM	0	0	0			0	59	0%
Area 10	**10A**	**10B**	**10C**	**10D**		**Total**	**Max**	**Percent used**
4:00:00 PM	0	0	0	0		0	131	0%
5:30:00 PM	0	0	0	0		0	131	0%
Area 7	**Erin St**					**Total**	**Max**	**Percent used**
4:00:00 PM	0					0	8	0%
5:30:00 PM	0					0	8	0%

Vilas Park Parking Counts 12/7/2019

Saturday Cloudy Temp 30

Area 4	Drake St	4A	4B	4C	Randall	Total	Max	Percent used
7:00:00 AM	0	0	1	0	15	16	137	12%
8:30:00 AM	0	0	1	2	14	17	137	12%
Area 1	**Vilas Ave**	**1A**				**Total**	**Max**	**Percent used**
7:00:00 AM	0	3				3	65	5%
8:30:00 AM	0	3				3	65	5%
Area 8	**VPD**	**8A**				**Total**	**Max**	**Percent used**
7:00:00 AM	0	0				0	84	0%
8:30:00 AM	0	0				0	84	0%
Area 9	**9A**	**9B**	**9C**			**Total**	**Max**	**Percent used**
7:00:00 AM	0	0	0			0	59	0%
8:30:00 AM	0	1	0			1	59	2%
Area 10	**10A**	**10B**	**10C**	**10D**		**Total**	**Max**	**Percent used**
7:00:00 AM	0	1	0	0		1	131	1%
8:30:00 AM	0	0	0	0		0	131	0%
Area 7	**Erin St**					**Total**	**Max**	**Percent used**
7:00:00 AM	1					1	8	13%
8:30:00 AM	0					0	8	0%

Vilas Park Parking Counts 2/26/2020

Sunday Partly Cloudy Temp - 26

Area 4	Drake St	4A	4B	4C	Randall	Total	Max	Percent used
10:30:00 AM	4	16	27	0	6	53	137	39%
1:00:00 PM	4	20	29	0	4	57	137	42%
Area 1	**Vilas Ave**	**1A**				**Total**	**Max**	**Percent used**
10:45:00 AM	0	3				3	65	5%
1:15:00 PM	0	6				6	65	9%
Area 8	**VPD**	**8A**				**Total**	**Max**	**Percent used**
10:45:00 AM	0	32				32	84	38%
1:20:00 PM	0	40				40	84	48%
Area 9	**9A**	**9B**	**9C**			**Total**	**Max**	**Percent used**
11:00:00 AM	1	3	0			4	59	7%
1:40:00 PM	0	4	0			4	59	7%
Area 10	**10A**	**10B**	**10C**	**10D**		**Total**	**Max**	**Percent used**
11:30:00 AM	28	0	0	0		28	131	21%
1:50:00 PM	36	0	1	0		37	131	28%
Area 7	**Erin St**					**Total**	**Max**	**Percent used**
11:45:00 AM	0					0	8	0%
2:00:00 PM	0					0	8	0%

Vilas Park Parking Counts 3/31/2020

Sunday Partly Cloudy Temp - 26

Area 4	Drake St	4A	4B	4C	Randall	Total	Max	Percent used
10:30:00 AM	12	0	0	0	6	18	137	13%
1:00:00 PM	10	0	0	1	4	15	137	11%
Area 1	Vilas Ave	1A				Total	Max	Percent used
10:45:00 AM	6	3				9	65	14%
1:15:00 PM	6	4				10	65	15%
Area 8	VPD	8A				Total	Max	Percent used
10:45:00 AM	1	8				9	84	11%
1:20:00 PM	3	2				5	84	6%
Area 9	9A	9B	9C			Total	Max	Percent used
11:00:00 AM	0	2	0			2	59	3%
1:40:00 PM	0	0	0			0	59	0%
Area 10	10A	10B	10C	10D		Total	Max	Percent used
11:30:00 AM	0	2	0	0		2	131	2%
1:50:00 PM	0	2	0	0		2	131	2%
Area 7	Erin St					Total	Max	Percent used
11:45:00 AM	4					4	8	50%
2:00:00 PM	4					4	8	50%

Vilas Park Parking Counts 4/11/2020

Sunday Partly Cloudy Temp - 26

Area 4	Drake St	4A	4B	4C	Randall	Total	Max	Percent used
2:05:00 PM	0	2	3	5	8	18	137	13%
3:00:00 PM	0	2	1	6	8	17	137	12%
Area 1	Vilas Ave	1A				Total	Max	Percent used
2:25:00 PM	3	9				12	65	18%
3:10:00 PM	2	12				14	65	22%
Area 8	VPD	8A				Total	Max	Percent used
2:35:00 PM	5	4				9	84	11%
3:25:00 PM	7	8				15	84	18%
Area 9	9A	9B	9C			Total	Max	Percent used
2:40:00 PM	0	6	3			9	59	15%
3:30:00 PM	0	4	2			6	59	10%
Area 10	10A	10B	10C	10D		Total	Max	Percent used
2:50:00 PM	0	2	0	0		2	131	2%
3:40:00 PM	0	3	0	0		3	131	2%
Area 7	Erin St					Total	Max	Percent used
3:00:00 PM	1					1	8	13%
3:50:00 PM	1					1	8	13%

Vilas Park Parking Counts 5/25/2020 - Memorial Day

Note: Some parking closed for use due to COVID-19

Monday Sunny Temp - 76

Area 4	Drake St	4A	4B	4C	Randall	Total	Max	Percent used
2:15:00 PM	9	10	3	3	8	33	137	24%
						0	137	0%
Area 1	Vilas Ave	1A				Total	Max	Percent used
2:35:00 PM	2	31				33	65	51%
						0	65	0%
Area 8	VPD	8A				Total	Max	Percent used
2:55:00 PM	N/A	N/A				0	84	0%
						0	84	0%
Area 9	9A	9B	9C			Total	Max	Percent used
3:15:00 PM	N/A	N/A	N/A			0	59	0%
						0	59	0%
Area 10	10A	10B	10C	10D		Total	Max	Percent used
3:30:00 PM	N/A	N/A	N/A	24		24	131	18%
						0	131	0%
Area 7	Erin St					Total	Max	Percent used
3:40:00 PM	4					4	8	50%
						0	8	0%

Vilas Park Parking Counts **5/29/2020** Note: Some parking closed for use due to COVID-19

Friday Partly Cloudy Temp - 64

Area 4	Drake St	4A	4B	4C	Randall	Total	Max	Percent used
11:45:00 AM	1	4	6	0	2	13	137	9%
						0	137	0%
Area 1	Vilas Ave	1A				Total	Max	Percent used
12:05:00 PM	16	1				17	65	26%
						0	65	0%
Area 8	VPD	8A				Total	Max	Percent used
	N/A	N/A				0	84	0%
						0	84	0%
Area 9	9A	9B	9C			Total	Max	Percent used
	N/A	N/A	N/A			0	59	0%
						0	59	0%
Area 10	10A	10B	10C	10D		Total	Max	Percent used
12:55:00 PM	N/A	N/A	N/A	2		2	131	2%
						0	131	0%
Area 7	Erin St					Total	Max	Percent used
1:00:00 PM	2					2	8	25%
						0	8	0%

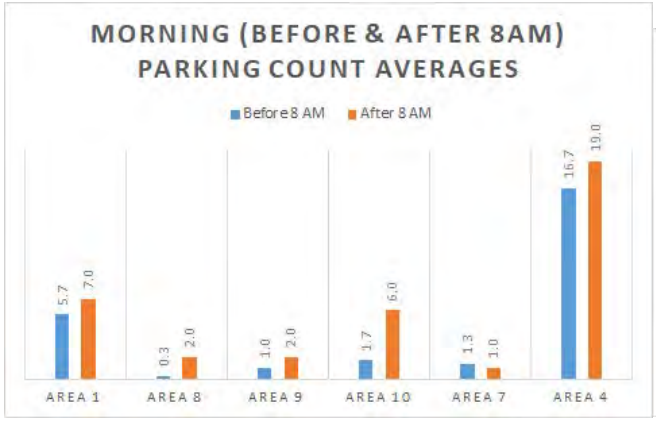
Vilas Park Parking Counts **6/6/2020** Note: Some parking closed for use due to COVID-19

Saturday Clear Skies Temp 73

Area 4	Drake St	4A	4B	4C	Randall	Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	5	9	4	0	8	26	137	19%
						0	137	0%
Area 1	Vilas Ave	1A				Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	10	27				37	65	57%
						0	65	0%
Area 8	VPD	8A				Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	N/A	N/A				0	84	0%
						0	84	0%
Area 9	9A	9B	9C			Total	Max	Percent used
12:00:00 PM	N/A	N/A	N/A			0	59	0%
						0	59	0%
Area 10	10A	10B	10C	10D		Total	Max	Percent used
12:50:00 PM	N/A	N/A	N/A	16		16	131	12%
						0	131	0%
Area 7	Erin St					Total	Max	Percent used
1:00:00 PM	2					2	8	25%
						0	8	0%

For example, daytime use is higher in the park than along adjacent streets, but this use shifts as the zoo closes; parking demand shifts from the park lots to on-street parking as residents return home from work. Figure 5.129 demonstrates parking changes that occur during these morning and evening transitions.

The noon-hour parking counts are shown in a seasonal format to demonstrate the fluctuation of park use by people arriving by vehicle in differing weather conditions (Figure 5.130). The parking averages change significantly as the "shoulder seasons" arrive. "Shoulder seasons" are the months that see lower usage due to weather changes, such as more rain and colder temps, that are less conducive to being in the park or going to the zoo (Figure 5.131). Once winter begins to offer favorable snow and ice conditions, park use climbs again for activities such as ice skating at the lagoon, and ice fishing and cross-country skiing at Lake Wingra. Zoo usage also picks up during favorable weather.



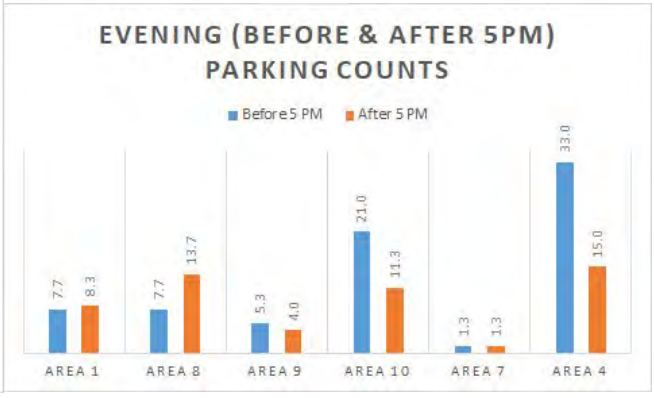


Figure 5.129. Morning and Evening Parking Counts before and after 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM

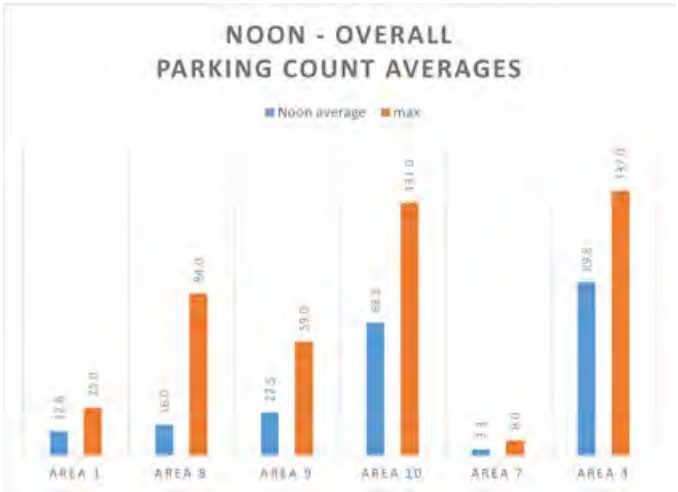
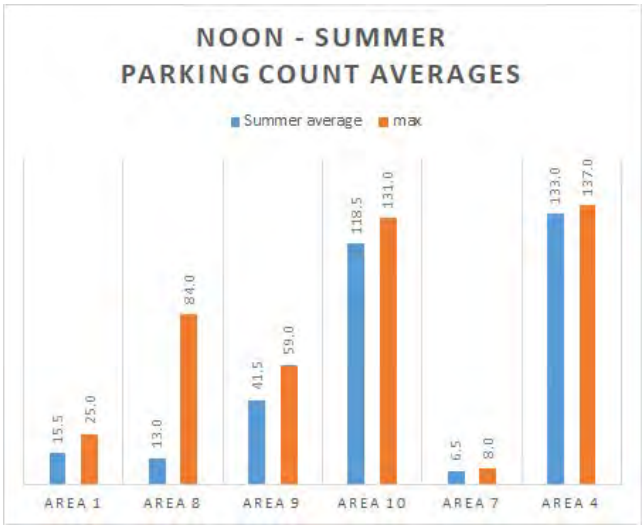
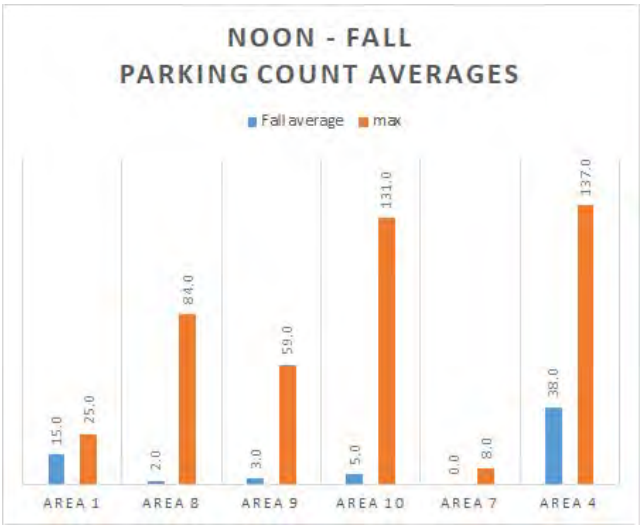
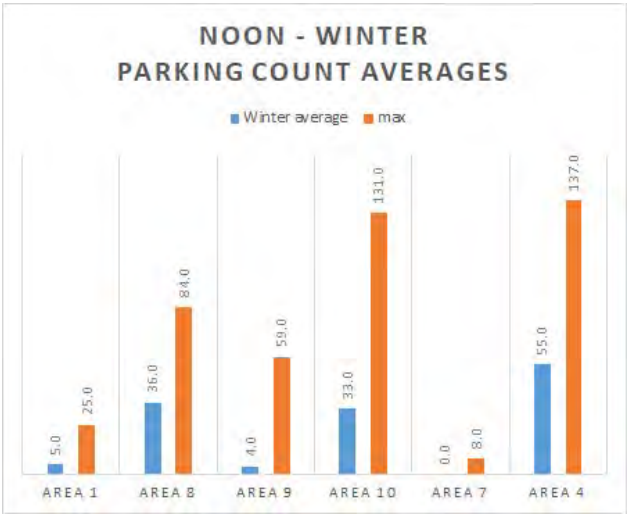


Figure 5.130. Overall Parking Count Averages during the Noon Hour







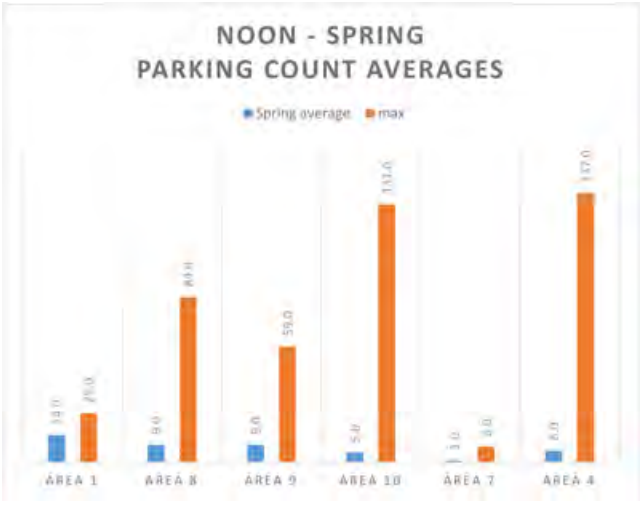


Figure 5.131. Parking Count Averages during Seasonal Observations

EFFECTS OF CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC (COVID-19) ON TRAFFIC AND PARKING

The Spring of 2020 saw the unprecedented closure of most of Madison's public park facilities, including park shelters, courts, playgrounds due to COVID-19 public health and safety requirements. The temporary closure of Vilas Park Drive was part of the changes to accommodate the increased trail usage across the city of Madison (Figure 5.131).

The closures due to the pandemic also extended to the Henry Vilas Zoo which was closed to visitors from March 14, 2020 through June 18, 2020. The closure correlated with reduced use of the parking lots in Areas 4, The north lot at drake and Randall, as well as the Area 10, the southern lot by the zoo entrance. Similar warm weather weekends in 2019 shows 90% or more parking usage, while during the closure usage percentage was in the mid-teens. This data further confirms the well-established understanding that a majority of the parking serves zoo users.

With the closure of Vilas Park Drive (Figure 5.132), the western lot, Area 1, by the tennis courts saw an increase in use, with vehicles even seen parking along the driveway during peak use (Figure 5.133). This condition was not observed even during the highest use in 2019 season visits. From site observations, the use of the parks internal trail system remained high during the COVID closures of the shelters, playgrounds and other features.

Figure 5.132. Vilas Park Drive during COVID closure, May 2020

Figure 5.133. Parking Area 1 during COVID closure, May 2020

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

An environmental assessment of Vilas Park provides an evaluation of positive and negative impacts from environmental factors. For the Master Plan, this environmental assessment is a broad view of known factors and is not a federal Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Study (EIS). This section of the site analysis refers to information collected from previous studies and guides to determine potential impacts to the planning effort.

Figure 5.134. Critical Actions, Responsible Entities, and Effectiveness (Lake Wingra Watershed Management Plan, Strand, CoM, FoLW, 2015)

LAKE WINGRA WATERSHED

Vilas Park makes up part of the northern section of the Lake Wingra Watershed. In 2015, a team led by Strand Associates, Inc. prepared the Lake Wingra Watershed Management Plan for the City of Madison (Figure 5.135).[72] The plan identified one storm sewer outlet discharging into the lagoons at Vilas Park (Figure 5.136). This line drains a portion of the Vilas Neighborhood primarily to the east and north of the park along Vilas Avenue.

Within the Vilas Park sub-watershed, Edgewood Ave., Drake St., Grant St., Adams St. and Randall Ave. are on City of Madison road salt application routes. Of those, only a limited portion of Edgewood Ave. drains into the Vilas Park lagoons via storm sewer. Although limited, reducing the level of salt can be achieved by less use on streets and/or draining into a sediment basin prior to directly in the lagoon.

Tests performed on samples taken during the development of the Watershed Management Plan found Phosphorous levels of 0.7 lbs./acre in discharge within the Vilas Park sub-watershed, a moderate level. Sources

72 Lake Wingra Watershed Management Plan, Strand, CoM, FoLW, 2015

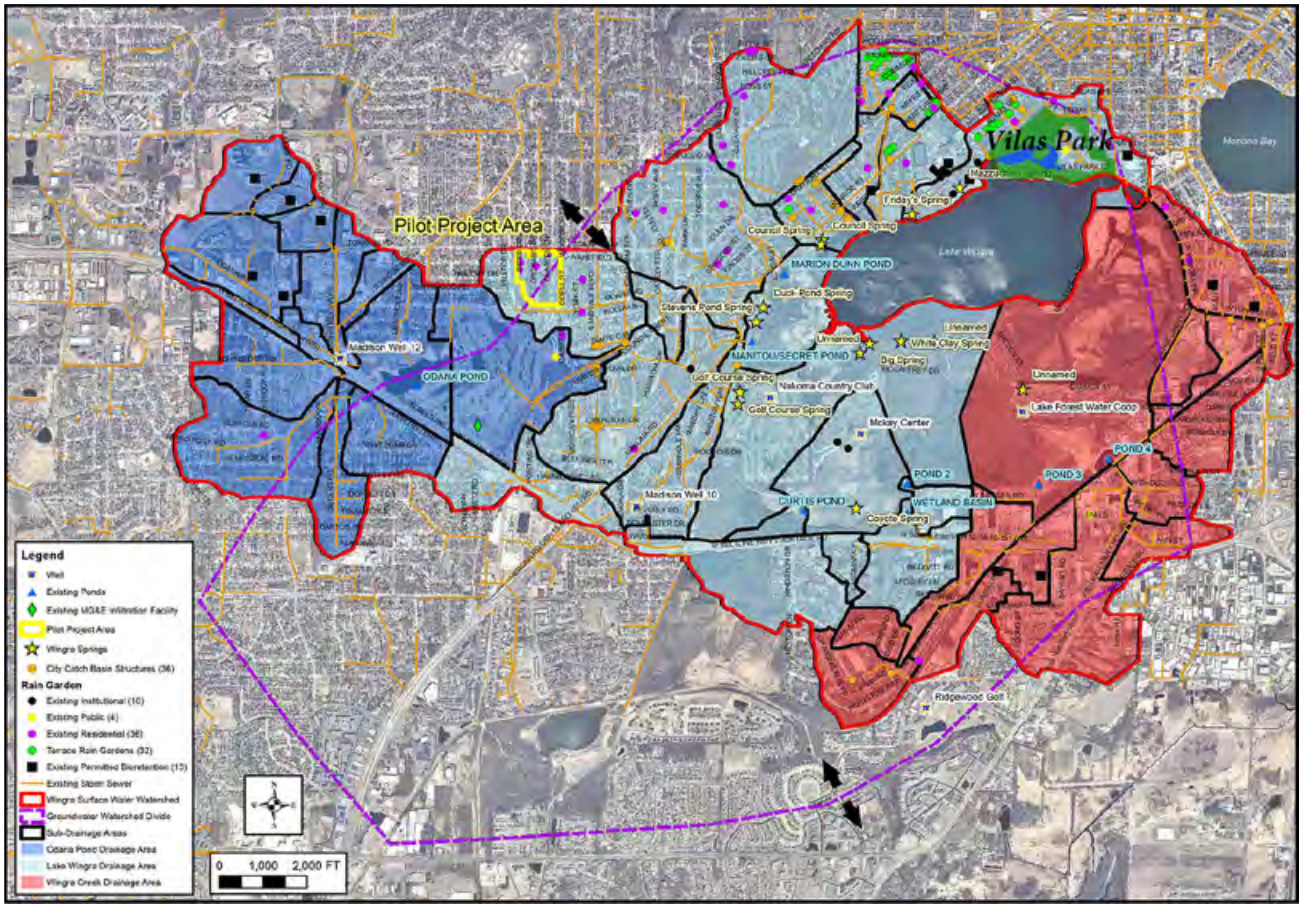


Figure 5.135. Lake Wingra Watershed Map (Vilas Park shown in green)
(Lake Wingra Watershed Management Plan, Strand, CoM, FoLW, 2015)

Figure 5.136. Lake Wingra Drainage around Vilas Park
(Lake Wingra Watershed Management Plan, Strand, CoM, FoLW, 2015)

of phosphorus include organic matter such as leaves, grass clippings, fertilizer, soil, waterfowl, waste erosion etc.. Phosphorous decreases water quality by increasing the levels of nutrients. The reduction in water quality directly effects the beach and lagoons at Vilas Park.

As part of ongoing management efforts, modeling shows the City of Madison street sweeping program provides a reduction of 2.9% of Total Phosphorous (TP) and 16.7% in Total Suspended Solids (TSS) in the Vilas Park sub-watershed. An additional recommendation from the Lake Wingra Watershed Management Plan included permeable pavement:

> Permeable Pavement: Advocate for a porous pavement pilot project on a City-owned property (government-sponsored discretionary capital project). Parking lot pavements within Vilas Park or the zoo could serve as pilot projects and are within the watershed.

LAKE WINGRA

The southern border of Vilas Park consists of the shoreline of Lake Wingra. According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI DNR), Lake Wingra is 336 acres in size and has a maximum depth of 14 feet. It is a eutrophic lake, which means there are high levels of biological productivity, such as rich nutrient levels of nitrogen and phosphorus. Invasive species include curly-leaf pondweed, Eurasian water-milfoil, hybrid Eurasian/northern water-milfoil and purple loosestrife. Fish species in Lake Wingra include musky, panfish, largemouth bass, northern pike and walleye.

An existing boat launch, which is made of wood planking and is in poor condition, is centrally located along Vilas Park Drive next to the fishing pier. Canoe and kayak storage racks are also located near the boat launch. In accordance with the local boating ordinance, Section 9-2-9(f) of the Town of Madison Code of Ordinances, Lake Wingra regulation of boats is as follows:

(f) Regulation of boats on Lake Wingra and Part of Wingra Lock.

1. No person shall operate a motor driven boat on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays on Lake Wingra or on Wingra Creek between Wingra locks and the John Nolen Drive bridge over Wingra Creek, except that any person possessing a physician's statement indicating that the person is not capable of rowing or paddling a boat or canoe may operate a battery powered electronic motor at a slow-no-wake speed not exceeding five (5) miles per hour.
2. On days when all motor driven boats are permitted, they must be operated at a slow-no-wake speed not exceeding five (5) miles per hour.

3. Paragraphs 1 and 2 above shall not apply to boats operated by the appropriate local, state or federal government employees or their agents for lake control or to persons operating motor driven boats used for officiating or for furnishing support or safety services for any sporting event authorized by the Town.[73]

Based on aerial photography and the 1955 A.L. Johnson Plan for Vilas Park, filling of Lake Wingra occurred in the location of the lawn (east of the beach) and parking lot at the south entrance of the Henry Vilas Zoo between the years 1955 and 1957. The origin of the fill material, whether local or transported from another location, is unknown.[74]

The shoreline of Lake Wingra at Vilas Park, excepting the beach, is eroded and protected to varying degrees. Some areas are vegetated with native plants, others with invasive species, and others with stone rip-rap. The largest concentration of wetland vegetation in the park is located near the kayak/canoe storage rack at the beach and is in the fill area of 1955-57.

Figure 5.137. ADA Pier on Lake Wingra at Vilas Park

Figure 5.138. Vilas Park Beach on Lake Wingra

Figure 5.139. Lake Wingra in the Winter

Figure 5.140. Bench viewing Lake Wingra near Beach

73 Town Board of the Town of Madison Section 9-2-9 Regulation of Boats and Boating of the Code of Ordinances, 1995.
74 Dane County GIS, www.dcimapapps.countyofdane.com, 2020.

LAGOON

As part of the 1906 O.C. Simonds Master Plan for Vilas Park, the lagoon was utilized to build land for park uses. The La Crosse Dredging Company created a lagoon with one island named Wild Rice. In the period between the original 1906 dredging and the creation of a City Map of 1914, the lagoon was expanded to create a second, much larger island. There are no records to indicate when the lagoon was expanded. The result was a lagoon with two islands. This lasted until 1955-57 when Lake Wingra was filled and the smaller island was removed. This filling is documented in aerial photographs taken during that time period.

In 2019, the City of Madison contracted with CGC, Inc. of Madison to probe the lagoon to determine the depth of the water and the amount of lose sediment at the bottom.[75] The findings show the lagoon is shallow, with a maximum water depth of 3.75 feet. The depth of sediment to firm bottom has a range of 0.75 feet to 4.5 feet. The data shows the lagoon system does not have the depth to reduce vegetation growth, which may factor into the continued seasonal plant growth in the lagoon. The soil profile consists of dark gray organic silt; medium stiff to stiff, gray lean clay with occasional thin seams of silt; little to some clay and sand partings; dark gray organic silt with trace sand, clay and shell fragments; stiff, brown to gray lean clay; and trace sand.[76]

The original lagoon had two connection points with Lake Wingra. This resulted in the creation of an island where the current park shelter is. Access to the island at both entry points was provided by the construction of bridges. Funding for the bridges was donated by the Vilas family. The west bridge crosses the remaining connection of the lagoon to Lake Wingra, whereas the east bridge is now within the zoo's boundary fence. The 1955-57 filling of Lake Wingra closed this second open-water connection and turned the island into a peninsula. In 2012, Lauren V. Brown, a community fellow at Edgewood College[77] suggested in her work that a secondary connection be reopened near the existing boat launch.

75 CGC Inc., Probe Location Plan, January 2019.
76 CGC Inc., Log of Sediment Core, March 2019.
77 Vilas Park/Lake Wingra Shoreline Vision, Sustainability Leadership Graduate Certificate Program, Edgewood College, 2012.

Figure 5.141. Lagoon in Summer

Figure 5.142. Lagoon in Fall

Figure 5.143. Lagoon in Fall with Event in the Meadow

Figure 5.144. Lagoon in Winter (Skating)

Figure 5.145. Lagoon in Spring

WETLANDS

In 2016, the City of Madison retained Baxter and Woodman Consulting Engineers to conduct a Wetland Delineation of Vilas Park. Their findings were in accordance with the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual and Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Northcentral and Northeast Region (Version 2.0).[78] There were four areas within the park found to meet the designation as wetlands (Figure 5.146).[79]

These identified wetlands and description are:

Lake Wingra Shoreline Wetland (Wetland 1)

A fringe wetland (Wetland 1) occurs along the shoreline of Lake Wingra. Within the Survey Area, most of the shoreline is fortified with large rock riprap. Wetland plants are able to grow within the spaces between the rocks. Also, wetland plants occur on shallow terraces next to the lake.

Vilas Park Lagoon Shoreline Wetland (Wetland 2)

A fringe wetland (Wetland 2) occurs along the shoreline of the Vilas Park Lagoon. The shoreline includes naturalized areas restored with native plants, turf grass areas, and areas stabilized with rock. Wetland plants are able to grow within the spaces between the rocks. The lagoon is relatively shallow and covered with a variety of emergent and submergent plants (e.g., water lilies, coontail, Eurasian water milfoil).

Wetland 3

Wetland 3 is a narrow wetland located next to the tennis courts. It receives stormwater runoff from the tennis courts and surrounding area…Wetland 3 can be considered a less susceptible wetland per NR 151.

Wetland 4

Wetland 4 is a seasonally-wet basin located near the north parking lot for the zoo. It is mowed when it is dry… Wetland 4 can be considered a less susceptible wetland per NR 151.[80]

NR 151 is environmental protection of wetlands administered by the WI DNR to establish performance standards for limiting nonpoint runoff pollutants to achieve a water quality standard.[81]

78 City of Madison Parks Division Wetland Delineation – Vilas Park, Baxter and Woodman Consulting Engineers, 2016
79 City of Madison Parks Division Wetland Delineation – Vilas Park, Wetland Boundary Map, Baxter and Woodman Consulting Engineers, 2016
80 City of Madison Parks Division Wetland Delineation – Vilas Park, Baxter and Woodman Consulting Engineers, 2016
81 Chapter NR 151, Department of Natural Resources, www.docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/nr/100/151

Figure 5.146. Wetland Boundary Map
(Wetland Delineation of Vilas Park - Baxter and Woodman Consulting Engineers, 2016)

Figure 5.147. Fringe Wetlands at Lagoon

MOUND GROUP

There are several burial mounds located in the upper Vilas Park area near Erin St. A survey from 2007 shows the Vilas Park mounds location (Figure 5.148). In April of 2010, the City of Madison Parks Division made a request to the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS) to disturb catalogued and uncatalogued portions of a human burial site at Vilas Park Mound Group (WHS project number DA-0148 and BDA-0270). More recently, The Vilas Park Investigation Study of Potential Archeological Adverse Effects, was completed in 2018 by a team of Cardno environmental consultants and is the most current study of the Vilas Park mounds.[82]

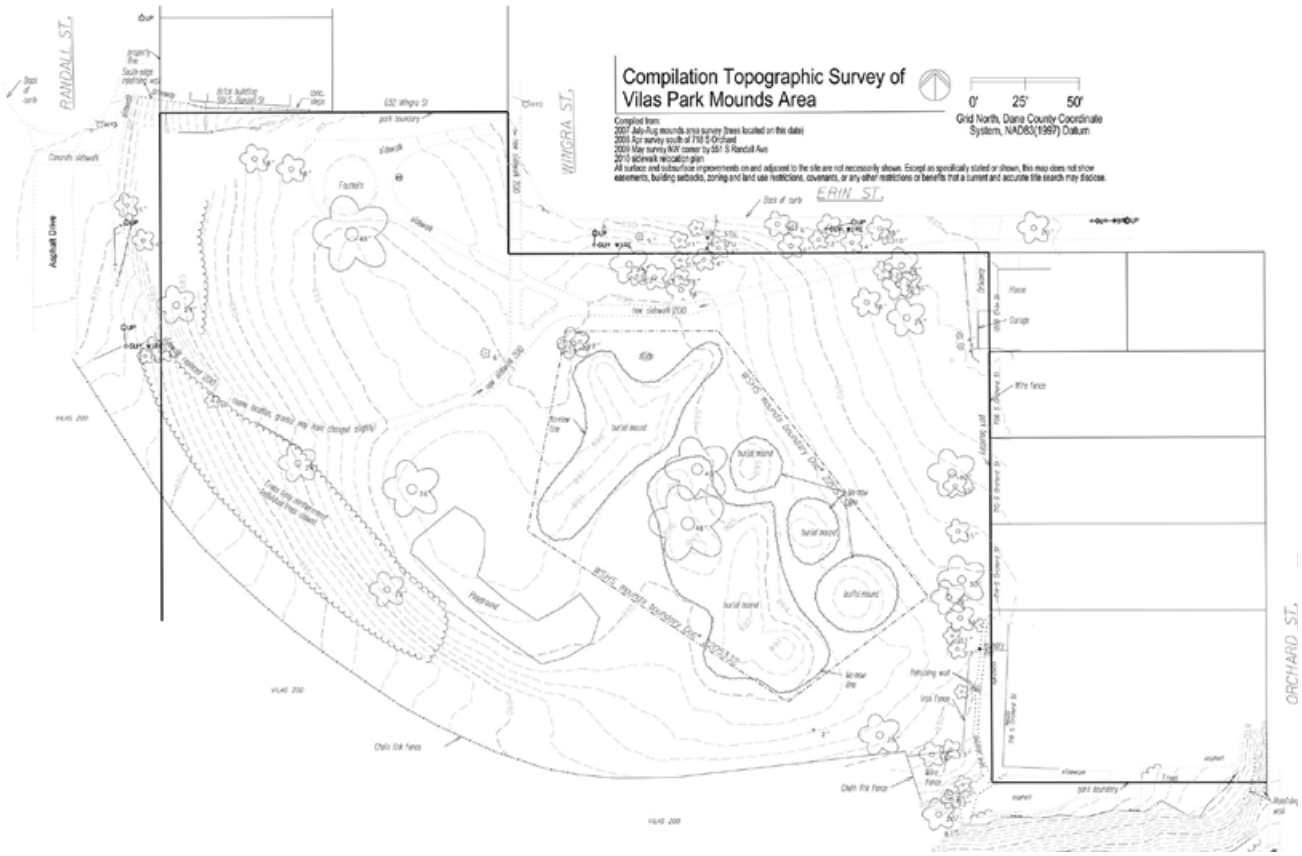


Figure 5.148. Compilation Topographic Survey of Vilas Park Mounds Area (City of Madison - 2018)

According to the September 1915 addition of the The Wisconsin Archeologist[83] there were several more mounds prevalent in the Vilas Park addition. Charles Brown was the Secretary and Curator for the Wisconsin Archeological Society and well respected for his work in identifying mounds. In the document there were several features in the Vilas Park Group. Those were the Vilas Park Mound, Village Site and Lewis Effigy.

Increase A. Lapham initially surveyed the mounds in Vilas Park in the 1859. A significant amount of mounds in what is identified as the Dividing Ridge (Figure 5.149), between Lake Monona and Lake Wingra were

82 Vilas Park Investigation – Study of Potential Archeological Adverse Effects, Cardno, October 2018.
83 The Wisconsin Archaeologist - Lake Wingra, Wisconsin Archeological Society, Milwaukee, WI, September 1915

evident. For the 1915 report, W. W. Warner marked the mounds using Lapham's original maps for reference (See Figure 5.150).

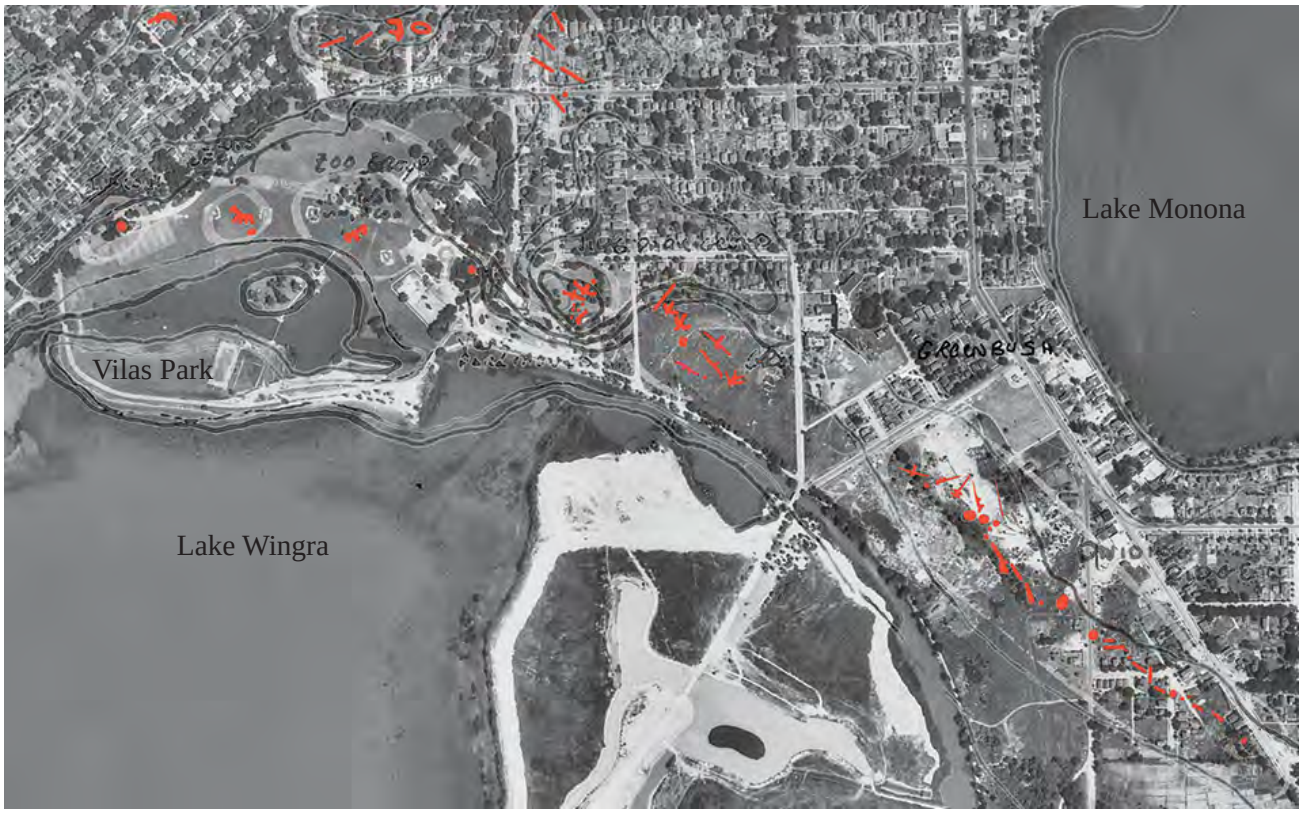


Figure 5.149. Location of the Mounds in the Dividing Ridge from Prof. Robert A. Birmingham's The Effigy Mound Landscape of Madison and the Four Lakes, Dec 2009

According to the document the Vilas Park Group:

> *"On top of a hill, the northern terminus of the Dividing Ridge, at the northeast corner of Lake Wingra, raising just above the Vilas Park Zoo and giving a fine view of the lake and its shorelines, is a rather compact group of Indian earthworks.*
>
> *The preservation of the mounds now remaining was secured through the purchase by the City of Madison, in the years 1910 and 1913 of the hill-top and adjoining lower land. As may be noted from the accompanying plate there originally were in this group a total of eleven mounds. Eight of these were conical (burial), one linear ant two effigy mounds. One of the burial mounds was destroyed and several of the other mounds mutilated in past years by the erection of several dwelling houses, the cultivation of garden patches and the cutting of a road across the land. Portions of the wings of both of the bird effigies were thus removed. The former pasturing of cattle on the hill-top has also caused deformations of their wings and bodies. Of the burial mounds now obliterated considerable portions could still be seen when the writer first viewed these earthworks in 1908."* [84]

84 The Wisconsin Archeologist - Lake Wingra, Charles Brown, Page 91, September 1915

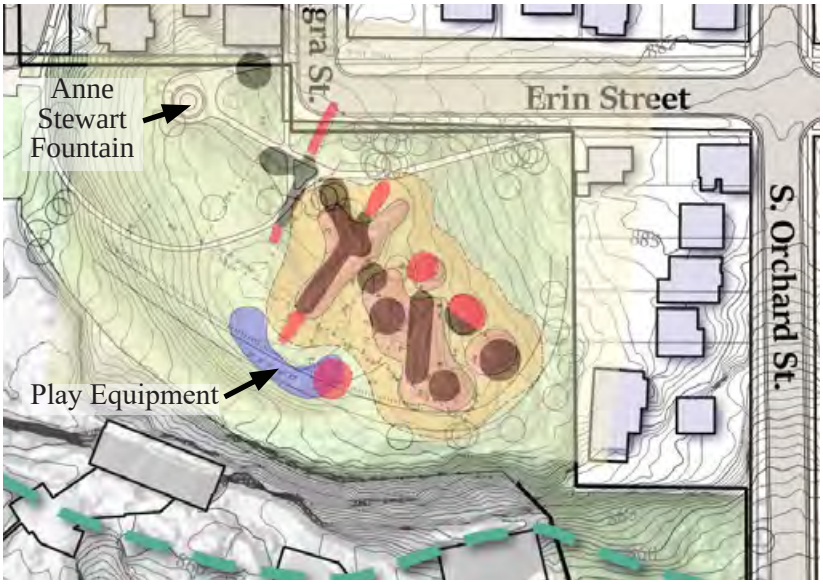


Figure 5.150. Vilas Park Mound Group with 1915 W. W. Warner Diagram

Figure 5.151. Dividing Ridge
Wisconsin Historical Society - WHi-38942

The describes the Village Site and the Lewis Effigy mound as being located at the base of the hill in what is now the Henry Vilas Zoo.

The plaque that is at the mounds was dedicated in October 1914. The events of the day are describe in The Wisconsin Archaeologist as follows:

> "On the afternoon of October 7, following a luncheon tendered them at Lathrop Hall, the members of the Society of American Indians, then in Conference at Madison, were taken by the University reception committee on an automobile drive over the University grounds and through the City parks. At Henry Vilas Park a stop was mad to permit of the unveiling of a descriptive metal tablet in honor of the occasion on the group of Indian earthworks here described. The tablet was placed on the top of the most southerly of the burial mounds. It is 12 inches by 18 inches in size, is mounted on a concrete block and bears the following legend."[85]

The concrete block has since been replaced with a stone and the tablet been moved off of the mound.

Figure 5.152. Tablet on Concrete Block, 1914
Wisconsin Historical Society - WHi-51985

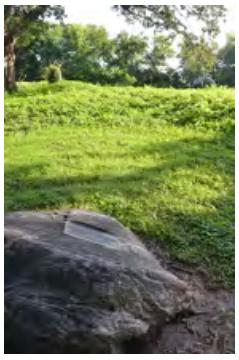


Figure 5.153. Tablet on Stone, 2019

85 The Wisconsin Archeologist - Lake Wingra, Charles Brown, Page 91 and 92, September 1915

In 2019, the City of Madison Parks Division, in consultation with the Ho-Chunk Nation, developed a policy[86] for maintenance of burial mounds in parks. The Ho-Chunk Tribal Historic Preservation Officer oversees the policy and its impacts on the planning effort for Vilas Park in this Master Plan. The policy is as follows:

AUTHORIZATION

The Madison Board of Park Commissioners is the approving authority for determining the appropriateness and acceptance of a maintenance plan for Burial Mounds in Madison Parks. The Parks Division has received direction from the representatives of the Ho-Chunk Nation as to the proper maintenance of individual mound systems and incorporated the information into this policy. The policy is intended to clearly outline a maintenance plan for the Burial Mounds located in the Madison Parks system. It provides procedures and guidelines to assure that the mounds are treated with the utmost respect and responsibly managed in a manner that protects the integrity of the mounds at all times.

DEFINITIONS: Protection of earth works and burial markers are protected by Wisconsin State Statute 157.70. It stipulates that there may be no disturbance of the burial mound or within the legal buffer of 10 feet from the perimeter. Madison Parks maintains a buffer of no soil disturbance of 20 feet total from the mound perimeter.

Burial Mounds in Madison Parks:

- *Conservation Parks: Elvehjem Sanctuary, Cherokee Marsh North Unit, Edna Taylor*
- *General Parks: Hudson, Burrows, Vilas, Bear Mound*
- *Edgewood Park and Pleasure Drive*

PROCEDURE

1. *Burial mounds will be inspected on a regular basis*
2. *Prescribed management plans will be established for individual mounds based on site conditions to manage vegetative materials.*
3. *Established trees growing on the surrounding mounds will be inspected regularly and managed to prevent damage to the mounds.*
4. *Regular maintenance will ensure proper air flow and prevent establishment of plan materials that may threaten the integrity of the mound.*
5. *No signage, trails or other obstructions will be placed within 20 feet of the base of the mound.*
6. *If a mound is ever disturbed, staff will follow outlined protocol regarding soil disturbance from tree*

86 Statements of Policies and Guidelines for a Maintenance Plan for Burial Mounds in Madison Parks, Approved by Park Commission on October 2, 2019.

limbs (cur flush and remove brush) and animals (remove and fill hole by hand with soil). Outreach to Burial Sites Preservation staff as needed.

GUIDELINES FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF MADISON PARKS BURIAL MOUNDS

1. *Mound inspection:*
   a. *Visual inspection of the mounds when doing routine mowing in the surrounding parkland, approximately every 2 weeks.*
   b. *Inspect for downed limbs or any damage to the mounds and report back to the Supervisor if any damages are noted.*
   c. *Inspect for animal burrows. Remove animals from area, replace soil into the hole and compress by hand.*
2. *Manage invasive species to prevent degradation of the mounds and to promote establishment of native plants:*
   a. *Conduct prescribed burns on an annual/semi-annual basis on all burial mounds according to individual mound plans.*
   b. *Hand cutting and removal of any woody growth and weeds, treat directly with an herbicide as needed.*
   c. *Introduce native forbs and grasses as seeds by hand only.*
   d. *Ensure that there is no soil disturbance.*
3. *Tree care:*
   a. *Assess tree health on and with driplines within mound area on a regular basis.*
   b. *Trim and thin out deadwood in trees in close proximity to the mounds in order to prevent limbs dropping and allow more sunlight to promote healthy turf growth.*
   c. *Remove all established trees growing on or within the buffer area footprint of the mounds that are 14 inches in diameter at breast height or (dbh) or less by hand and treat with an herbicide.*
   d. *Remove dying or severely damaged trees proactively before they uproot and disturb the integrity of the mound.*
   e. *Cut stumps flush with the ground, grubbing is never allowed.*
   f. *Care will be taken to avoid dropping large limbs on the mound which could cause damage to the mound surface.*
   g. *Remove trees that endanger the mounds during the latter winter months only when the ground is frozen and there is plenty of frost and snow cover to protect them.*
   h. *No heavy equipment is allowed within the mounds and its buffer area.*

4. *Mowing operations performed according to restoration plans for individual mound systems:*

   a. Bi-monthly mowing will be done with a walk behind brush type mower set high to prevent scalping of the ground and to limit woody plant growth. This will reduce soil compaction and disruption.

   b. The vegetation on the mound will be allowed to grow taller than managed turf areas, to discourage human foot traffic.

5. *Trails maintenance:*

   a. Document sites where trails and sidewalks are in conflict due to proximity with the preservation of the mounds with pictures and written documentation to be kept in the Parks PA Common folder under Burial Mound Maintenance.

   b. Move existing trails 20 feet away from the mounds.

   c. Work with the Burial Sites Preservation staff in the Wisconsin Historical Society to comply with State statutes.

   d. Install education signage with a cultural component to redirect foot traffic at trail heads in order to redirect foot traffic.

6. *Signs within the 20 foot buffer zone will be removed.*

   a. The WI State Historical Society will assist to determine if the mound site has been cataloged and will need to be considered if a request to disturb permit is required.

   b. A State qualified Archeologist must be on site for sign removals and other soil disturbance activities in conformance of Wisc. Stat. 157.70.

Figure 5.154 Vilas Park Mound Group

TREE SURVEY

In 2019, MSA Professional Services, Inc. conducted an inventory of all trees with a diameter of 10 inches or greater (Map 5.1). The survey identified 724 trees within the park, made up of 44 unique species (See Figure 155). The most common species was oak, at 146, or approximately 20%. Oak subspecies inventoried were white, red, swamp white and bur oak. The largest tree recorded was a bur oak at 52 inches in diameter on the northwest corner of the site. The National Arborist Association and International Association of Arboriculture noted this bur oak to have been living at the time of the signing of the U.S. Constitution per a plaque placed by the Wisconsin Arborist Association in 1987. Details of the tree inventory are below.

Top 5 Species:

- Red Oak (53)
- White Pine (42)
- Bur Oak (41)
- Elm (34)
- White Oak (27)

Top 5 Undesirable Species:

- Ash, Green and White (27)
- Alder (19)
- Norway Maple (19)
- Black Locust (18)
- Amur Maple (2)

The "undesirable" classification is based on one of three things: (1) the trees are on the WI DNR's invasive species list,[87] (2) the trees are threatened by the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), or (3) the trees threaten native oak woodlands. Categorization as "undesirable" is meant to provide guidance for future park improvements. Current city policy is to treat ash trees, which are greater than 10 inches in diameter and are otherwise in good health, for EAB.

As the City of Madison continues to manage the threat of EAB, future species diversity is necessary to reduce the risk of a mass decline in tree populations. The City of Madison Streets Division - Forestry Section has adopted a policy of buying and planting no more than 10 percent of a single genus for their street tree program. The city is applying a similar policy to park lands. Future management of the Vilas Park canopy should include steps to manage and protect existing oaks, while considering diversity in future plantings.

87 Wisconsin CH. NR 40 Invasive Species List, May 1, 2015.

TREE FAMILIES

at Vilas Park

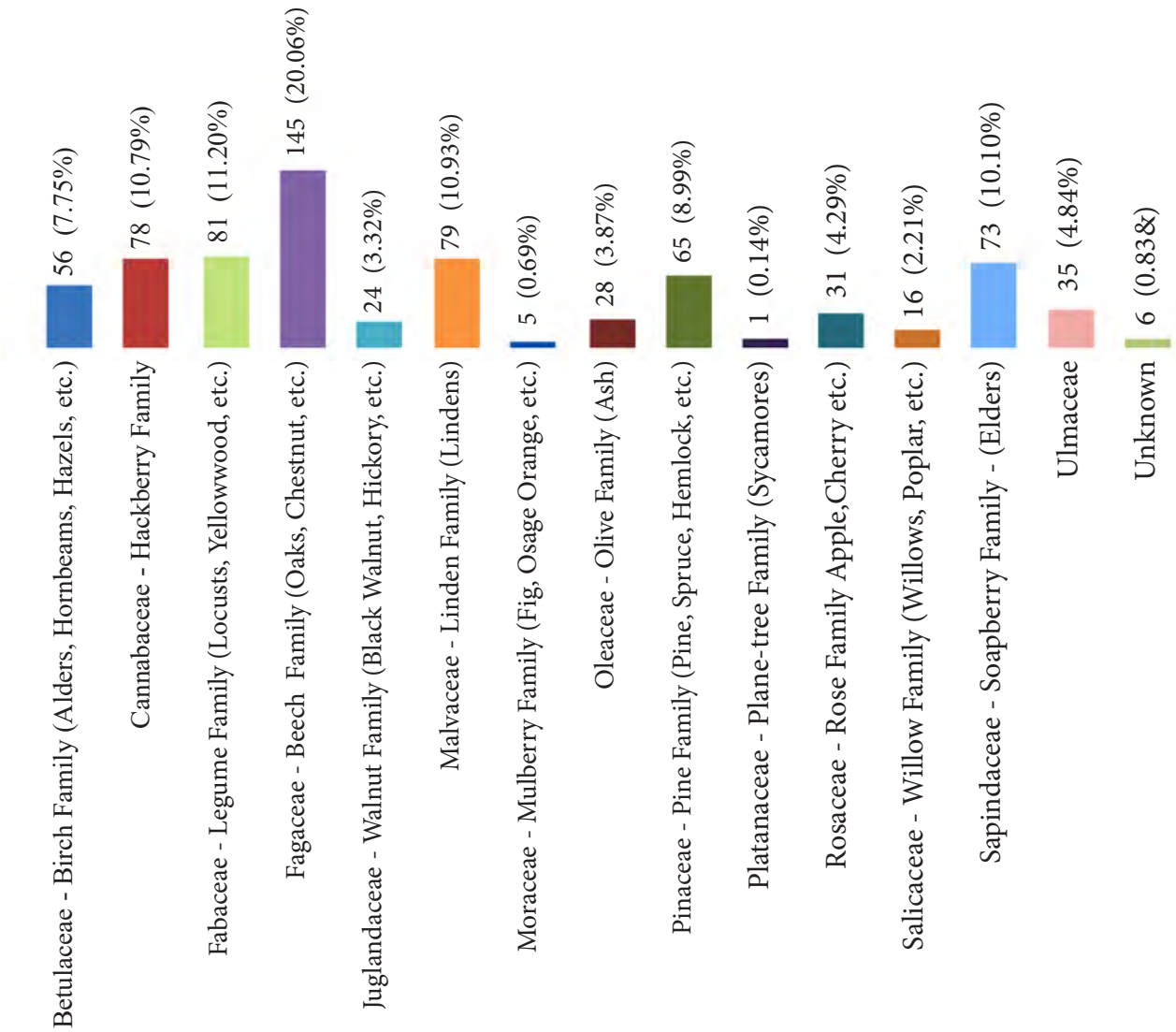


Figure 5.155. Vilas Park Tree Families (Diameter 10" or larger)

Tree species and quantity at Vilas Park. The trees list of undesirable species meets classification as mentioned.

DESIRABLE LIST - 88% of Canopy
(Indicated in green on the diagram)

SPECIES	(QTY)
Red Oak	53
White Pine	42
Bur Oak	41
Elm	34
White Oak	27
Norway Maple	26
Swamp White Oak	22
Basswood	13
Hawthorn	8
Linden	7
Black Cherry	6
Hackberry	6
Crabapple	5
Cedar	4
Hickory	4
Norway Spruce	4
Ironwood	3
Red Pine	3
River Birch	3
Silver Maple	3
Spruce	3
White Birch	3
Black Walnut	2
Cottonwood	2
Horsechestnut	2
Shagbark Hickory	2
Thornless Honeylocust	2
White Spruce	2
American Elm	1
Apple	1
Blue Spruce	1
Concolor Fir	1
Fir	1
Planetree	1
Red Maple	1
Tamarack	1
Willow	1
Basswood	1

UNDESIRABLE LIST - 12% of Canopy
(Indicated in red on the diagram)

SPECIES	(QTY)
Alder	19
Norway Maple	19
Black Locust	18
White Ash	17
Green Ash	10
Amur Maple	2
Black Alder	1
Mulberry	1

Map 5.1. Vilas Park Tree Survey

Page Intentionally Left Blank

RELEVANT PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The following documents are neighborhood plans and relevant reports. Only the applicable discussions concerning Vilas Park are shown for each document. The documents are listed chronologically.

1989 – BRITTINGHAM-VILAS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN (City of Madison Department of Planning and Development)

Although limited in recommendations specific to the park property, the plan is the one of the earliest neighborhood plans to directly address Vilas Park. The plan provides a short history of the park's founding and the development of Henry Vilas Zoo. The neighborhood plan provides a single recommendation for improvements to Vilas Park:

> *"Improve City clean-up activities in the neighborhood, especially after athletic or social events at Camp Randall, Henry Vilas Park and Zoo, and Brittingham Park."*

2003 – WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES LAKE MANAGEMENT PROTECTION GRANT APPLICATION: LAKE WINGRA SHORELINE HABITAT RESTORATION[88] (Edgewood College)

The grant application describes the Lake Wingra lagoon shoreline:

> *The Lake Wingra lagoons located in Vilas Park were originally part of the littoral zone of a Lake Wingra that was about twice the size of the current one.[89] The lagoons, and most of the park itself, were created through extensive filling and dredging in the early 1900s. Presently the lagoons are 3.6 hectares (8.8 acres) in size, and less than 1 meter in depth. The aquatic vegetation is dominated by invasive Eurasian milfoil. There are about 1,550 meters (5,100 feet) of shoreline, and the shore is riprapped with gravel below the waterline. The grass turf of the park is maintained and mowed right up to the waterline, so that essentially no native vegetation is present.*
>
> *While Eurasian milfoil has declined in Lake Wingra itself, it still forms massive monotypic stands in the Vilas Lagoon systems that are connected by a narrow channel to the lake proper. In other area lakes, declines in milfoil have been linked to a native weevil that targets Eurasian milfoil. It is known that in systems where milfoil is not harvested weevil populations build up especially if a buffer zone of natural vegetation surrounds the lake shoreline affording critical overwintering habitat for the weevil. The Vilas lagoons currently have no such habitat since the park lawn is mowed right to the water's edge,*

88 Collaborative effort by Dane County, City of Madison, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Friends of Lake Wingra, Edgewood College, University of Wisconsin, and varied neighborhood associations, 2003.

89 Baumann, P.C., J.F. Kitchell, J.J. Magnuson, and T.B. Kayes. 1974. Lake Wingra, 1873-1973: A case history of human impact. Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letter. 62: 57-94.

and macrophytes in the lagoons are regularly harvested thus removing nascent weevil populations. Developing a natural riparian zone around the lagoons coupled with the elimination of routine harvesting of the lagoons could provide a natural biological control of the excessive milfoil growths.

In the Madison area, including the Lake Wingra watershed, the numbers of resident and wintering geese have increased dramatically since the 1980s. The number of resident (locally nesting) giant Canada geese have also increased during this time: in the summer of 2002, there were an estimated 23 adult geese resident in Vilas Park, producing about 33 young.12 During the fall, 100-700 geese are regularly present in Vilas Park during this migrating season. An average of 12 g/m2, or about 100 lbs. per acre, dry weight feces was determined by sampling in November 2002 within the grassy areas of Vilas Park heavily populated by geese. This is equivalent to about 600 lbs. per acre wet (as collected)

Recommendations from the grant application :

- *With Friends of Lake Wingra (FoLW) group, compile project information and prepare for display on kiosks at Vilas Park and Wingra Park.*
- *Discourage nuisance geese from the playgrounds and playing fields in Vilas Park*

2004 – PARK STREET CORRIDOR: MAIN STREET FOR THE SOUTHSIDE URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES: FOR PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPROVEMENTS AND PUBLIC STREETSCAPE DESIGN (Schreiber/Anderson Associates)

While the plan does not specifically address Vilas Park, the Park St. corridor serves as the primary public transit route and is the main eastern vehicular connection through Vilas Park Dr., Drake St. and Mills St. The plan discusses improvements in wayfinding signage, multi-modal transportation and pedestrian safety improvements.

2007 – MONROE STREET COMMERCIAL DISTRICT PLAN (Planning and Design Institute, Inc.)

The plan identifies Vilas Park as significant to the overall neighborhood character as it is within walking distance of Monroe St. businesses. The Grant St. and Drake St. corridor serves as a thoroughfare for users moving from Monroe St. to east and south Madison. The plan also states that, on busy days, users of both the Monroe St. corridor and Vilas Park and the zoo utilize on-street parking in the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Recommendations from the plan:

- *Preserve and enhance the residential character of the neighborhoods around the commercial districts.*

- *Preserve public amenities such as the library, Dudgeon Center, Park and Pleasure Drive, Lake Wingra and parks.*
- *Support the community quality of the Edgewood Campus and the UW Arboretum.*

2008 – REGENT STREET-SOUTH CAMPUS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN (Vierbicher Associates, Inc. and Potter Lawson, Inc.)

While outside of the neighborhood boundary, the plan identifies Vilas Park as a major destination for residents and students. At the time the plan was written, the neighborhood contained very little greenspace. The plan outlines nine future parks or open spaces to be provided either by the City or University of Wisconsin within the neighborhood boundary.

2009 – LAKE WINGRA: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE (Friends of Lake Wingra)

The document states:

> *During the early 1900s a levee was built (now McCaffery Drive in the UW Arboretum) isolating Gardner Marsh from the Lake. Wingra Dam and lock were built to control the water level, and dredged sand from the lake bottom provided fill for Vilas Park and the Lake Forest Development. Cut off from its wetland outlet, the now 340-acre lake began to receive storm water runoff from the new neighborhoods along Monroe Street, and later from all the neighborhoods in the watershed…*
>
> *…In Lake Wingra, algae growth depends on phosphorus. One pound of phosphorus entering the lake can produce up to 500 pounds of algae! Common sources of phosphorus include fertilizers, eroded topsoil, decaying leaves, and goose and pet feces. Excessive phosphorus encourages blue-green algae that can be toxic to fish, pets and people.*

The document identifies four goals:

1. *Clean, clear water.*
2. *Restored spring flow.*
3. *Abundant native plants and animals.*
4. *Stewardship and enjoyment.*

It also identifies actions neighborhood residents can take to help achieve the goals:

- *Keep leaves and yard clippings out of streets and storm drains.*

Relative Abundance	Aquatic Plants		Fish	
Abundant	Eurasian water-milfoil* coontail		bluegill	
Common	Illinois pondweed muskgrass sago pondweed slender naiad	water stargrass wild celery white water lily	brook silverside golden shiner	largemouth bass carp*
Medium/Low	common bladderwort clasping-leaf pondweed flat-stemmed pondweed	northern water-milfoil small duckweed spatterdock	black crappie bluntnose minnow pumpkinseed yellow perch	muskellunge* white crappie* walleye*[7]
Rare	common waterweed curly-leaf pondweed* floating-leaf pondweed Fries' pondweed great duckweed	long-leaf pondweed small pondweed variable pondweed white-stemmed pondweed	bigmouth buffalo black & yellow bullheads blackchin & common shiners brook stickleback bowfin central mudminnow fathead minnow	green sunfish longnose gar northern pike freshwater drum* yellow* & warmouth* bass white sucker*[7] spotfin shiner*[1]

Figure 5.156. Sampling Efforts Conducted for the Lake Wingra: A Vision for the Future (FoLW - 2012)

- *Direct roof downspouts toward the lawn or garden, or into a rain barrel.*
- *Build a "rain garden" to absorb runoff from roofs and other surfaces.*
- *Water by hand where practical, to minimize use of sprinklers.*
- *Reduce your use of de-icing salt during the winter.*
- *Clean up after your pets, and don't feed the waterfowl.*

thoroughfare both for pedestrians and vehicles (west to east through traffic), and that many conflicts exist between park users, commuting bicyclists, and vehicles.

2010 – GREENBUSH NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN (SCHREIBER ANDERSON & ASSOCIATES, 2008; AMENDED 2010)

The Greenbush Neighborhood is adjacent to Vilas Park, SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital and Meriter Hospital. Vilas Park and Vilas Zoo visitors, along with employees, patients and visitors of the hospitals, contribute to significant traffic volumes on Drake St. and Mills St. To help promote pedestrian safety and improve traffic flow, the plan identifies the following:

> *Designated bicycle routes exist on Drake and South Mills Streets and Vilas Park Drive. The Bicycle Transportation Plan for the Madison Urban Area and Dane County classifies Randall Avenue and Erin Streets as through streets suitable for most bicyclists, meaning that there are no formal bicycle lanes, but the speed and volume of traffic and street connectivity is appropriate for most bicyclists.*

The plan identifies Orchard St. to Vilas Park Dr. as a "major access point" and notes that it should be maintained. The plan also notes that this and other access points are not clearly identified, and additional signage should be added to identify the boundary of the neighborhood as well as wayfinding to key destinations.

Mills St., Vilas Park Dr. and Wingra Dr. are identified in the plan as "gateways", and "important entrances that may contain high traffic volumes (pedestrian, automobile, bus or bicycle). The plan also mentions that Vilas Park Dr. is the major east-west thoroughfare for pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles and, as such, is central to the future planning of Vilas Park. The plan also mentions that many conflicts exist between park users, commuting bicyclists and vehicles.

The neighborhood plan made the following recommendations:

- *Improve wayfinding signage or strategies (i.e. brochures) to direct Vilas Zoo patrons to overflow parking lots near the Wingra Drive entrance of the zoo.*
- *Improve parking and transit options at Vilas Park and Zoo, such as advertising bus access to the zoo or running a trolley down Randall Avenue from Regent Street to the zoo during special events.*
- *Support planning by the Friends of Lake Wingra to improve water quality in Lake Wingra.*
- *Explore the use of the hillside on South Orchard Street (the area located behind the parking lot) or other suitable areas of Vilas Park, for either a dog exercise area or as space for community gardening.*
- *Develop a model water-quality improvement practice such as rain gardening and the use of porous pavement and promote in the Greenbush Neighborhood.*
- *Explore and promote non-car transit alternatives to the park, e.g. buses or shuttles.*

2011 – GROUNDWATERSHED STATUS REPORT (Maribeth Kniffin, Edgewood College - Student Project)

While the report does not directly address Vilas Park, recommendations are made that could have potential implications for improvements and management of the park:

- *Identify areas of opportunity for recharge projects (southeast marsh and the Arbor Hills greenway)*
- *Install permeable surfaces throughout the watershed*
- *Develop of infiltration standards*
- *Incorporate green infrastructure into the Wingra Watershed Management Plan*
- *Encourage the city to distribute grants for on-site stormwater management*
- *Give citations to property owners that create excessive runoff*

2012 – SOURCES OF CHLORIDE TO LAKE WINGRA (Roger Bannerman, Environmental Specialist - WIDNR, retired)

While the document does not directly address Vilas Park, its recommendations for reduction of the use of road salts are relevant for managing ice and snow within the park.

2012 – VILAS PARK AND LAKE WINGRA SHORELINE VISION PLAN (Lauren Brown, Edgewood College - Student Project)

An Edgewood College student developed a conceptual plan for the Vilas Park shoreline through the use of public engagement and planning. The plan calls for the development of natural shorelines with native plantings and a second opening to the lagoons from Lake Wingra (Figure 5.157).

Figure 5.157. Vilas Park and Lake Wingra Shoreline Vision Plan (Lauren Brown - 2012)

2012 – VILAS PARK/WINGRA CREEK SHORELINE DESIGN AND RESTORATION (Kurt J. Schmidt, UW Madison - Student Project)

This student project identifies key design features that can be used to improve the ecology, user safety and aesthetics of the park.

Project recommendations:

- *Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation Improvements*
- *Boating Circulation – reopen the eastern connection between the lagoons and Lake Wingra.*
- *Fishing Nodes*
- *Site Lighting*
- *Sculpture Nodes*

- *Vegetation Plans – modify shoreline to increase native vegetation buffer. Reduces velocity and improves quality of runoff into Lake Wingra by filtering debris and contaminants. This is partly achieved by reducing the open lawn adjacent to the Lake which should reduce the Goose population.*

2013 – WINGRA WATERSHED: A MODEL FOR GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION (Janet Gassman, Diana Huepenbecker, Ashley Kuehl, and Hannah Mog, UW Madison - Student Project)

This report analyses the "Vision for the Future" document put together by the Friends of Lake Wingra group alongside the action steps in the Madison Sustainability Plan found within the City of Madison

Conclusions from the report:

A future step that may be taken in the interest of implementing sustainable practices within the pilot project locations would be to identify "low hanging fruit", or relatively simple actions that may be accomplished in a short period of time. Community meetings, educational information regarding the watershed, and environmental art are all actions that can be executed without significant financial investment. With the right leadership, these steps would encourage community buy-in and promote stakeholder feedback. The concept of sustainability must be made approachable throughout these discussions, and inclusive techniques must be employed, particularly with regard to any improvements to Vilas Park. As the park serves the entire Madison community, and not simply the Vilas Neighborhood, efforts must be made to ensure that everyone has a voice in the future of this community asset.

2014 – VILAS PARK SHORELINE: A VIBRANT VISION FOR THE FUTURE REPORT (Catie Rafferty, Emily Fuger, Jacquie Ptacek, Peter Riddle, and Yasi Rezai, Edgewood College - Student Project)

This is a student project through Edgewood College's Sustainable Development course, in partnership with the Nelson Institute's Environmental Conservation Professional Master's program at UW Madison. The report was prepared in conjunction with the 2012 "Vilas Park and Lake Wingra Shoreline Vision Plan" by Lauren Brown (Figure 5.158).

Project Vision:

…this group sees a Vilas Shoreline of the future where equity prevails in both human and natural aspects. One where safety is a priority and ecosystem health receives a first-class ticket and front seat towards progress. We envision a community park with a diverse group of people and an improved user experiences including picnicking, swimming, fishing, boating, walking, and community gardening. The park will stimulate

community involvement and bring together different groups of people to work together and enjoy this precious city resource. We envision a future with a functioning ecosystem with diverse species. We envision one of Madison's most beautiful and historic beaches once again regaining its place at the top… We see enhanced community connectivity, enhanced public health, and improved overall well-being… Part of our vision is that the Vilas Park Shoreline should be a sustainable, socially diverse, and ecologically healthy park that fosters wellness in the community.

Goals Included:

- *Spur interest in Vilas Shoreline redesign*
- *Update Stakeholder Contact List*
  - *Make initial contact with stakeholders*
  - *Create brochure and poster to distribute to stakeholders*
  - *Align this plan with various other sustainability plans*
  - *Tool kit (how to move forward)*

The product of the Vilas Park Shoreline Report was a set of recommendations for further action:

- *Develop a tool kit to further education stakeholders about the Park and planning process.*
- *Develop a comprehensive plan for all of Vilas Park, not just the shoreline.*
- *Fundraising for additional research and planning.*

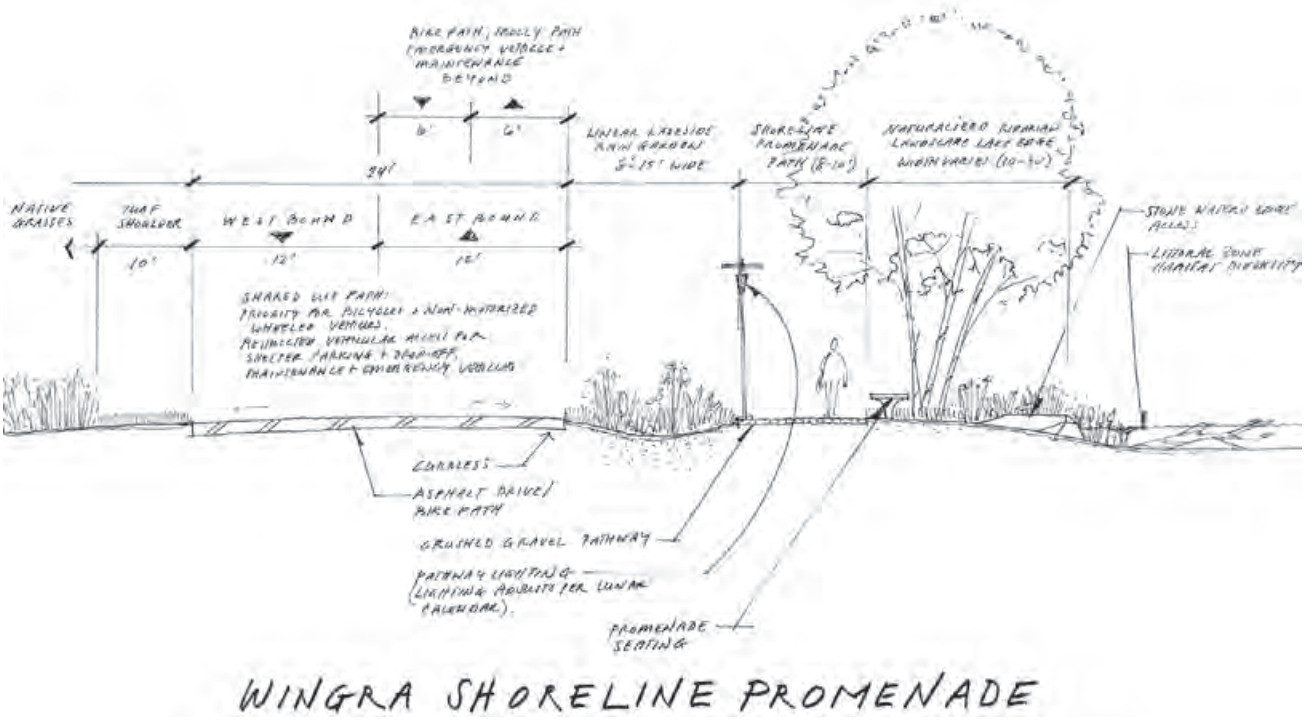


Figure 5.158. Vilas Park and Lake Wingra Shoreline Vision Plan - Cross Section of Vilas Park Drive (Lauren Brown 2012)

2015 - LAKE WINGRA WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN (Strand Associates, Inc.)

From this report came general recommendations for achieving Lake Wingra watershed management goals:

- *Chlorides – Work toward changing the Lake Wingra chloride concentration from 120 mg/L to 40 mg/L that existed in the early 1970s.*
- *Infiltration – Recover 10 percent of the 742 million gallons of lost infiltration because of development in the Lake Wingra Watershed.*
- *Phosphorus – Of the 1,900 pounds of phosphorus generated in the watershed each year, reduce the phosphorus load reaching Lake Wingra by 50 percent compared to no controls.*

2017 – ANNIE C. STEWART MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN CONSERVATION/PRESERVATION PLAN (InSite Consulting Architects)

The city will be pursuing specific conservation and preservation options as described in the 2017 plan for the Annie Stewart Memorial Fountain. The 2017 plan determined the existing limestone base is beyond repair and needs to be replaced, while the marble statuary must be cataloged and preserved. Due to the high cost of annual maintenance, the city does not expect that a working fountain will be the final product of the restoration. The specific restorative actions the city will take have not been determined as of the writing of the Vilas Park Master Plan 2020.

2018 – CITY OF MADISON PARK AND OPEN SPACE PLAN 2018-2023 (City of Madison Park Division)

Vilas Park is identified as a Community Park, due to its size and the types of amenities offered at the park, including a heated shelter with restrooms, playgrounds, open space, athletic fields, Lake Wingra waterfront, a beach, hockey and ice skating, tennis courts and paved walking paths.

Vilas Park Highlights:

- Vilas Park was tied with Tenney Park for the sixth most shelter reservations in 2017, at 111.
- Due to the often-wet state of the park's field space, it is not regularly used for scheduled athletic events. Because of this, it does not fall into the top twenty parks based on number of athletic field reservations.
- The plan identifies that more than 5,000 residents live within a half-mile of Vilas Park, which makes it third in surrounding population density. Brittingham Park is number one, at over 15,000 residents, and James Madison Park is second, at over 10,000 residents within a half-mile
- Vilas Park was the eighth most reserved park for non-athletic events in 2017, hosting the equivalent of 25 days of events including 'Let's Eat Out' and numerous runs/walks.

The Park and Open Space Plan also outlines recent improvements to Vilas Park:

- *2016 – A sidewalk was added along Drake St. to provide safe access for on-street parking.*
- *2017 – The tennis courts were resurfaced, and a new abutment was constructed for an accessible fishing pier.*
- *2018 – The pedestrian bridges over the lagoons were replaced and upgraded to ADA standards.*

2018 - VILAS PARK INVESTIGATION – STUDY OF POTENTIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVERSE EFFECTS (Cardno)

According to this report, six archeological sites have been identified within the boundary of Vilas Park. Five of the six sites have been extensively disturbed. Further disturbance within these zones needs to be monitored pursuant to State Statute 157.70. The report states that human remains have been unearthed several times, the earliest noted was in 1915.

The following are recommendations from the report:

Future city projects within the project area are likely to have adverse or negative effects on all six sites (DA-0148, DA-0149, DA-0174, DA-0178, DA-0196 and DA-1193) known to have been historically present within Vilas Park.

Due to the high density of burial mounds and the potential to encounter human remains within the park it is recommended that any ground disturbing activities located within the current boundaries of the park be monitored by a qualified archaeologist. Extant mound groups like Da-148 (Vilas Mound Group) should be avoided at all cost and ideally should be made part of a site management plan. Other sites, such as the large village site of DA-0196 would need archaeological survey and testing prior to any construction efforts. Given the nature and history of excavations at this site, extensive archaeological fieldwork and Native American consultation would likely be required for any such project.

The report recommends that site DA-0148 (Figure 5.159), near the Dinosaur Playground, should be avoided as it remains partially intact. Site DA-196, partly contained within the zoo property, is also called out as a site to be avoided or monitored during ground disturbing activities.

Figure 5.159. Identified Sites from Vilas Park Investigation - Study of Potential Archaeological Adverse Effects (Cardno 2018)

OTHER RESOURCES:

Friends of Lake Wingra:

https://www.lakewingra.org/about-us/friends-partners

City of Madison Engineering Lake Wingra Watershed:

https://www.cityofmadison.com/engineering/stormwater/wingraplan.cfm

SITE ANALYSIS

A site analysis is the evaluation of physical characteristics of a study area. Each site is unique consisting of elements such as topography, vegetation, watercourses and weather. The site analysis helps determine placements of structures, roads and other built elements while also providing suggestions for orientation to balance environmental effects to these uses.

SLOPES

The majority of Vilas Park is relatively level. The analysis of the slopes included in this report is from the Dane County GIS[90] using its 2-foot contour database (Map 5.2). The slope categorization is 0 to 6 percent, 6 to 12 percent, 12 to 20 percent, and over 20 percent.

The west side of the park generally slope to the south of the walking path parallel to Vilas Avenue. Along the east the elevation changes from the burial mounds at Erin Street to the zoo have the steepest topography in the park with slopes in excess of 2:1; as such these areas of the park are generally considered undevelopable. The remnant roadbed extending from the south end of Randall Avenue toward the bluff line up to the burial mound site is less than 5 percent and meets American with Disabilities Act (ADA) for accessibility requirements with no handrails. The existing path is over 8 percent and does not meet ADA requirements.

Most other areas of the park fall within the 0 to 6 percent slope and provide grades compatible with accessible walkways. The shoreline along the lagoon including the island and Lake Wingra have steeper, eroded 2:1 slope.

Figure 5.160. Vilas Park Meadow and Valley viewing toward the Lagoon

90 Dane County GIS, www.dcimapapps.countyofdane.com, 2020.

Map 5.2. Vilas Park Slope Analysis

Page Intentionally Left Blank

SOILS

Soils information for the Vilas Park Master Plan are from the Dane County GIS maps (Map 5.3).[91] Supplemental information on classification and characteristics of the soil series is from the National Cooperative Soil Survey. [92]

A majority of the site that would eventually become Vilas Park was originally a bog as described in early descriptions of the property from the Annual Report of the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association at the time of the donation of the land by the Vilas family.[93] The soils in the low-lying areas of Vilas Park are Wacousta silt (Wa) silty clay loam. The Wa soil classification is very poorly drained with a 0 to 2 percent slope. These soils are described as located in broad depressions and swales on till plains, moraines and stream terraces that consist of very deep, very poorly drained in silty lacustrine sediments.[94] The former City of Madison plat plan of the 1905 vacated lots in conjunction with the demarcation of the "old shore line" on the 1906 O.C. Simonds plan verify the location of a wet boggy area at the north end of Lake Wingra.

Moving upward in a slight valley base toward the intersection of Drake Street and South Randall Avenue, the soils continue to be silt loams consistent with a broad depression as shown in the slopes section of this report. The predominant soil in this area, Batavia silt loam (BbA) has a gravelly substratum and is well-drained. This soils zone has relatively slight slopes of 0 to 2 percent.

The Batavia silt loam (BbB), located in the broad depression, is similar to BbA in makeup but has a slightly higher percentage of slope at 2 to 6 percent. This soil lies along the edge of the formerly boggy area found on site. As with the Wacousta silt loam the Batavia soils consist of very deep, well drained soils on till plans, glacial outwash plains and stream terraces formed in loess silty materials and loamy stratified outwash or sandy loam till.[95]

Just north of the BbB soils moving toward Vilas Avenue and higher ground is Military loam (MhD2). The loam is eroded and well-drained in composition with steeper slopes of 6 to 12 percent. The Military series are formed upland in sandy loam till, are moderately deep and are underlain by sandstone bedrock.[96]

Most of the Henry Vilas Zoo falls within the Wacousta series similar to Vilas Park. The north east and east

91 Dane County GIS, www.dcimapapps.countyofdane.com, 2020
92 National Cooperative Soil Survey, www.soilseries.sc.egov.usda.gov, 2020.
93 Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association Annual Report, 1904
94 National Cooperative Soil Survey, Wacousta Series
95 National Cooperative Soil Survey, Batavia Series
96 National Cooperative Soil Survey, Military Series

side of both the Park and Zoo have the highest elevations and steepest slopes in either property. Moving toward South Randall Avenue the soils transition to Dodgeville silt loam (DnB). This series is well-drained forming in loess with an underlying clay residuum. There is an underlay of dolomite or limestone bedrock at a depth of 20 to 40 inches.[97]

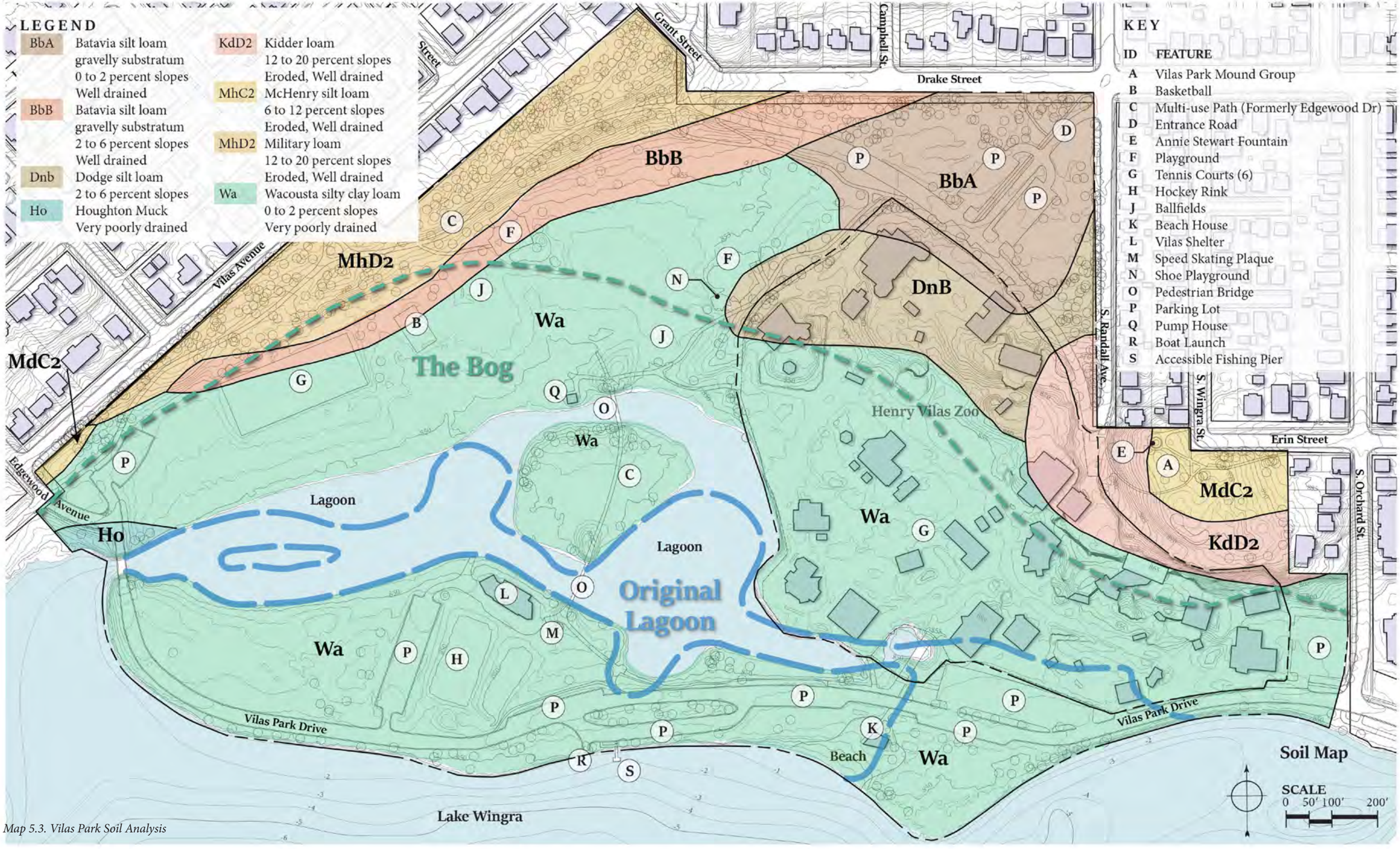
The ridgeline between the east side of Henry Vilas Zoo and the upper region of Vilas Park, where the effigy and burial mounds are located, is the steepest topography on site. The soils in this location are the Kidder loam (KdD2). The Kidder series consist of very deep, well drained soils formed in thin loess and loamy till on moraines and drumlins with slopes of 0 to 30 percent.[98]

At the highest elevation in Vilas Park, adjacent to Erin Street, are the McHenry silt loam soils (MdC2). The McHenry series is similar to Kidder with very deep, well-drained soils formed in loess or other silty materials.[99] There is also a small area of MdC2 soils at the Edgewood Drive and Vilas Avenue intersection at the base of the hilly topography extending upward to Monroe Street.

The three main building in Vilas Park are located within the Wa soils area: the main pavilion, beach house and pump house associated with the lagoons. Relocation of or modifications to the existing structures in the Wa soils areas will require site-specific soil borings to determine suitability due to the overall poor load bearing capacity in Wa soils.

Figure 5.161. Vilas Park and Historic Lake Wingra Shoreline

97 National Cooperative Soil Survey, Dodgeville Series
98 National Cooperative Soil Survey, Kidder Series
99 National Cooperative Soil Survey, McHenry Series



Map 5.3. Vilas Park Soil Analysis

Page Intentionally Left Blank

WIND

Wind analysis is an important source of information for placement of elements in a park. Wind provides cooling during warm summer days and brutal chills in the winter which can determine the orientation of a shade structure or shelter. Future energy sources can also be a factor in analyzing predominant wind direction in correlation with open access to free-flowing breeze.

The wind data shown for Vilas Park is information monitored by the NRCS[100] at the Dane County Regional Airport. The prominent wind for the summer, June through August, is from direct south. Open air shelters can benefit from this southerly breeze in warm months. In the fall, September through November, the winds shift from mainly the south to northwest as well. During the winter, December through February, the winds maintain a prominence from the northwest and south. In the colder months, solid or enclosed walls of a shelter, such as restroom and concession, may best serve users with an orientation on the north side of the building. In the spring, March through May, the winds are predominantly from the south.

The diagrams show an average for each season's winds. The wind speeds are depicted with colors intensity reflecting speeds and their direction. The wind speed averages are in meters per second and are approximately 4.11 m/sec (9.19 mph) in summer, 4.60 m/sec (10.29 mph) in fall, 4.89 m/sec (10.94 mph) in winter and 5.06 m/sec (11.32 mph) in spring. The rings on the diagram represent frequency of winds. The inner ring starts at 3 percent of the time followed by 6 percent, 9 percent, 12 percent and the outer ring 15 percent of time.

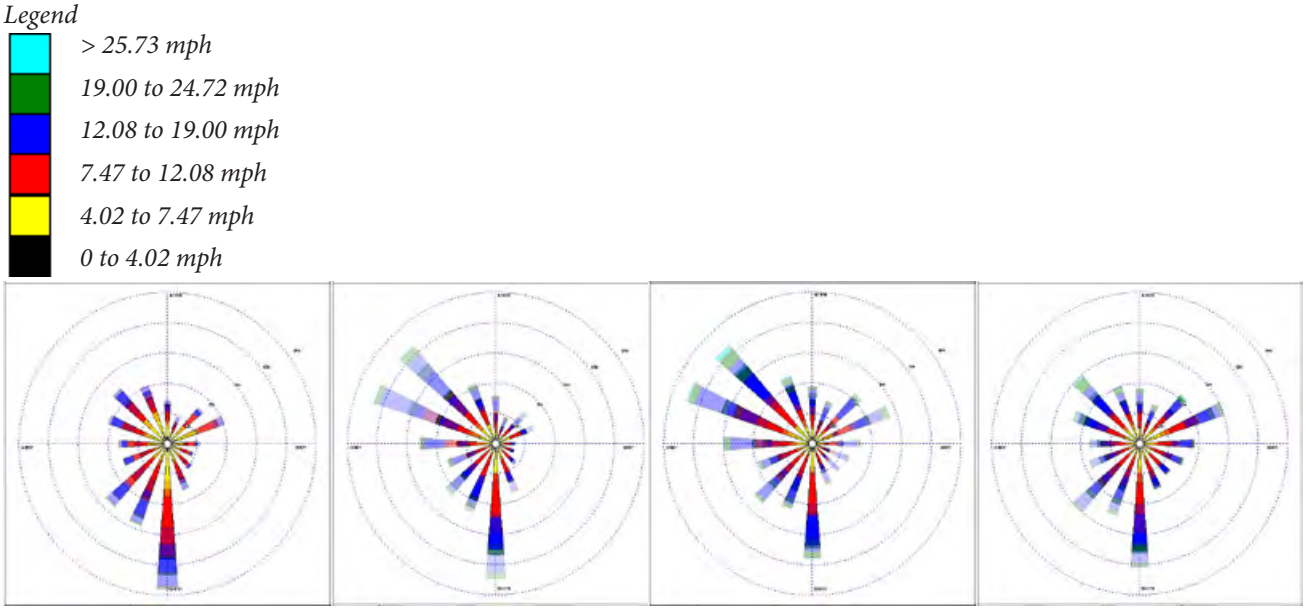


Figure 5.154. Wind Rose at Dane County Regional Airport from NRCS

100 Natural Resources Conservation Service, www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/climate/windrose.html, February 2010

OVERALL ANALYSIS

The orientation of Vilas Park respects several aspects of the natural environment (Map 5.4). Typically, the field space is located in low-lying, unbuildable areas such as the Lake Wingra basin. This natural draining valley make up most of Vilas Park and is an area that naturally stays moist in rainy seasons during fall and spring. Future consideration for better drainage should be considered to lessen the impact of water in open fields.

The elevation 853 and lower are near the demarcated original shoreline of Lake Wingra as shown on the O.C. Simonds 1906 Vilas Park Master Plan. As such the lower level of the park stays wet through most of the year. With added drain tiling or other techniques, these areas of the park can be more usable throughout damp periods. The Vilas Park shelter is located in this lower area. Documentation and detail of the footing could not be located for the shelter, but the structure seems stable. Future considerations for structure placement include factors such as robust footing requirements given the wet soil conditions found in most of Vilas Park.

Programing future cost of improvements for the Vilas Park Master Plan such as roads, walks and other hard surfaces should take into consideration the required sub-base materials to provide appropriate support in wet and poorly drained soils. The adjusted cross section for Vilas Park Drive and parking lots will establish a baseline estimate of implementation cost for construction in the poor soils in most of the park. Cross section and technical descriptions are found in Section 7.0 Master Plan.

The orientation of Vilas Park is conducive to maximizing sun angles throughout the year. The valley setting of the park aligns with sunrise and sunset both winter and summer solstice. Future planning of new or relocated park amenities benefit from this desirable orientation.

Significant canopy woodlands, as describe in the Environmental Assessment Tree Survey section of the Site Analysis, line the park edges at higher elevations, separating adjacent neighborhoods with a natural vegetative screen. The soils are not as saturated in these high elevations, providing conditions favorable for natural woodland settings. Park enhancements such as vegetation management of the understory and select canopy pruning strengthen the natural setting as O.C. Simonds originally envisioned.

Map 5.4. Vilas Park Overall Analysis

Page Intentionally Left Blank

6. CONCEPT PLANS

CONCEPT PLANS INTRODUCTION

WHAT ARE CONCEPT PLANS?

A conceptual plan is the graphic starting point of the planning process. It presents an idea of the type and arrangement of facilities that may fit on the site. Although to scale, a conceptual plan is not a suitable document for construction or project cost estimates. Conceptual plans provide a level of detail appropriate to evaluate options, spur discussion and provide a means to build consensus around a proposed plan.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Upon completion of the site assessment and public engagement in Phases I and II of the Master Plan process, the next step towards development of the final master plan was to prepare concept ideas for the future of Vilas Park.

RESEARCH AND SITE INVESTIGATIONS

A wide range of data collected was on the park, along with research into the original park master plan and later revisions. The inventory included review and documenting:

- soil types,
- slope analysis,
- existing utility infrastructure mapping,
- tree inventory,
- lagoon sediment conditions,
- (watershed),
- historical shoreline and lagoon boundaries,
- (and other environmental concerns)

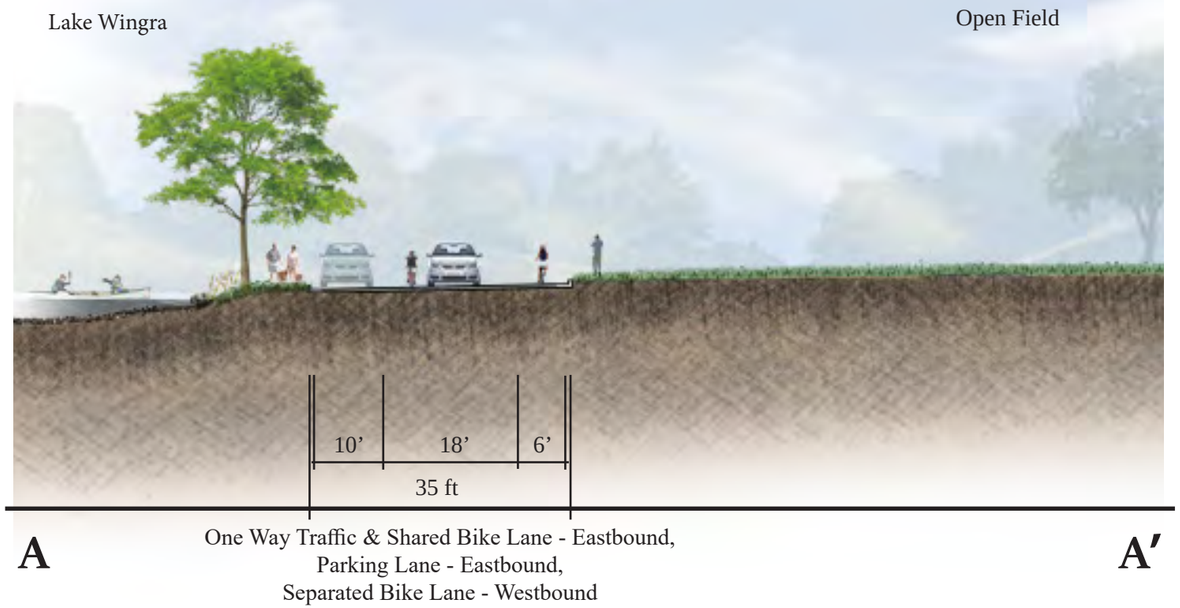
The above elements were studied and compiled into an Existing Conditions plan.(Please refer to Section 5, Existing Conditions). The existing park site with historical shoreline location and original extent of the lagoon is shown in Map 6.1. This map is an amalgam of unspecified original site plan (O.C. Simonds era), topography, with existing built park elements.

SITE ANALYSIS

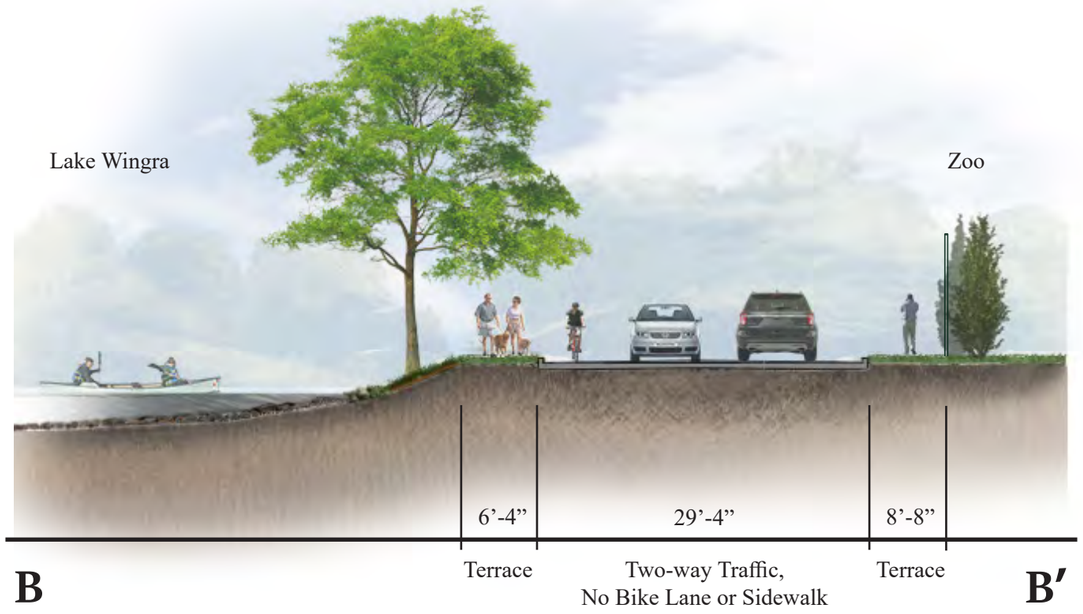
This information, when overlaid on the existing site plan, was utilized to document where changes have occurred over time. The concept ideas that were generated propose restoring, in some form, elements of the original park design as well as proposing new directions to explore for the future of Vilas Park.

Map 6.1. Existing Conditions at Vilas Park

Page Intentionally Left Blank



CROSS-SECTION - WEST



CROSS-SECTION - EAST

Figure 6.0. Vilas Park Drive Existing Cross-Sections

Page Intentionally Left Blank

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Alongside the assessment of physical and historical conditions of the site, a comprehensive public engagement campaign sought to determine what was important to City of Madison residents and what the future of the park may look like. The kickoff was a public meeting at the Main Park Shelter in June 2019. Outreach during the process included online surveys, site observations, on-site intercept interviews, comment cards, and stakeholder and focus group meetings. Section 3 of this report summarizes the full engagement efforts during the first two phases of the master plan process. Additional engagement documentation can be found in the standalone Benchmark Engagement Report.

COMMON ELEMENTS OF THE PLANS (Overall Design Considerations)

Three concepts were developed with different options within each aimed at stimulating discussions about the best approach to upgrading the facilities and uses within the park. The concepts are not intended to be standalone plans but rather a collection of ideas that can be interchanged to create a comprehensive master plan. There are common themes within all of the concepts, and they are described in the following "overall design considerations" section. From there, each concept will be described in detail, including the reasoning behind the design.

Gateway

In each concept, the term "gateway" describes landscape enhancements, monuments, or signage that create a sense of identity at entrances into Vilas Park. O.C. Simonds designed a formal entrance to Vilas Park that was known as Elm Court (Figure 6.1). The alignment of the court is now the angled entrance road from the intersection of Drake Street and Randall Avenue (originally Warren Street) into the north parking lot. There was a circular garden followed by a tree lined gravel road into the park carriage road, Burr Oak Drive. The

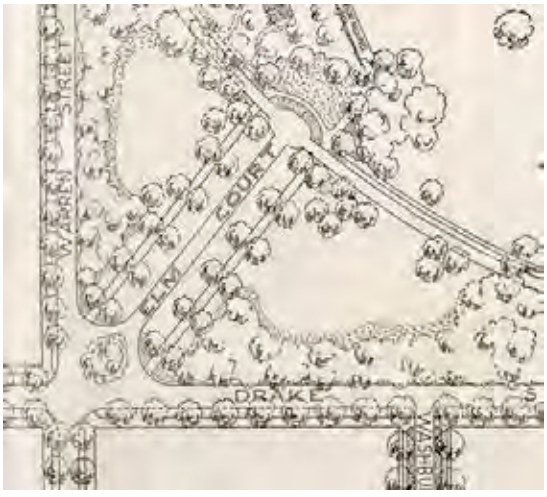


Figure 6.1. O.C. Simonds Elm Court Plan

Figure 6.2. 1908 Photograph of Elm Court

intersection of the two roads was framed by a formal garden of flowing shrubs (Figure 6.2). Other park entrances also consisted of "Y" shaped road connections with vegetated centers in the triangular islands. These formal entrances were the inspiration for the gateway designs in the concept plans. The gateways are indicated by the letter "G" on the concept plans.

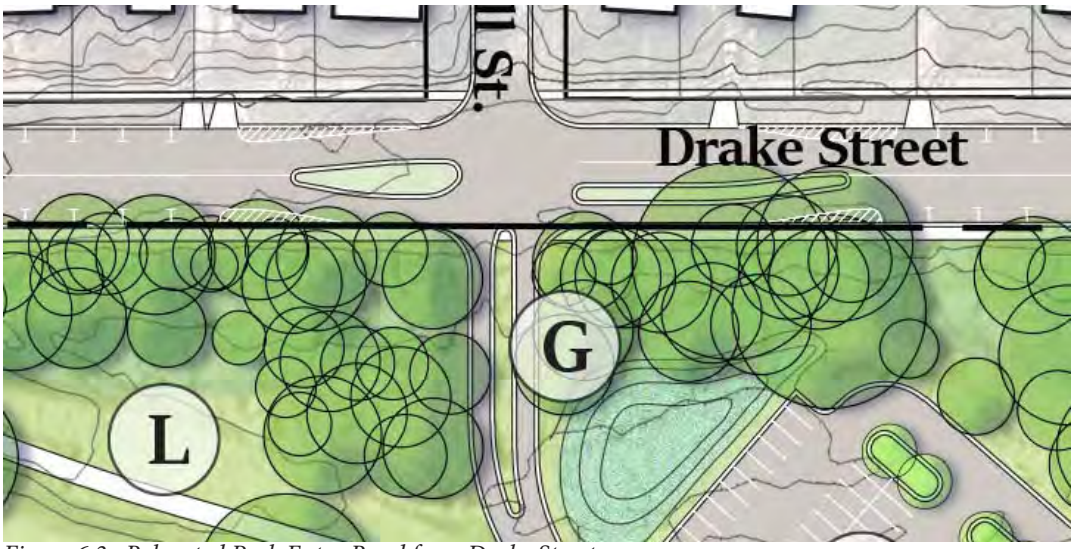


Figure 6.3. Relocated Park Entry Road from Drake Street

North Entrance

In each of the concept plans, the entrance to the north parking lot (north zoo entrance) is relocated from the Drake Street and Randall Avenue intersection to the Campbell Street and Randall Avenue intersection (Figure 6.3). By removing the west-east vehicular travel land terminating in the exit at Grant Street and Drake Street as well as the existing angled parking at this location in the park, the concepts eliminate a key conflict point between automobiles, bicycles, and pedestrians – the desire to find ways to minimize pedestrian-vehicular conflicts was frequently heard and expressed as a goal/interest from public input during the project.

Moving the entrance to the opposite side of Drake Street from Campbell Street creates a properly designed four-way intersection. The pavement width of Drake Street provides enough space to add a left turn lane to go south into Vilas Park. The landscaped islands along Drake Street at the entrance require removing 13 parallel parking stalls, mostly used by park users on the south side of Drake Street, which can be recouped in the redesigned park parking lot. There is no reduction of on-street parking on the north side of Drake Street. The proposed intersection would not be a four-way stop but would provide open flow to Drake Street with stop signs on Campbell Street and the park entrance road. The City of Madison Traffic Engineering will determine on-street markings and signage prior to implementation. The relocated entrance road allows for two-way traffic into and out of the park, eliminating the current one-way system that extends through the north boundary of the park. Appropriate signage of arrival and entry into Vilas Park and the zoo will prevent visitors from turning north onto Campbell Street and into the residential neighborhood.

Parking

Maintaining the same amount of total parking within Vilas Park while limiting the addition of stalls is another common consideration within each concept plan. The parallel parking on Drake, Randall and Erin Streets was included in the overall parking counts due to an undetermined amount of park users utilizing those stalls. The total amount of available parking, including the street parking, is 429 stalls. Parking is identified as the letter "P" on the concept plans. In order to provide the city with options, each of the 3 concepts addresses parking differently. Concept A shows less than what is existing, with 413 stalls, Concept B has more, at 464 stalls, and Concept C maintains almost the same count, at 435 stalls. These varying designs reflect the varying public opinions that were found in survey responses. The results of the survey are found at the end of this section of the report.

Main Park Shelter

The park shelter is also something that is considered in all of the concept plans. During the second Residential Resource Group meeting, the Vilas Neighborhood discussed the desire for a shelter building to include a community room. In the public survey, participants raised the notion of event space needs in the park, identifying the shelter as a potential use area. Newer shelters at Elver and Tenney Parks were identified as facilities to consider as models for Vilas Park (Figures 6.4 and 6.5). Though the Elver and Tenney Park shelters are models for consideration, this shelter would be designed specifically for Vilas Park at a future date as a recommended implementation item. The main shelter building shown on all 3 concept plans is the footprint of the Elver Park structure and is indicated with the letter "D" on the plans. The Elver Park shelter includes a community room, restrooms and a maintenance/utility room. The footprint is for diagrammatic purposes only and any future shelter in Vilas Park would have its own identity. In all of the concepts, the existing small pump house near the north pedestrian bridge to the island moves from that location to a utility room within the main shelter building.

Figure 6.4. Community Room at Tenney Park

Figure 6.5. Elver Park Shelter

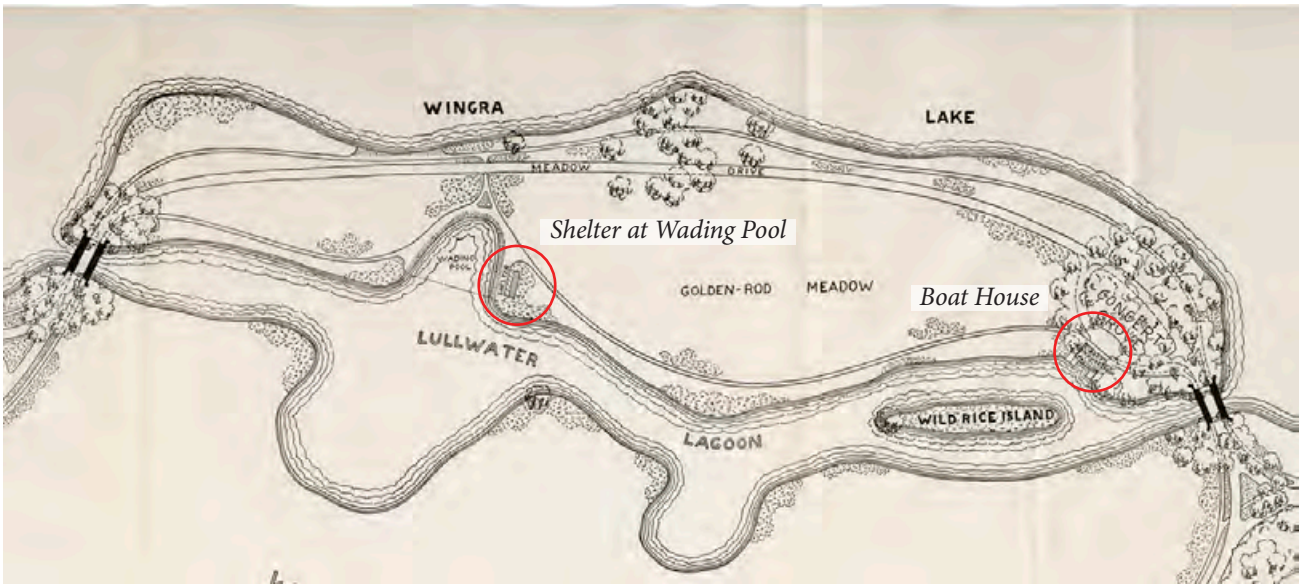


Figure 6.6. Original Building Locations

Also, in all of the concepts the main shelter is relocated to a place with open views from the north side of the park through the central open space to Lake Wingra. This was requested in several of the public engagement sessions. In the original Simonds Plan there were two structures in the park (Figure 6.6.), a boat house just east of the western historic bridge and a shelter east of the south pedestrian bridge over the lagoon. That shelter had a wading pool that is the small bump out toward Vilas Park Drive in the lagoon today. The concepts consider relocation of the main shelter nearer the historic wading pool.

Trees and Native Landscape

Removal or selective pruning of canopy trees to open and further enhance the viewshed should be considered. The trees identified as undesirable species in Section 5 Existing Conditions were removed from the concept plans. The perimeter of the open space and lagoon, along with the understory of the woodlands, are opportunities for reintroducing native landscapes. The vegetation will enhance wildlife habitats and reduce maintenance in some areas that are currently mown. These natural areas are identified on the concepts within the legends.

Lagoon, Wetlands, and Forebays

Allowing the lagoons to become more natural and unmaintained in some areas was also identified during public engagement. The concepts show areas of the lagoon that can revert to low-maintenance zones allowing native plant growth to occur. All of the concepts show the central part of the lagoon to have varying levels of open water verses natural marsh with a mix of plants and water. Again, as with parking, these varying designs reflect the varying public opinions that were found in survey responses. In order to create better conditions for ice, the waterway north of the island is proposed to be expanded in width.

Figure 6.7. Open Water at Vilas Park lagoon

Figure 6.8. Open Water with Wetland Edges

Figure 6.9. A Wisconsin Bog with a Mixture of Plants and Water

All of the concepts also show a wetland added to the lagoon to improve the water quality (see legend). This wetland would collect sediments prior to them entering the lagoon and Lake Wingra system. There is only one storm water discharge into the park site and it is located west of the existing pump house on the north shore of the lagoon. This wetland addition would collect the runoff from that storm line prior to it entering the lagoon. The remainder of runoff from surrounding streets and residences drain into storm lines that are directed around the park to below the Lake Wingra weir. A majority of runoff is surface runoff from the meadow and uplands which contains grass clippings that may add to the phosphorus level in the lagoon.

Compassionate Friends Plaques

A remembrance garden is shown on all of the concepts as a space in memory of local children and to celebrate them in a quiet garden setting. The remembrance garden was added to the plans for the park during the public engagement session. The remembrance garden is indicated with the letter "U."

Concepts A, B and C are discussed in more detail below. For all of the concepts, we begin our discussions at the Drake Street and Randall Avenue intersection on the north and head clockwise through the park to the east.

CONCEPT A

Once into the north parking in Concept A (Map 6.2), the lot splits into two similar in size areas (73 stalls each). The former entrance road becomes a pedestrian promenade between the lots, which lines up directly with the new zoo entrance (currently under consideration by the zoo). There are 6 accessible stalls in the west lot with direct access to the promenade. There are flex picnic spaces flanking either side of the promenade. These spaces are labeled with an "L." A tabletop pedestrian crossing gives priority to pedestrian traffic through the parking service drive between the lot, park walk and zoo entrance. There is bike parking located west of the zoo entrance along the walkway. A secondary access to Randall Avenue provides an opportunity for dispersing vehicles at peak times as well as providing a secondary access point for emergency vehicles. A stormwater basin for the parking lots is located between the entry road and west lot in an existing low area.

At the mound group location on Erin Street, the walk down to the lower park shifts south to the old road alignment that is a shallower slope than the existing walk. The existing walk has a slope of over 10%, while the new walk will have a slope of 5% or less, which meets ADA standards. The connecting walk to the Annie Stewart Fountain maintains the setback as outlined for mound protection by the Statement of Policies and Guidelines for a Maintenance Plan for Burial Mounds in Madison Parks. Two overlooks, as indicated by the

Map 6.2. Vilas Park Concept A

Page Intentionally Left Blank

letter "O," are along the brim of the bluff for views of the Lake Wingra valley. The overlooks are responses to discussions by the Greenbush Neighborhood. The walk continues along the bluff toward Orchard Street with a new connection to the lower park to provide a trail loop. The walk requires steps due to the steep topography of the bluff. Recently, park planners have found that communities throughout the country have been requesting measured trail systems be added to their urban parks. At Vilas Park, this can be achieved by adding signs designating half- to one-mile lengths within the loop system.

The existing small parking lot at the corner of Vilas Park Drive and Orchard Street is reconfigured as single bay of parking for more efficient use of pavement. There is a reduction of 8-stalls in this lot. More efficient layouts of parking areas in the park provide the opportunity to reclassify the use of this lot. The 28-stall lot is remote from the zoo entrance and may serve better as staff parking.

The intersection of Vilas Park Drive and Orchard Street provides an opportunity to enhance the east gateway into Vilas Park. There is enough road width to add a landscaped island, enhanced plantings and a new Vilas Park sign. The narrow corridor between the zoo fence and Lake Wingra along Vilas Park Drive can support walks and terraces on both sides with the reduction of the road width to 22 feet. The City of Madison Traffic Engineering allows streets to have 11-foot drive aisles. Figure 6.10 shows the potential improvements as indicated in section B.

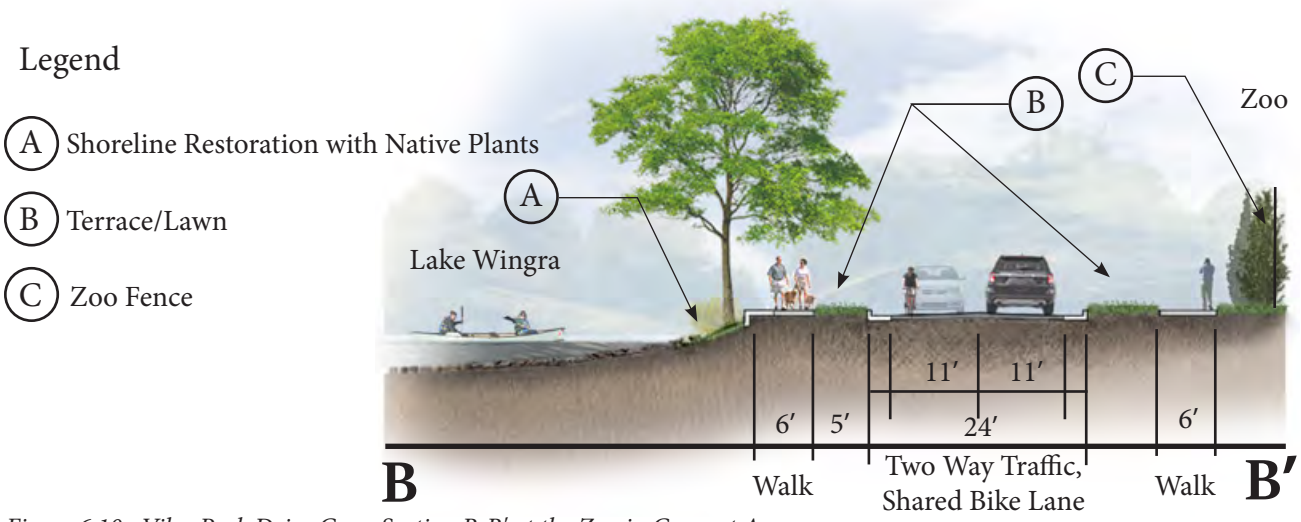


Figure 6.10. Vilas Park Drive Cross Section B-B' at the Zoo in Concept A

Within concept A, the south parking lot (south zoo entrance) layout is designed to be more efficient than the existing lot. The existing parking lot is much wider than a typical 60' bay. Reconfiguring the parking bays to be parallel provides enough space at the east end to add a bus drop-off. The teardrop island at the drop-off meets the turning radius required for school, city and inter-city bus-es. The orientation of the drop-off lane

allows for disembarking directly onto the connecting park and zoo walkway system. The parking lot and bus drop-off have direct access to the south zoo en-trance, which will limit pedestrian and vehicular conflicts. There are 6 accessible stalls and bike parking nearest to the entry gate. A storm water basin is located in the green space south of the last bay of parking and before Vilas Park Drive.

The beach house ("F") moves to the east to allow for extension of a grand walkway leading to the south zoo entrance. As patrons leave the zoo, the view opens directly to Lake Wingra. The parking for the beach area is east of the beach house with access to a plaza space between the building and beach. This plaza area provides an opportunity for café tables and bench seating. A small play-ground ("C") is located near the beach house and beach. To lessen the erosion of sand, semicircular walkways help to confine the sand to the beach. On the west walkway there is an overlook with bench seating. The east walkway provides an accessible swimming ramp. The ramp walk continues into the lake with a handrail on one side and a transition seat in the lake to allow people to have direct access to the lake.

Moving west on the peninsula, the lagoon is opened to Lake Wingra at a second location to replication the original design of the lake system. By condensing parking into distinct zones, the newly formed island in the park reverts fully to dedicated open space. The parallel parking spaces on Vi-las Park Drive, as well as parking spaces at the shelter and additional small linear lots, are all incorporated into the south lot and the beach parking lot. A small lot along Vilas Park Drive will maintain parking for access to walks, fishing piers ("J") and a canoe/kayak launch ("Q") along the shoreline. A bridge will cross the new opening of the lagoon and is sized to allow for a 12-foot vehicle lane with 6-foot pedestrian walkways on either side.

In Concept A, the main shelter is removed from the peninsula to allow for open views from the north end of the park to Lake Wingra. In its place is open lawn, natural areas and wetlands ("I"). The wetlands also provide stormwater management by collecting runoff from walks and Vilas Park Drive prior to it draining into the lagoon or Lake Wingra. The wetlands provide an opportunity for boardwalks and provide habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Vilas Park Drive is reduced to 20 feet wide. It has a 12-foot drive aisle (to share with eastbound bikes) and an 8-foot westbound, counter traffic bike lane (Figure 6.11). The alignment of Vilas Park Drive bends and curves to reduce the speed of traffic through the park and to create a parklike feel to the road. The pedestrian walks are separate from Vilas Park Drive and circulate around the edges and shoreline of the new island.

Legend

A Shoreline Restoration with Native Plants

B Natural Areas

C Open Lawn

D Wetlands

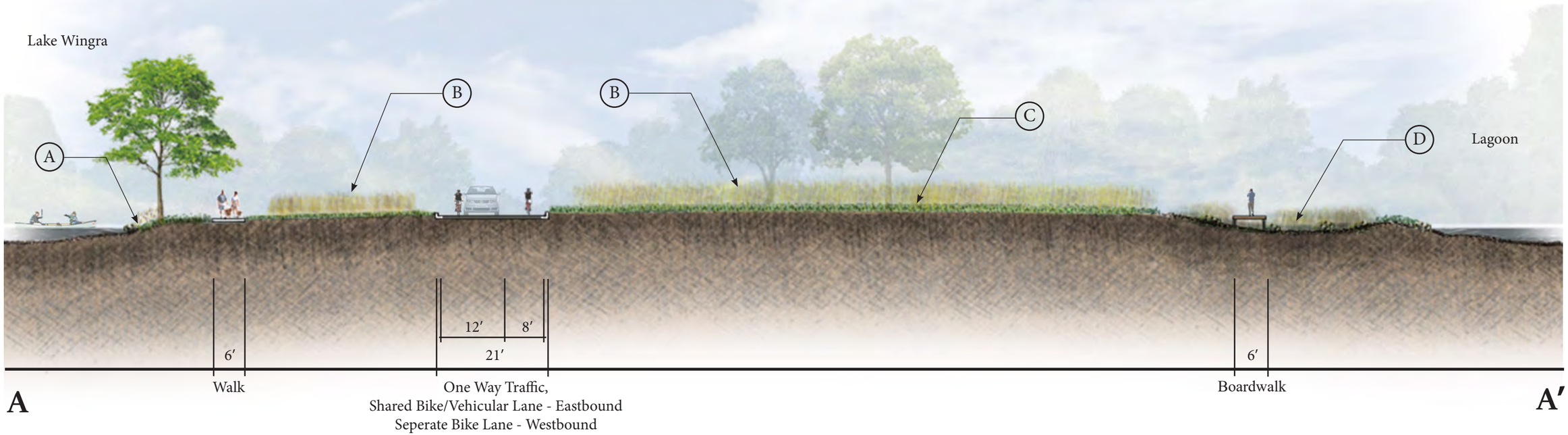


Figure 6.11. Vilas Park Drive and Peninsula Cross Section A-A' in Concept A

Page Intentionally Left Blank

At Edgewood Avenue, the west park gateway culminates in an abrupt T-intersection to prevent flow-through traffic. The main park shelter ("D") tucks in along the north shore of the lagoon and hillside on the west side of the park. The parking lot for the shelter will be slightly larger than the existing lot in that location and will include bike parking at the building drop-off circle. The parking lot supports the playground ("C"), basketball court ("B"), hockey rink ("H") and trails that are near the shelter building. A berm extends outward perpendicular from the hillside that extends parallel to Vilas Avenue to buffer views of the parking lot from the north end of the park and neighborhood. The berm also provides an opportunity for a hillside playground.

The playground has separate spaces for school- and preschool-age children. This location provides close access to restroom facilities in the main shelter. The "old woman in a shoe" will be relocated into this play-ground. More wetlands extend along the lagoon near the shelter. The ice-skating area, shown with a blue dashed line, on the lagoon shifts to the west between the historic bridge and the existing island. The east lagoon would transition to a natural wetland landscape.

Returning to the north, the main bike and pedestrian walk on the west side is another remnant of Burr Oak Drive from the Simonds Plan and continues to be an asset to Vilas Park. The 'Wingra meadow' area of the Simonds Plan is once again open and free of structures. Areas for open lawns that allow for informal play and relaxation are indicated with the letter "A."

The existing parking capacity is 429 stalls at Vilas Park. The breakdown:

- North parking (including Drake Street and Randal Avenue parallel parking on park side) - 144
- Erin Street parking - 8
- South lot, beach, Vilas Park Drive parallel and peninsula parking - 196
- Main shelter parking - 56
- Tennis court parking - 25

Concept A has a total of 413 stalls, which is less than the existing amount of parking. The break-down:

- North parking (including Drake Street and Randal Avenue parallel parking on park side) - 189
- Erin Street parking - 8 (no change)
- South lot, beach and peninsula parking - 152
- Main shelter parking - 64

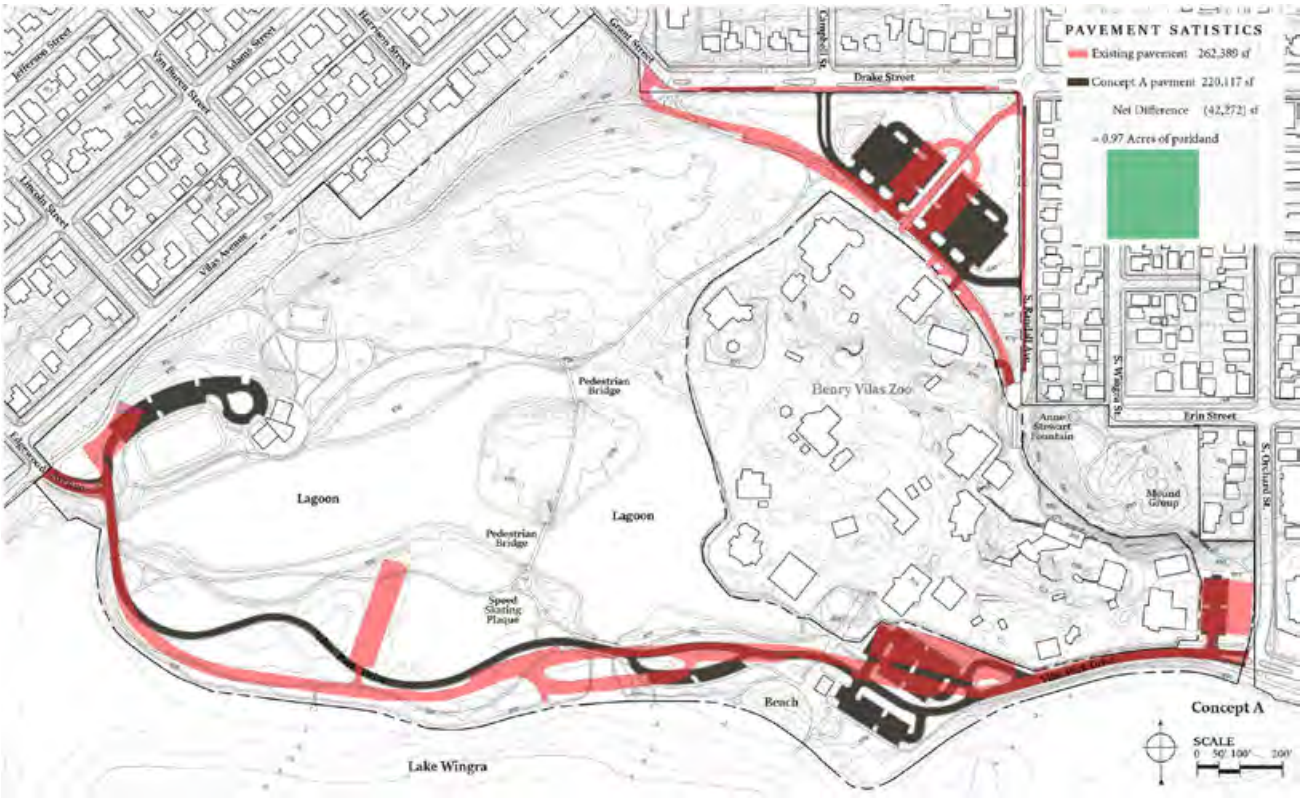


Figure 6.12. Vehicular Pavement Comparison in Concept A

The reorientation of the parking and the reconfiguration of roads in the park also change the amount of pavement dedicated to vehicles. In Figure 6.12, the areas in red are the existing roads and parking within the park. The areas shown in black are the proposed redesigned lots and the reduced Vilas Park Drive area. The existing pavement accounts for approximately 262,500 sq. ft., whereas the proposed pavement reduces the amount to 220,100 sq. ft. This difference adds nearly one acre of parkland to the site.

CONCEPT B

As with Concept A, the north parking lot is split into two similarly sized areas in Concept B (Map 6.3). In addition to the main park access road, the lots are also connected on the north end to allow for more circulation between them. The lots contain 79 and 82 stalls, respectively. The pedestrian gateway and promenade again align with the new zoo entry. Both lots have a total of 6 accessible stalls, all in the west lot, with direct access to the promenade, as with Concept A. The parking lot has a secondary connection to Randall Avenue on the north side of the east lot. This option creates two access points, but does not provide direct drive through from the access road, as with Concept A. The tabletop pedestrian crossings are shown at the parking access road and at interior lot connections. Bike parking is located east of the proposed new zoo entrance. The remembrance garden is sited along the walks as you enter the park from the parking lot. The storm water basin is in the same location as in Concept A.

Map 6.3. Vilas Park Concept B

Page Intentionally Left Blank

At the mound group, one overlook is located at the top of the bluff, but a second overlook is added nearer the zoo fence and downslope from the mounds along the relocated walk. The walk connection to the lower park is moved to the former roadway and is the only connection from the mound group area to the rest of the park. A connection to the east of the zoo follows the existing street sidewalk system along Erin and Orchard Streets.

The parking lot at Orchard Street and Vilas Park Drive is proposed to be the same layout and function (as a zoo and park staff lot) as in Concept A. The east gateway ("G") is consistent with Concept A as well in that it provides a landscaped island and safe pedestrian crossing. The multi-use path that currently ends at the intersection is extended along Vilas Park Drive to the beach along the Lake Wingra shoreline. There is enough width in the corridor to have a 5-foot wide walk along the zoo fence, a small terrace, 22 feet for the Vilas Park Drive roadway and a 10-foot wide multi-use path to match the existing path at the Orchard St. intersection as it extends eastward toward the UW Arboretum entrance (see Figure 6.13).

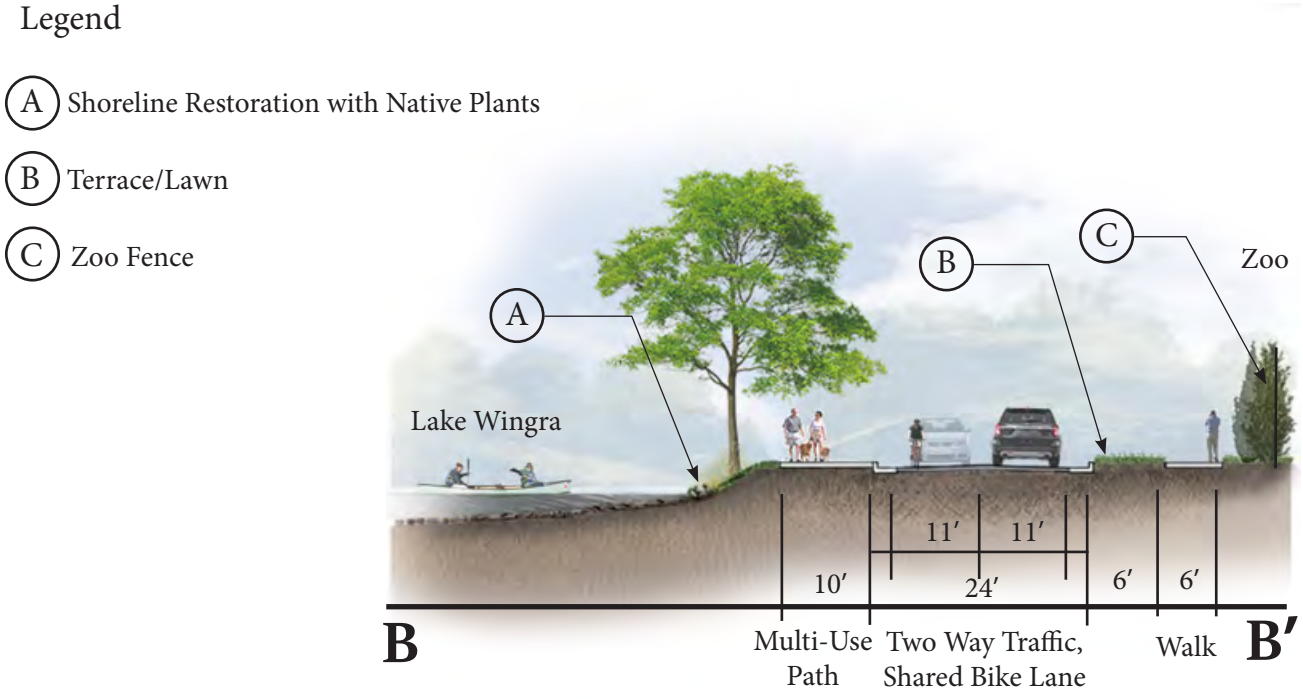


Figure 6.13. Vilas Park Drive Cross Section B-B′ at the Zoo in Concept B

The south parking lot is expanded to contain more spaces than the other concepts. The bus drop-off ("R") in Concept B is extended the full length of the parking lot to accommodate up to 7 buses at one time. The buses then exit past the accessible stalls and out to Vilas Park Drive in a large looping system. There are 6 accessible stalls and bike parking near the zoo entrance. A stormwater basin similar to Concept A is located south of the last bay of parking.

The beach house ("F") is centrally aligned on the south zoo entrance walk. The building can be a covered open-air structure in the center to provide views to Lake Wingra from the zoo entrance. The restrooms and changing areas flank either side of the central walk. The beach containment is the same as in Concept A with the exception of a wider paved area along the west end for tables, chairs and umbrellas. A large playground ("C") is located east of the beach house and has school- and preschool-aged zones. A kayak/canoe launch ("Q") provides access to Lake Wingra near the bike parking, directly south of the shelter. The parking for the beach is located northwest of the beach house with direct access to the shoreline amenities. The multi-use path continues north of the beach house with bike parking next to the building. The path continues west toward the main shelter building, unobstructed by vehicular routes.

The most significant change in Concept B is the elimination of the through connection of vehicles on Vilas Park Drive. Vilas Park Drive terminates at the main park shelter ("D"), which sits on the shoreline of the lagoon, but nearer the zoo than the existing structure. An outdoor area to the west of the shelter provides steps into the lagoon and offers the opportunity to fish and connect directly to the water. The east side of the building has a drop-off area and parking lot that circulates traffic back out toward the eastern gateway.

The hockey rink and small family ice rink ("H") are located just west of the new shelter. In Concept B the lagoon is left to revert to a more natural wetland placing limitation on maintaining open water. Ice skating on the lagoon would secede to natural vegetation.

The multi-use path continues across the peninsula to the existing historic bridge in a more direct route than the existing Vilas Park Drive alignment (see Figure 6.14). The pedestrian walks flow along the shoreline of the lagoon and lake in a circular pattern around the peninsula. As with the other concepts, the addition of wetlands along the shoreline and in existing wet areas provides the opportunity to add boardwalks with wildlife viewing platforms.

The Edgewood Avenue entrance is downplayed in Concept B. This entrance can be a gateway, but not as substantial as the other concepts since this access dead ends in a parking lot. This west parking lot serves a small open-air shelter ("E") on the lagoon shoreline, a small playground ("C"), basketball courts ("B") and tennis courts ("T"). The tennis area is reduced in size from 6 to 3 courts, similar to Tenney Park. Bike parking is located next to the basketball and tennis courts. The pedestrian walk continues along the north edge of the lagoon, meandering in and out of the wetlands. The walks connect back to the north parking lot, providing many unobstructed pathways meandering through the park. There are also several informal picnic areas ("L") located along the pathways.

Legend

A Shoreline Restoration with Native Plants

B Natural Areas

C Open Lawn

D Wetlands

E Fishing Pier

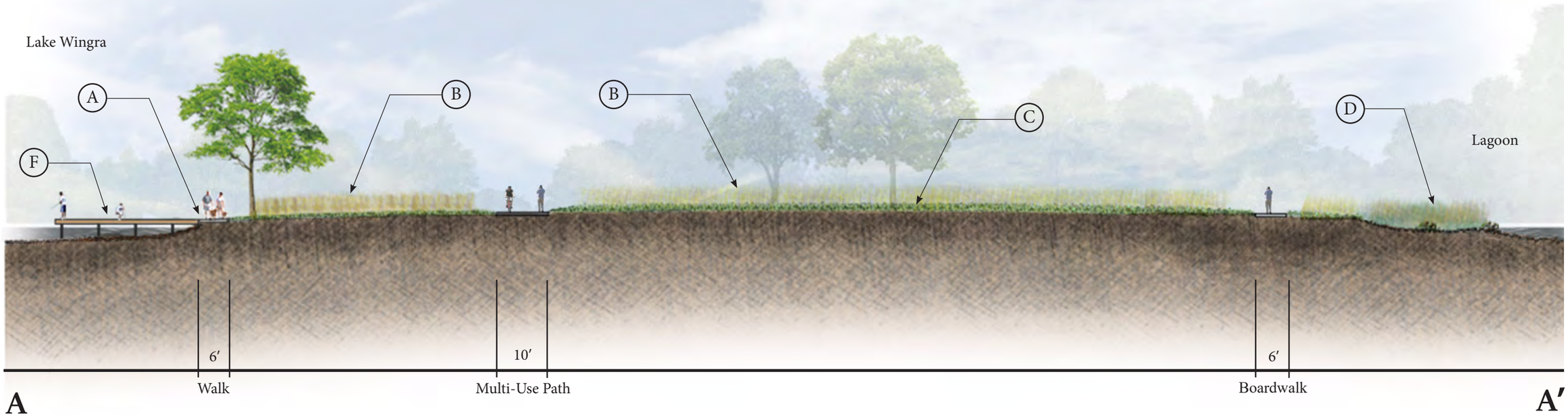


Figure 6.14. Vilas Park Drive and Peninsula Cross Section A-A' in Concept B

Page Intentionally Left Blank

The existing parking capacity is 429 stalls at Vilas Park. Concept B has 464 stalls, which is significantly more than the existing capacity. This concept is meant to show the potential for more parking and how that could affect park uses and green space. The Concept B parking breakdown:

- North parking (including Drake Street and Randal Avenue parallel parking on park side) - 203
- Erin Street parking - 8 (no change)
- South lot parking - 139
- Main shelter and beach parking - 73
- Small shelter, basketball and tennis court parking - 41

Even though there is significantly more parking than existing, Concept B has the most reduction of pavement dedicated to vehicles. This is due to the elimination of Vilas Park Drive from the historic bridge to the relocated main shelter. Also, the south parking area is more compressed which short-ens internal service roads connecting the main lots together (see Figure 6.15). The existing pavement accounts for approximately 262,500 sq. ft., whereas the proposed improvements reduce that amount to 188,500 sq. ft. This difference adds approximately 1.6 acres of parkland to the site.

Figure 6.15. Vehicular Pavement Comparison in Concept B

CONCEPT C

Similar to Concepts A and B, the north parking lot in Concept C (Map 6.4) is split into two areas of similar size. The parking lots have 83 stalls on the west and 82 on the east side. The pedestrian promenade again aligns with the new zoo entry. The west lot has 6 accessible stalls with direct access to the promenade. Each of the two lots are connected only to the access drive and there is no connection to Randall. In this concept, the only entrance and exit is at Campbell Street. The tabletop pedestrian crossings are at the access road and the zoo entrance, with bike parking along the walkway. The remembrance garden is placed where the "old woman in the shoe" playground is currently located.

At the mound group, the two overlooks are along the top of the bluff as shown in Concept B. A nature-themed playground is shown west of the mounds with a larger buffer between the mounds and the play equipment. Elements of the dinosaur-themed equipment and/or portions of trees that are removed from the park in other areas could be repurposed in this playground.

The existing parking lot at the corner of Vilas Park Drive and Orchard Street is reconfigured for more efficient use of pavement. There is an increase of 19 stalls to the existing lot in that location. The lot can continue to serve as an overflow lot or revert to zoo and staff parking.

The east gateway at Orchard Street and Vilas Park Drive is the same as in Concepts A and B. The Vilas Park Drive cross section is similar as well (Figure 6.16).

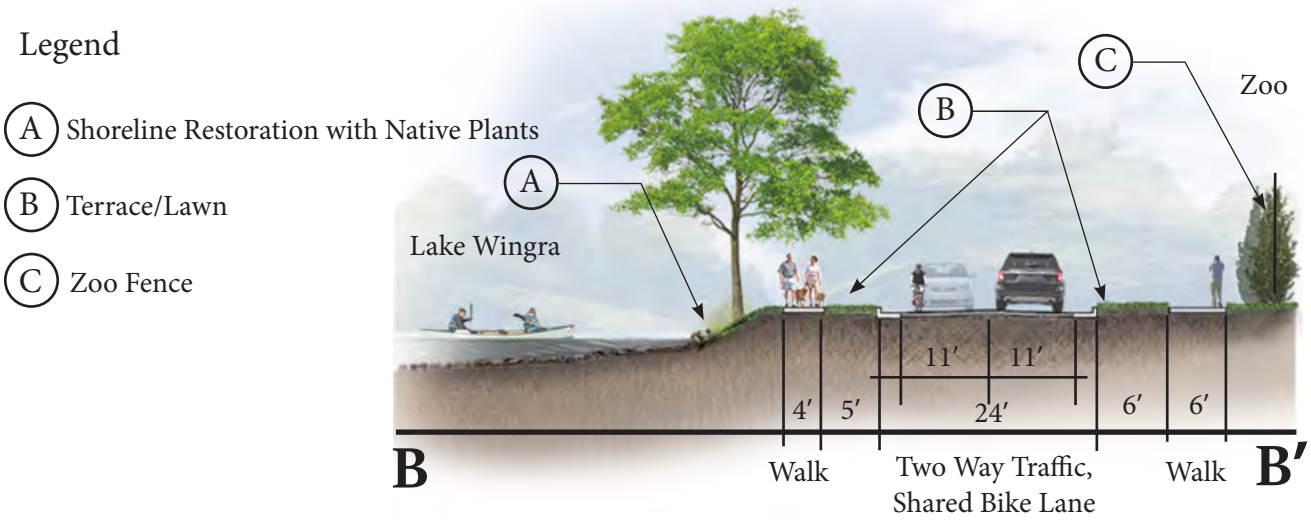


Figure 6.16. Vilas Park Drive Cross Section B-B′ at the Zoo

Map 6.4. Vilas Park Concept C

Page Intentionally Left Blank

The main south parking lot is narrowed to improve efficiency. The bus drop-off is located south of the main lot. It provides direct access to the zoo entrance requiring one crossing of the parking lot access road near the accessible parking stalls. The turning radius of the drop-off area meets requirements for school, city and inter-city buses. The drop-off can hold up to 4 buses at one time. There are 5 accessible stalls and bike parking nearest the entry gate.

In Concept C, the beach house location moves slightly to the east to extend the grand walkway at the south zoo entrance. Parking for the beach area is shared with the main south lot at the zoo en-trance, as well as two angled lots to the west. The beach house has a covered shelter and is adjacent to an open plaza space. This area provides an opportunity for café tables and bench seating. Again, to lessen the erosion of sand, walkways help to confine the sand to the beach. The west side of the beach has an overlook with bench seating. The center walkway spine is an accessible swimming ramp. The easterly walk continues and terminates at an accessible fishing pier, towards the southernmost tip of the park.

In Concept C, the main shelter is situated east of the existing pedestrian bridge along the lagoon shoreline, overlooking the larger open water of the lagoon (former speedskating track). On the la-goon side of the shelter, a linear step edge extends along the shoreline, similar to the U.W. Memorial Union Terrace. On the west end of the space, a ramp provides access for canoes and kayaks in the summer and skating in the winter. The hockey rink is located directly west of the shelter. Ice skating is in the same location as in Concept B, circling the small island.
The remaining perimeter of the lagoons is wetland. The wetlands provide areas for stormwater collection for runoff from the shelter and parking lots before draining into the lagoon or Lake Wingra. The wetlands also provide an opportunity for boardwalks and wildlife viewing.

Two-way traffic flows on Vilas Park Drive up to a turnaround at the shelter. The turnaround is designed to allow for bus movement and drop-offs at the shelter. This drop-off could serve as a Met-ro transit shuttle stop on weekends or for special events. The alignment of Vilas Park Drive re-mains similar to the existing with slight curvature added. The pedestrian walks circle around the edges and shoreline of the peninsula with additional overlooks and a fishing pier along Lake Wingra. As in Concept A, Vilas Park Drive is reduced to 20 feet, including a 12-foot drive aisle (to share with eastbound bikes) and an 8-foot westbound bike lane (Figure 6.17).

At Edgewood Avenue, the west park gateway is also like Concept A, culminating at a T-intersection. A small, open-air shelter is located next to an expanded parking lot. The shelter includes a trailhead with bike parking, a bike repair station and a kiosk. The larger parking lot sup-ports new playgrounds, basketball courts, 8 pickle ball courts and 2 additional open-air shelters. The playground also has separate spaces for school- and preschool-age children. There is an accessible fishing pier and linear dock on the lagoon south of the shelter.

Returning to the north, the main bike and pedestrian walkway continues as it does currently, with the addition of another open-air shelter near the north parking lot and zoo entry. The 'Wingra meadow' area is once again an unobstructed focal point. The perimeter of the open lawn, lagoon and woodlands are edged with natural areas of native plantings.

The existing parking capacity is 429 stalls at Vilas Park. Concept C has 435 stalls, which is similar to what is existing. The Concept C parking breakdown:

- North parking (including Drake Street and Randal Avenue parallel parking on park side) - 211
- Erin Street parking - 8 (no change)
- South lot parking - 106
- Main shelter and peninsula parking - 68
- Pickleball courts, trailhead and playground parking - 42

In Concept C, the continuation of Vilas Park Drive, similarly as it exists, with linear parking lots along Lake Wingra results in the least amount of reduced pavement of any of the concepts. The existing pavement accounts for approximately 262,500 sf whereas the proposed reduces that amount to 221,400 sf. This difference adds approximately 0.94 or, as with Concept A, nearly 1 acre of parkland. Figure 6.18 shows the correlations and reduction in pavement.

Legend

- (A) Shoreline Restoration with Native Plants
- (B) Natural Areas
- (C) Open Lawn
- (D) Wetlands
- (E) Overlook

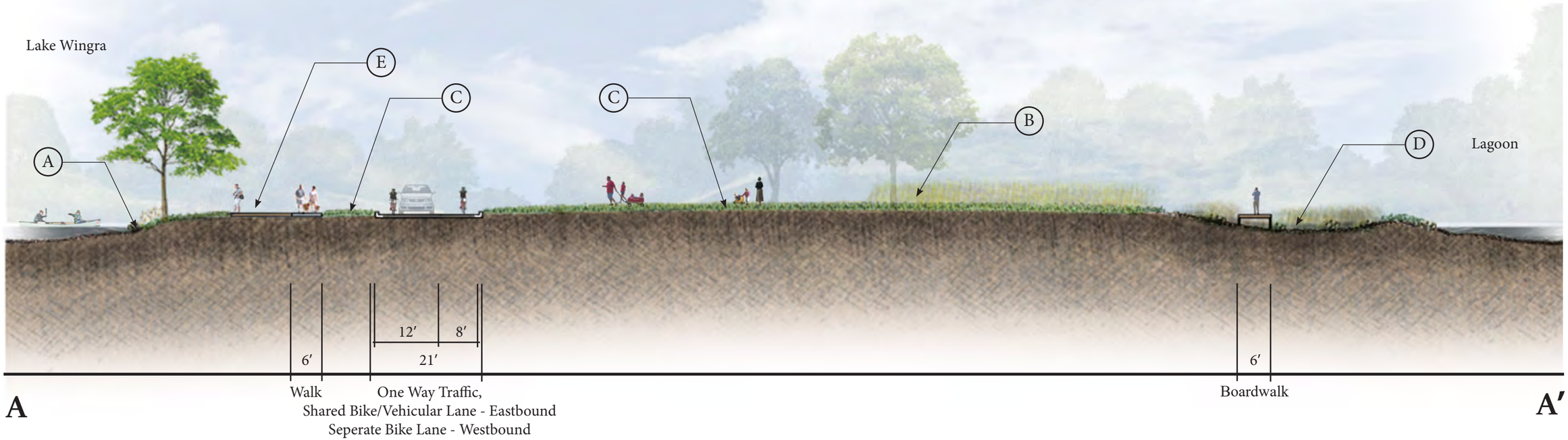


Figure 6.17. Vilas Park Drive and Peninsula Cross Section A-A' in Concept C

Page Intentionally Left Blank

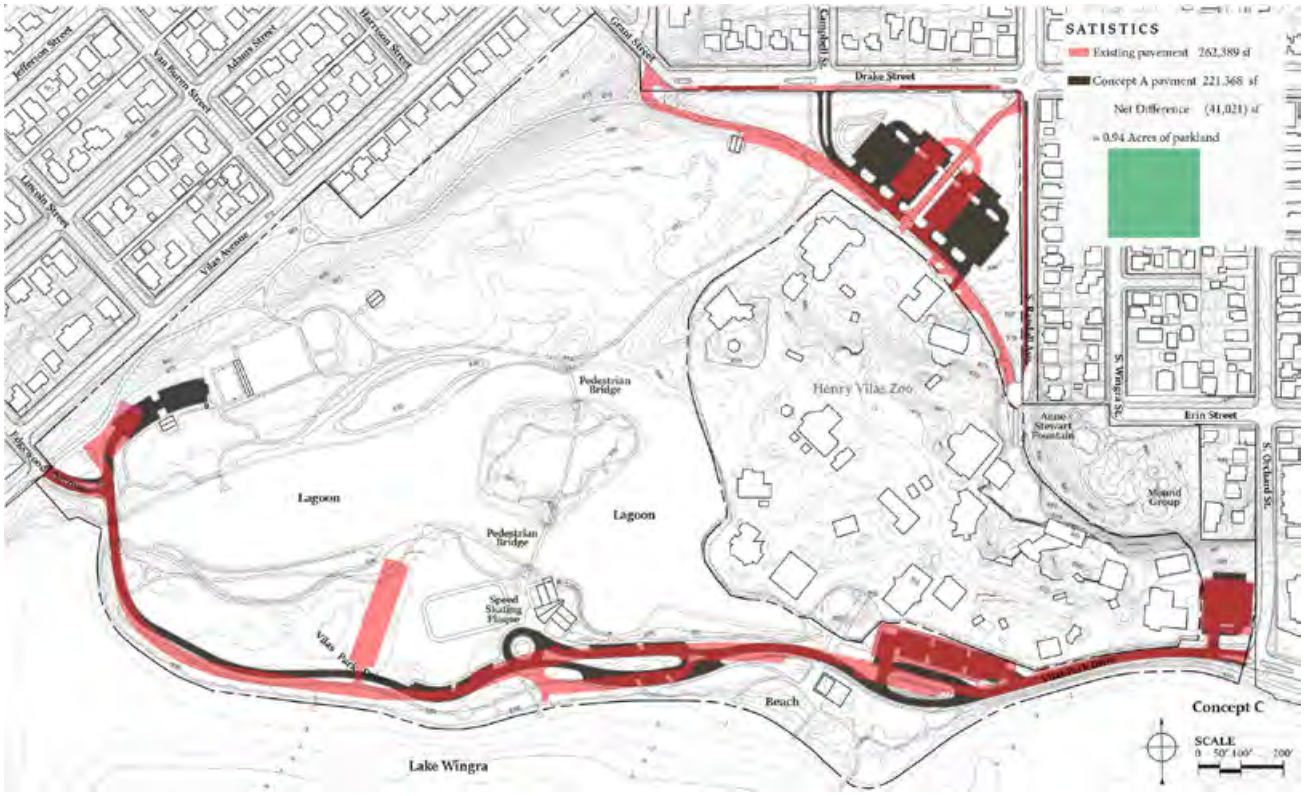


Figure 6.18. Vehicular Pavement Comparison in Concept C

REVIEW AND INPUT ON THE CONCEPTS

In Phase II of the project, community engagement occurred, in large part, virtually due to restrictions on public gatherings by Public Health Madison Dane County due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A large Community Input Meeting was held online via Zoom Webinar and accompanied an online public survey which was open prior to the meeting and remained open for three weeks after the meeting. The survey was also advertised in the park utilizing Burma-Shave style advertising placed along Vilas Park Drive, which was closed to vehicular use as an alternate bike-pedestrian option to the City's bike paths, which were becoming increasingly overcrowded during the shutdown of schools and businesses and onset of warmer weather. These were in addition to concept reviews by the Resident Resource Group (RRG), Community Partner Advisory Group (CPAG), Interagency Staff (IAS) and Focus Groups. The community engagement process sought to collect input on design solutions provided in the 3 concept plans for Vilas Park improvements from a diverse cross-section of residents representing many different races, ages, abilities and genders. This process provided valuable feedback surrounding the ideas in each concept to coalesce into a master plan for the park.

The initial public engagement in Phase I identified key design issues that, when viewed together, inform the framework for the Vilas Park Master Plan. These issues include:

- Vilas Park Drive
- The Main Park Shelter
- Parking
- Open Space and Active Recreation
- Playgrounds
- Lagoons

As discussed earlier in this section, the three concepts include different options aimed at stimulating discussions about the best approach to upgrading the facilities and uses within the park. The concepts are not intended to be stand-alone plans but rather to represent some of the extremes of decision-making (in the case of the lagoons, as an example, to show varying levels of open water and their corresponding available ice skating access) so that feedback and alternate ideas that can be obtained to help inform decision making to create a comprehensive master plan.

Input from the various outreach methods focused on attaining feedback and gauging reactions to options proposed within the concepts. Typical engagement and outreach involved in-person discussions allowing for open comment and dialog on the proposed changes. However, the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) resulted in a shift from in-person meetings to virtual meetings. Initially, the loss of face-to-face meetings was a concern. However, the virtual platform allowed for opportunities not present with traditional public engagement methods, especially for those not comfortable speaking up directly in a public meeting and for those who would otherwise not be able to attend public meetings due to issues like lack of child-care.

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

The public engagement kickoff to review the concept plans was a combined meeting of the Community Partners Advisory Group (CPAG) and the Resident Resource Group (RRG), which was held virtually via WebEx on April 22, 2020. Thirteen attendees from the two focus groups were given an introductory presentation of the concepts, which was followed by time for open discussion.

Takeaways from this meeting included:

- Tennis courts are in high demand and should be included in the final design.

- The final design should provide a description of the setback and design requirements for impervious surfaces and buildings.
- Preservation of lakefront greenspace is important.
- There is concern the plan is devoting significant effort to developing parking lots that appear to primarily serve the zoo.
- Shelter location in Option A (near existing tennis courts) is too close to the Vilas Ave. residences.
- Playground space is lacking in all three concepts. They appear to be smaller than the current sizes and the locations don't work well for residents and zoo users. A playground near the existing shoe playground should be retained in the final design.
- Concepts provide many good options for improvements to the park.
- Future engagement should provide mix and match opportunities to select preferences rather than three defined concepts.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the participants were encouraged to discuss the concepts further with their organizations. The Vilas Neighborhood Association, The Friends of Lake Wingra, South Randall Ave. Neighbors and Clean Lakes Alliance all provided statements regarding the concepts and ongoing design development. Those statements are summarized below.

Vilas Neighborhood Association (VNA)

Below is an excerpt from the VNA statement, which was submitted on May 3, 2020 by Wendy Fearnside on behalf of the Vilas Neighborhood Association. The full statement is available in Appendix B.

Main themes

- *Preference for some features but little support for any of the concepts in their entirety*
- *Keeping the open space and feel of the park, with mature trees and a green buffer between the park and neighborhood*
- *Strong support for retaining the tennis courts. Fewer than the current number would be OK.*
- *Preference for current playgrounds locations. Keep the Shoe playground location for access to open space, entrance to the Zoo, and easy school group use*
- *Keeping the Shoe*
- *Opposition to consolidation of playgrounds and other activity spaces.*
- *Support for a new playground near the beach*
- *A central location for the shelter, as in the current site or in Concepts B or C. Opposition to shelter*

location and increased parking near Edgewood/Vilas Avenues (Plan A)

- *Addition of walking paths*
- *Separating pedestrians and bikes from vehicular traffic on the Drive*
- *Continuing to provide for ice skating and hockey*

Topics on which preferences appear to be more divided

- *Through traffic on the drive*
- *Increased or reconfigured parking (more opposed, but significant minority supported)*
- *Keeping current shelter location vs. the other central locations in Concepts B and C*
- *Addition of small, open air shelters*
- *Pickleball*
- *Wetland restoration. Some want it natural; others see lagoon and lakefront as urban*

Friends of Lake Wingra (FoLW)

Below is an excerpt of the feedback from the Friends of Lake Wingra Board of Directors. The full statement is available in Appendix B.

Shelter Location: No comment.

Vilas Park Drive: FoLW preference: Concept B

Lagoon Management: FoLW preference: An alternative to [concept] A,B,C

- *Ice skating: According to feedback from our strategic planning process in 2018, about 1 in 4 people who visit Lake Wingra participate in ice skating during the winter. It is a favorite past time at Vilas Park Lagoon and groomed ice skating should remain an available option for park visitors in the winter.*
- *Wetlands: All three concepts show the use of wetlands and forebays. We have serious concerns about transitioning parts of the park or lagoon to wetlands without acknowledging tradeoffs or clarifying certain general design requirements. With that said, we do support the opportunity to find a more productive use for poorly graded and frequently wet areas of the park. Our concerns relate to the following:*
- *Without careful design and planning, constructed wetlands and wet ponds can become significant sources of phosphorus. Phosphorus is one of the three main areas of concern in the Wingra Watershed Management plan. FoLW would like the master plan to avoid potentially creating another source of*

phosphorus that could offset the reduction efforts the community and City of Madison are taking. See attached article summarizing a three-year study about wetland restoration at the UW-Madison Arboretum.

- *The creation and maintenance of artificial wetlands (and wet ponds) is difficult. Cattails, reed canary grass, and other invasive species will eventually overrun the wetland areas. Resources required to prevent invasive species overrunning the proposed wetlands would be significant. We acknowledge that any restoration of any kind will require resources to maintain it.*

We recommend:

- *Continue to enhance existing riparian buffers and transition existing wet areas of Vilas Park to native wet meadow and mesic prairie plantings. This would also help prohibit the movement of geese from land to water.*
- *Continue to prioritize features like elevated boardwalks to deter unstructured traffic flow through the wet meadows.*
- *Explain to the greater public the environmental tradeoffs of using wetlands at Vilas Park compared to other best management practices (BMPs).*
- *Look at additional BMPs to treat stormwater before it reaches the Lake. Explore the possibility of dredging areas of the lagoon, and use dredge material to modify grades in the park.*

Playground Layout: No comment.

Southern Parking Lot Layout: FoLW preference: An alternative to A,B,C

- *Friends of Lake Wingra supports removing Vilas Park Drive and understands that means parking will need to concentrate at gateways to the Park. We feel significant opportunities exist to provide a reasonable amount of parking without using waterfront property to do so.*
- *The amount of impervious surface so close to the beach and lake in Concept B concerns us. It will impact the character of the lake, the ambiance of the beach, and there are regulatory and stormwater management issues that don't seem to be addressed. We acknowledge that existing City/County agreements may dictate surface parking quotas in the short term. We would recommend enhancing the parking opportunities near South Orchard Street and also encourage the City of Madison to progressively assess future parking demands and brainstorm unique ways to satisfy parking during peak periods, such as shuttles, parking garages, or a potential partnership with St. Mary's on weekends.*

North Parking Lot Layout: Friends of Lake Wingra supports the modified north parking lot entrance and pedestrian gateway.

South Randall Ave. Neighbors

Eleven property owners on the 500 block of South Randall Ave. co-authored a statement in reply to the concept plans. An excerpt of the statement is included below, and the full statement can be found in Appendix B.

- *We strongly oppose the removal of the open green space along the 500 block of S. Randall Avenue. We value the open green space in front of our homes as a community asset. When we attended the initial meeting hosted by the City regarding the Vilas Park Master Plan in June 2019, we asked about this space. We were assured by Parks staff that this open space would not be removed; however, all three concepts eliminate nearly all open green space along our block in favor of a parking lot. This open green space is invaluable for several reasons, and its removal would have a significant impact on us and the community.*
  1. *The open green space and trees act as a buffer from the visual and noise pollution created by the existing parking lot. The elimination of the green space will reduce our property values and privacy and make this a much less pleasant place to live due to the added noise, air, and visual pollution.*
  2. *This open green space is the driest in the area and therefore is utilized more extensively than other areas. Coupled with the shade trees, it is one of the nicest areas in the park. For these reasons, we think it is the most logical area to maintain as green space. Adding picnic tables would further enhance the space.*
  3. *This open green space includes red maples that provide a wonderful splash of bright red each fall and is home to several 100-year-old oak trees in an area where many trees have been clear-cut due to Emerald Ash Borer. This space is one of the few areas of the park that provides a shady place for visitors to enjoy in the warmer months.*
- *We strongly oppose the expansion of the North End Parking lot. The proposed concepts (for side-by-side comparison https://tinyurl.com/ybeonwpv) expand the north end rectangular parking lots. The proposals indicate the net pavement for the entire park is similar or less than the current park, however they concentrate the pavement in front of our homes, replacing the green space which is more usable and more attractive than other areas of the park. We believe the green space should be preserved and the parking lot should be expanded to other, less usable areas of the park. For example,*

the chronically wet area at the proposed new entrance, northwest of the current main lot - instead of in the highly valuable, well-used green space toward Randall.

- *We strongly oppose a zoo entrance and exit on S. Randall Avenue. Our narrow street can barely fit two-way traffic with parking and there is even less street space in winter months with snow accumulation. Additionally, all three concepts remove the alternate exit at the south end of S. Randall Avenue. Directing increasing zoo traffic onto S. Randall will result in congestion for zoo visitors and make it more difficult for residents on the block to get to their homes as well as emergency vehicles. The added entrance would exacerbate the issues.*

- *We are in favor of moving the angled zoo entrance from S. Randall Avenue and Drake Street to Drake Street opposite Campbell Street. Drake Street can accommodate a left turn lane, has a better natural border for the lot and coupled with our proposed parking lot location would result in a safer flow for traffic and pedestrians.*

Clean Lakes Alliance

An excerpt of the statement from the Clean Lakes Alliance is included below, and the full statement can be found in Appendix B.

Concept B (favored)

Pros:

- *Consolidation of parking at W, NE and S locations*
- *First choice for main shelter location (consolidates facilities and separates more active uses from passive/quiet/open space uses)*
- *Reduced tennis courts*
- *Location of tennis courts, basketball court, playground, and small shelter on W side*
- *Conversion of through-way street to a multi-use path*
- *Managing the lagoons and associated wetlands more as natural areas (cuts down on expense of maintaining as a very shallow yet open water area; improves wetland habitat; ice skating can move to the main lake and to the designated on-shore rink areas)*
- *Configuration of walking paths and multiple wetland boardwalks*
- *Addition of shore fishing piers (could use 1-2 more; trees that need to be removed should be incorporated as engineered treefalls to improve nearshore fish habitat)*

- *Pedestrian-only, raised gateway at NE corner*
- *Rain gardens, bioswales and other green infrastructure around parking lots and shelters (like shown in west edge of NE parking lot)*

Cons:

- *Amount of space devoted to parking is excessive and should probably be scaled back, particularly at S location*
- *All impervious surfaces should be set as far back from the water's edge as possible (75' or more) -- this especially applies to parking*

Concept A (second choice)

Pros:

- *Consolidation of parking at W, NE and S locations*
- *Second choice for location of main shelter (Concept B location preferred)*
- *Playground locations on W and S sides*
- *Moving the road off the lake edge and adding meanders (Concept B multi-use path preferred)*
- *Incorporation of walking paths and marsh boardwalk, and their configuration*
- *Addition of shore fishing piers (could use 1-2 more; trees that need to be removed should be incorporated as engineered treefalls to improve nearshore fish habitat)*
- *Pedestrian-only, raised gateway at NE corner*
- *Looping, connected pathway with viewing overlooks on E side*
- *Offset of small beach house on S side to preserve lake views when exiting zoo*
- *Rain gardens, bioswales and other green infrastructure around parking lots and shelters (like shown in west edge of NE parking lot)*

Cons:

- *Separate and unnecessary 20-stall parking lot at S location*
- *Maintaining a through-way road despite the planned improvements*
- *Cutting an open-water connecting channel from the lagoon to the main lake (adds to expense and gives carp access to prime spawning location)*
- *All impervious surfaces should be set as far back from the water's edge as possible (75' or more) -- this especially applies to parking*

Concept C (least favored)

Pros:

- *Consolidation of parking, court activities, playground and small shelters on W end*
- *Most parking concentrated around the zoo and beach*
- *Good number of fishing piers, including one in the lagoon that can serve just as well as a nature viewing platform*
- *Main shelter location*
- *Narrowing Vilas Park Drive and adding a walking path next to shore*
- *Having a slightly larger beach house that is offset to maintain lake views from the zoo exit*
- *Flex picnic spaces, especially next to the beach where shade trees would be planted*

Cons:

- *Keeping Vilas Park Drive as a through street and in its current location*
- *Maintaining diffuse parking areas along the roadway*

In general, Clean Lakes Alliance strongly encourages park enhancements that serve to:

1. *protect water quality using green infrastructure whenever possible*
2. *enhance lakeshore habitat and sustainability (ex: minimize amount of impervious surfaces and mowed turf outside of recreational courts and fields)*
3. *allow for the reasonable separation of competing uses (active vs. passive)*
4. *play to the strengths of this particular park (ex: preservation of natural beauty, wetlands and lakeshores)*

The statements provided by the above groups show there is strong support for maintaining open space within the park. Parking, and its impact on nearby residents, water bodies and open space was a specific concern. The groups requested that the final master plan carefully assess needs for parking and its layout, as well as consider the long-term shifts in transportation trends, such as the potential for autonomous vehicles, more public transit and bike and pedestrian access options. Parking and Vilas park Drive is one of the largest uses in the park, totaling about 6 acres. Additionally, the Henry Vilas Zoo relies on parking provided by the park and that relationship is expected to continue indefinitely. As a community park, Vilas must meet the needs of the neighboring residents as well as those who live elsewhere within the City of Madison and surrounding region. Parking and vehicular access must be maintained, but the master plan will also consider opportunities for non-automotive options such as bicycle and pedestrian access and public transit.

FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

Accessibility Discussion

On May 22, 2020 Keith Wanta, a board member of Access for Independence, met with the project team to provide input on the concepts with a specific emphasis on accessibility and mobility. A summary of his comments are as follows:

- Shelter should have bus/transit access. Could a trial be coordinated with Madison Metro?
- Wayfinding improvements could be coordinated with zoo. Provide handouts, maps, etc. to guide users around both facilities.
- Restroom and Changing rooms should have a lift system in stalls to assist those individuals in wheelchairs to better access toilets.
- Tactile maps at main entry/drop-off points would assist those with visual disabilities and other cognitive impairments.

In addition to reviewing the content, Mr. Wanta also provided comments regarding improvements to the legibility of the concept plans themselves:

- Describe what a multi-use path is and how it functions.
- A video or taped narrative would be helpful to describe the existing park and the opportunities and constraints.
- A narrative describing the plans should have the plan labels included to help viewers orient themselves between the text and the plans.
- Add subscripts to similar symbols to help differentiate them.
- Have a before and after image, so that a user can go back and forth and see what elements are changing between the options to better understand the scope and location of changes.

Youth Survey

Due to COVID-19, opportunities for face-to-face engagement with youth were not available. To reach the largest audience, an online survey was developed to gain input on types of activities to consider for Vilas Park. This survey was distributed to the students of Lincoln Elementary and Franklin Elementary, kindergarten through 5th grades, and 80 responses were received. A short video introduction preceded the survey to engage the students in making their selections.

The first six questions asked students to rank their favorites from within the categories of field activities, court sports, playground features, water activities, trail exploration and winter activities.

The top results from each category:

- Field activity – capture the flag (36%)
- Court sport – four square (33%) and basketball (29%)
- Playground feature – swings (24%) and spinners (20%)
- Water activity – beach and swimming (64%)
- Trail exploration – biking on a trail (53%)
- Winter activities – sledding (34%) and skating/walking on a frozen lagoon (28%)

Next, students were asked to rank their favorite general type of activity using categories similar to the previous question: field play, winter fun, playgrounds, court sports, exploration/trails and Lake Wingra. Students favorites were well distributed across the activity types (Figure 6.19). Field activities were the most popular

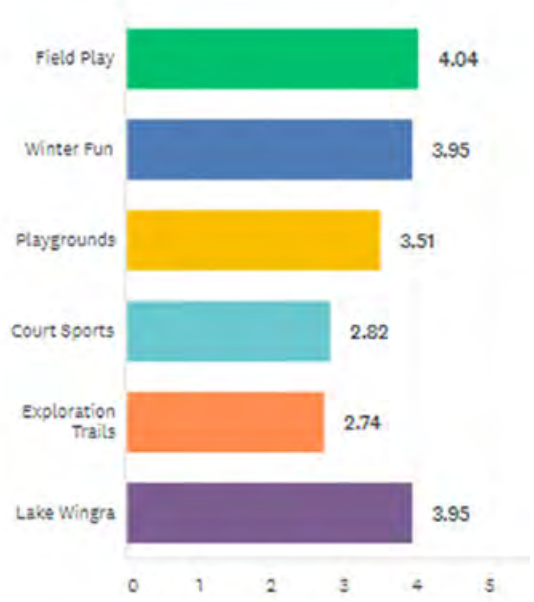


Figure 6.19. Youth Survey Favorite General Type of Activity Response

with an average ranking of 4.04 out of 5, while winter activities and activities at Lake Wingra were tied for second with an average ranking of 3.95. This result confirms the findings of the online public survey, which found that maintaining open space (fields), water activity areas (beach) and ice skating are important to youth who use the park.

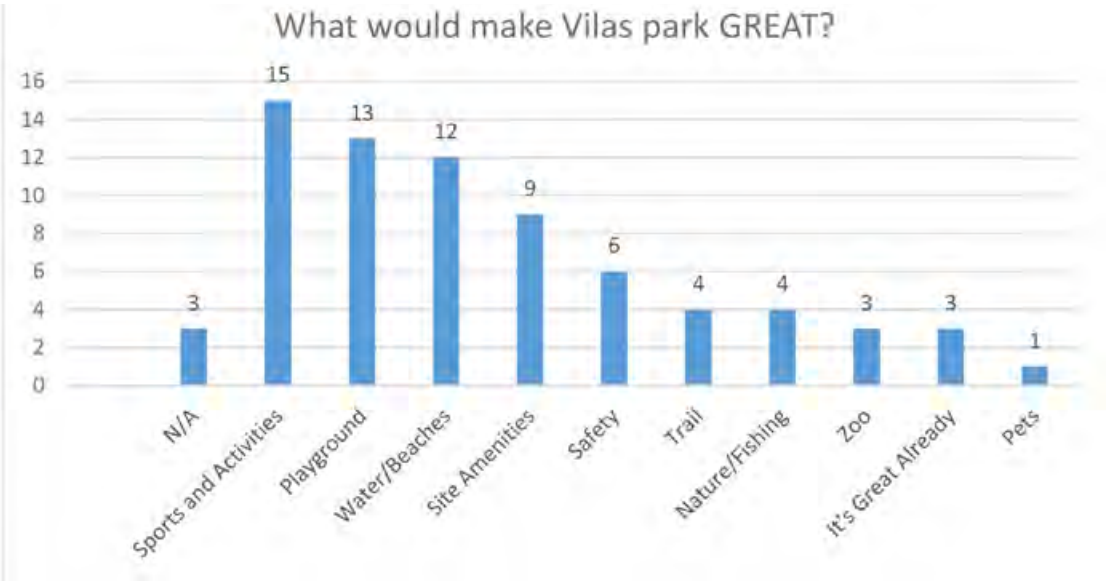


Figure 6.20. What would make Vilas Park GREAT Response

The survey also asked the students, "Tell us one thing that would make Vilas Park great." The responses were collected as open-ended comments. Comments were reviewed and analyzed to determine main themes and assigned a number for recording purposes. The total number of comments per main theme is reported on the graph below (Figure 6.20).

Examples of comments for each of the top three categories are shown below:

1. Sports and Activities (15 mentions)
    - "Add more baseketball hoops";
    - "A soccer field";
    - "If there were soccer nets in a soccer field!";
    - "An american ninja warrior course or a pool";
    - "organized capture the flag";

2. Playground (13 mentions)
    - "more playground";
    - "more swings";
    - "A big play grpund for more kids play then know";
    - "A BIGGER playground";
    - "rolercoasters free";

3. Water and Beaches (12 mentions)
    - "water park";

- "A pool";
- "Hoping stones on the lagoon.";
- "A WATER SLIDE!!!!!!.....";
- "Have multiple beaches";

These results also confirm the findings of the online public survey in that there is a desire for Vilas Park to maintain much of its current character, such as open fields for recreation, access to water and playground spaces. This must be taken into account when designing improvements for these spaces. Improvements to these spaces could be subtle, such as regrading the fields for drainage to improve playability, to more extensive modifications to the playgrounds and lagoon.

INTERAGENCY REGULATORY MEETINGS

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI DNR), US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and the Ho-Chunk Nation Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) were all engaged in the planning effort during Phase I to provide regulatory input related to Vilas Park. Meetings in Phase II focused on identifying potential roadblocks or concerns related to permitting for future phases of the master plan build-out, specifically related to modifications of the lagoon and Lake Wingra shoreline. The meetings also focused on identifying sensitive cultural and natural resource areas that could be impacted by park improvements. Below are the key takeaways from the meetings with the ACOE and WI DNR during Phase II.

Army Corps of Engineers

During a meeting on May 18, 2020, the ACOE provided the following information to the project team:

- Army Corps jurisdiction is limited to discharge into navigable waterways.
- How the work is completed is the primary driver, rather than the type of work.
- Wildlife Pond Enhancement/Section 27 permits may need to be considered.
- Boardwalk install does not constitute a discharge and thus does not need an ACOE permit.
- Installation of stormwater ponds is not permittable in existing wetland areas under ACOE permitting. Ponds in wetland areas must be for wildlife enhancement, not specifically for stormwater management.
- Master plan should provide general recommendations construction methodology.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

The project team met with the WI DNR on April 20, 2020. Below are comments and questions from the meeting by DNR staff that the project team will address in the final master plan or master plan report:

- Will existing shoreline riprap be removed prior to planting?
- How will current and future runoff from the zoo be addressed in order to control nutrients being released into the lagoons?
- Is there a concern over mosquitoes?
- The plan should consider porous pavements for trails (Flexamat presented as an option but was determined to not likely meet ADA requirements).
- Has a wetland delineation been completed to assess the impact of concepts on existing wetlands?
- Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) review will be required.

The project team asked the WI DNR additional questions, which were answered via email on August 4, 2020:

- Setbacks:

  Team question: "What development setbacks will be applicable in this situation? Specifically, the proposed shelter/restroom/warming house and a new Vilas Park Drive."

  WI DNR answer: "Setbacks from wetland and waterways will be handled at the city level with zoning, we do not have any requirements for setbacks."

- In-Lake Fill:

  Team question: "Some of the plans call for some in-lake fill (lagoon side) in front of the new shelters."

  WI DNR answer: "In-Lake Fill: It will be hard to do if you have alternatives to the fill (in which you already have presented). We normally do not permit fill into our lakebeds, especially for structures."

- Maintenance of shoreline wetlands:

  Team question: "Who would be the 'owner' and what type of maintenance agreement would be required?"

  WI DNR answer: "City of Madison would be required to maintain as needed. A maintenance plan can be approved through the permitting process. Ownership pending on the location of the wetlands may be the City or part of Lake Wingra's bed."

- Runoff and Treatment:

  Team question: "New impervious areas will need to comply with the redevelopment standards of the City of Madison, Chapter 37. What, if any, DNR standards would apply?"

  WI DNR answer: "Please consult NR 151 and work with the City of Madison on their requirements."

Ho-Chunk Tribal Historic Preservation Officer

Bill Quackenbush, The Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Ho-Chunk Nation,(THPO) was provided the preliminary concepts, concept descriptions and a compilation topographic survey of the mounds (prepared by City staff). The project team met with Mr. Quackenbush on May 14, 2020. Below is a summary of his suggestions:

- Development (such as the playground) has both a direct and indirect effect on the remaining mounds on site. These include impacts to viewscapes and soundscapes.
- Viewscapes and soundscapes need to be considered in plan development. Mr. Quackenbush stated, "These effects need to be taken into account when the City makes management and maintenance decisions. Do they only follow what is minimally legally required by the burial law, or do they create better management practices for the protection and preservation of these sacred sites?"
- Placement of built features and lighting that may block original views from the mounds to other natural or cultural features needs to be considered.
- Consideration needs to be given to noise levels (traffic, kids playing, etc.) adjacent to the burial mounds. Burial mounds are grave markers, per state law, and need to be respected as such.
- The mounds that are visible today are not necessarily the original extent of the mounds.
- Applicable regulations include State Statute 157.70 and Administrative Code 44.40.
- Soil disturbance on or adjacent to mounds should be monitored during future development by a qualified archeologist. Inadvertent discovery during excavation requires work stoppage and investigation by an archeologist, if not already present.
- If development occurs as shown in Concept C, inadvertent discovery is likely due to the original extent of the mound group.
- If no playground existed, the Ho-Chunk would recommend against placement of a playground near the mounds. The hierarchy of the site as a historic and cultural site outweighs the need for recreation in this type of space. Mr. Quackenbush stated, "Although the playground is conducive for a park-like location, the site is in fact a burial location and for a lack of a better term, a mortuary site."

City of Madison Interagency Staff

At the completion of the community engagement for the concept plans, a July 2020 meeting with staff representatives from the City of Madison Traffic Engineering, Parks (Planning, Operations, and Ranger staff), Engineering and Planning Divisions, as well as representatives from the UW Arboretum, Henry Vilas Zoo and Madison Metro Transit to review public comments and provide feedback on the feasibility of topics discussed

and questions raised during the public meetings. The interagency staff provided insights on functionality and maintenance requirements of potential changes to the park and how best to balance wants and needs in the master plan. Key takeaways from this meeting are summarized below by topic.

Metro Transit

- Bus drop-off must accommodate passing busses. Buses prefer to not cross pedestrian travel areas.
- The shortest route into the park possible is preferred.
- The project team should look at revising the east lot to provide for a turnaround for buses.
- Consider routing from Erin St. to Orchard St. to Vilas Park Dr./Wingra Creek Dr.
- Drake St. and Grant St. are also a possible bus route.

Henry Vilas Zoo

- The zoo desires an emergency access to the east onto Randall Ave. as shown in the draft plan.
- The zoo had 800,000 + visitors in 2019, making parking a necessity to manage congestion in neighborhoods.
- A new main entry alignment to the north is consistent with master plan. The timeline for improvement is within the next 5 years.
- Semi-deliveries to the southwest parking lot at the corner of Orchard St. and Vilas Park Dr. need to be considered.
- The results of a recently completed master planning process for the zoo indicate that the zoo will likely maintain two public entrances for public safety and access control.
- The south entrance has only been closed during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Stormwater Engineering

- Treatment and/or bio-retention of runoff from impervious surfaces will be required. Recreational facilities (basketball courts, park shelters, etc.) count towards the added impervious surface, though they have low total suspended solids (TSS) loading.
- Parks noted that the plan will not show specific stormwater treatment options other than approximate areas dedicated to surface treatment.
- If dredging the lagoons is part of this project, then the lagoons should be used as a treatment area.
- If dredging is not part of this project, then the plans should identify spaces to control sediment erosion and encourage protection of the lagoons as a separate system.

Traffic Engineering

- The width of Drake St. should allow for a turn lane and a possible central median.
- The five-point intersection at Drake St./Randall Ave./zoo entrance does not allow for efficient traffic movement.
- Drake St. is not at design capacity, which could allow for restriping to add bike lanes.
- The impact of traffic on Grant St. is of more concern than Drake St. City of Madison Traffic Engineering can analyze earlier tube counts vs. known neighborhood streets data and estimate impacts if Vilas Park Dr. were to be closed.

General Comments

- There was consensus on the importance of a connecting system of paths within the park and from the park to Vilas Zoo.
- Creation of a pedestrian connection around the north shore of Lake Wingra was discussed. The master plan document will discuss possible easements to create the connection.
- Opportunities and challenges were discussed in regards to making connections through the Kubly & Friday Trust parcels on the west side of Lake Wingra.

COMMUNITY INPUT MEETING

On June 22, 2020 a virtual meeting was held via Zoom Webinar to publicly present the park concepts and provide time for discussion and questions in break-out rooms. While an exact count of attendees is not available, although registration to the meeting was requested by 204 unique users, some of whom had more than one participant on screen. The meeting began with a short presentation, which provided a description of the concepts broken down by the key design elements:

- Traffic on Vilas Park Drive
- Location of the main park shelter
- Parking layout
- Open space and recreation opportunities
- Playground location
- Lagoon (and ice skating) management

Following the presentation, two breakout sessions were held. In the first, participants were able to choose one of four rooms for a discussion on the following topics:

- Room A – Traffic, Access and Parking
- Room B – Lagoons, Natural Areas and Main Park Shelter

- Room C – Playgrounds, Recreation Areas and Open Space
- Main Room – General Q&A

The second break out session was an open discussion.

Two of the four polls administered during the meeting provided some insight into the demographics and level of previous engagement by participants. Participants were asked the following questions:

1. Have you already reviewed concepts online? (52 responses)
   a. Yes (75%)
   b. No (25%)
2. How far do you live from the Park? (145 responses)
   a. Less than 3 blocks (50%)
   b. 3-8 blocks (26%)
   c. More than 8 blocks, but I can still walk or ride a bike to the park (14%)
   d. I don't live near the park and I need a car or transit to get there (10%)

These responses show a majority (76%) of the participants were from the surrounding neighborhoods and about the same percentage (75%) had been informed about the process and taken the online concept survey prior to attending the meeting.

Below are general notes from each breakout room.

Room A – Traffic, Access, and Parking

- Several residents living on Randall Ave. do not like any alternative that has the parking lot access out to Randall Ave. Residents feel the road is already too narrow and would prefer not to lose any trees that line the west side of the road.
- Some felt that parking does not need to be expanded in the northeast corner of the park as it services mainly the zoo and is too far from other park amenities.
- Residents preferred alternatives with Vilas Park Dr. closed to through traffic.
- Trees are one of the park's best features and maintaining them should be a priority.
- Due to noise concerns, the park shelter should be located as far away from residential properties as possible.

- Residents who live on Drake St. have concerns about increases in traffic due to moving the entrance towards Campbell St. This included concerns about increased traffic on the Campbell St. circle.
- There was some concern that this plan was too similar to the one completed in the 1960s, which was rejected.
- There was concern about bike and pedestrian safety if the parking lots were built too close to walkways.
- A number of attendees felt that any multiuse path built near the southeast entrance should have a better connection to Arboretum Dr.
- Kate Kane with the City explained the process of working with local accessibility groups to help ensure the park can be used by people of all abilities.

Room B – Lagoons, Natural Areas and Main Park Shelter

- Shelter could face out onto the Lake rather than the Lagoons, especially if the lagoons are not maintained as open water.
- Desire to have skating on the lagoons (and skating in general).
- Temporary closure of Vilas Park Drive (to vehicle traffic) due to COVID-19 has been received favorably. It has had a perceived improved on the function of the peninsula open space.

Room C – Playgrounds, Recreation Areas and Open Space

- Tennis courts are well used and should be maintained in the final plan. Several courts are required for recreation programming. There are issues with maintenance and quality of the surface.
- If pickleball and tennis are both included it should be on separate courts. It was stated by an attendee there are only 6 pickleball courts in the city.
- Ice skating and hockey is important to the park. Preference would be to maintain skating on the lagoons if possible. A skating loop around the island would be great.
- Neighborhood residents desire a playground in the mounds area/'Wingra' overlook, this serves as a neighborhood playground, specifically for the Greenbush neighborhood.
- A playground near the existing shoe playground should be maintained in the final plan. Users include local residents as well as Zoo visitors.
- "Two medium playgrounds in the main part are a real asset - access from different directions and spread out the intensity of use."
- There was question about why the park shelter was determined to be at the end of its serviceable life.
- Adding bike racks and a b-cycle rack would be a good way to encourage more bike traffic.

- Final concept should help enforce sense of place and character of the park.

Main Room – General Q&A

- Several neighbors noted tennis courts are well used. Only place in the world where you can play tennis and listen to the lions roar at the same time.
- Plans should include a kayak and canoe launch on Lake Wingra and lagoon.
- Some concern the concepts doesn't address park use by families and children/youth.
- " Neighbors and friends have told me we have to retain the road for access for the disabled. I have noticed, however, a great increase in park use by those with mobility challenges since the road has been closed. In the 12 years I've lived nearby I have never seen wheelchairs and walkers in the park."

Key takeaways from the meeting:

- Parking needs to be developed that ensures the lowest impact to existing open space and vegetation. Maintaining the same number of stalls as currently exists is preferred.
- A playground needs to remain near the existing shoe playground. More than one playground within the park is desired.
- Closure of Vilas Park Drive and replacing the road with a multi-use path is preferred.
- The new shelter should remain in a location near the current shelter (south of the island).
- Keeping the lagoons open to allow for ice skating is desired.
- Path and trail systems should include improvements for drainage and accessibility.

Following the meeting, the Greenbush, Vilas, and Dudgeon-Monore Neighborhood Associations issued the following joint statement:

> *The Greenbush, Vilas and Dudgeon Monroe Neighborhoods value Vilas Park as a community asset for all Madison residents. We want the Vilas Park Master Plan to ensure a strong future for Vilas Park. Toward that end, we are making two requests: (1) transparency in how you will decide which elements to include in the final design; and (2) a focus on pedestrian and bicyclist safety both in the final master plan and in near-term funding decisions for Vilas Park.*
>
> *Transparency*
> *It is clear that difficult decisions need to be made for Vilas Park. The future of the lagoon and the balance between providing parking and preserving park green space are just two examples of such decisions. We believe that the Vilas Park Master Plan process will be strengthened by providing a clear explanation*

of the criteria that will be used to select components for the final design (e.g., traffic patterns, the siting of key park features such as shelters, parking lots, and playgrounds, and the status of the lagoon). We request that this information be provided before the draft of the final plan is released for public review and comment. Further, an explanation of how these criteria were implemented as the design was finalized should be released as a companion document to the draft master plan. This type of transparency will help Vilas Park users understand what is included in the master plan and why—a vital part of building public support for the final design.

Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety
Public feedback to the Vilas Park Master Plan process has consistently highlighted concern about pedestrian and bicyclist safety in Vilas Park. Zoo patrons, neighborhood residents, and park users from Madison and the surrounding area are all affected by pedestrian and bicyclist safety issues. We are encouraged that the separation of pedestrians from motor traffic is included in all three of the design concepts; and we urge that the final master plan not only include rigorous pedestrian and bicyclist safety features but also prioritize near-term funding for such features.

We appreciate the challenges associated with developing a Vilas Park Master Plan, and we raise these issues with the hope of contributing to a productive and successful process and enhanced safety for pedestrians and bicyclists in the park.

ONLINE PUBLIC SURVEY

From May 2020 until July 2020, a public survey was available through a link posted on the City of Madison Parks Division Vilas Park Master Plan Project website. The distribution of the survey link occurred through postings on city social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter), as a City of Madison website news item[102] and during the community and focus group meetings. A Spanish language version of the survey was also made available. A total of 908 responses were received to the survey, 906 to the English version and two to the Spanish.

The survey presented the overall concepts for context but focused on acquiring feedback about specific elements within the concepts, such as placement of the shelter and treatment of the lagoons. The survey results are summarized below. The full results can be found in Appendix B.

102 https://www.cityofmadison.com/news/vilas-park-master-plan-concepts-ready-for-review

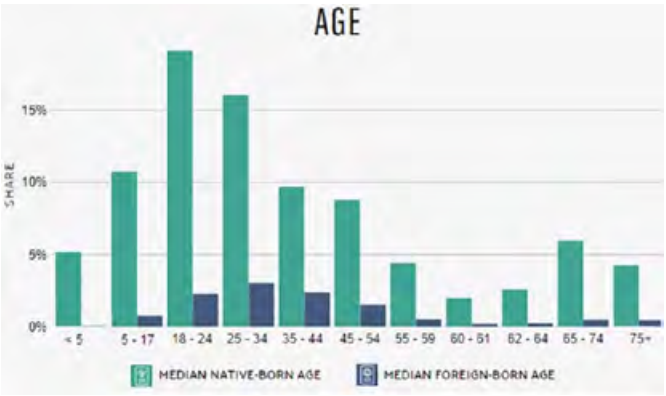


Figure 6.21. Data USA City of Madison Demographics

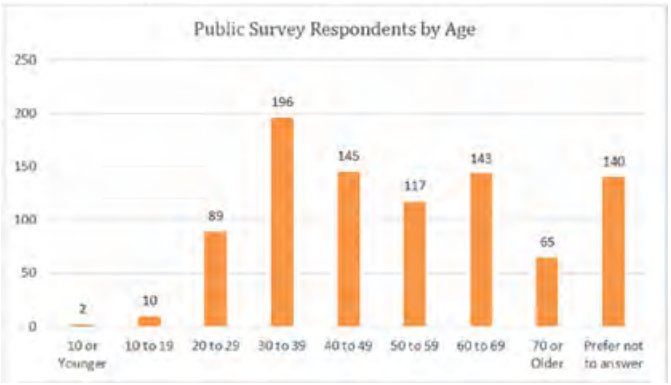


Figure 6.22. Public Survey Respondents by Age

Demographic information provided by respondents suggests that the typical survey taker was between 30-39 years old (24.3%), which is not a direct reflection of the City of Madison demographics. According to Data USA, the highest percentage of residents are between 18-24 years of age (see Figure 6.21)[103]. Although the relative percentages of age groups from the survey did not correlate exactly to Madison's numbers, the survey was able to obtain input from a broad range of ages, from persons 10 or younger up to 70 or older (Figure 6.22).

The US Census Bureau lists Madison as 78.4% Caucasian, 9% Asian, 6.9% Hispanic or Latino, 6.8% Black or African American and 3.6% reported two or more races[104]. By contrast, 82% of survey respondents were Caucasian, 1.3% were Asian, 2.0% were Hispanic or Latino, 0.1% were African American or Black and 2.1% were from two or more races.

The US Census Bureau lists Madison as 78.4% Caucasian, 9% Asian, 6.9% Hispanic or Latino, 6.8% Black or African American and 3.6% reported two or more races. By contrast, 82% of survey respondents were Caucasian, 1.3% were Asian, 2.0% were Hispanic or Latino, 0.1% were African American or Black and 2.1% were from two or more races.

The majority, 60.6% of the 802 respondents who provided a zip code with their response, were from the zip codes bordering Vilas Park (53711, 53713, and 53715), which include the Greenbush and Vilas neighborhoods as well as the Arboretum; 81.3%, or 652 respondents, were from zip codes within a 1.25 mile radius of the park (53703, 53705, 53706, 53711, 53715, 53726).

Question 1 - Shelter Location (805 responses)

The most favored location for the shelter was south of the island (41%), with the west shore of the lagoon

103 https://datausa.io/profile/geo/madison-wi/#demographics 2017
104 https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/madisoncitywisconsin/RHI125218 2018

second and the east shore of the lagoon third. Only zip code 53715, primarily the Greenbush Neighborhood, preferred the west shore over the other alternatives. The results are shown in Figure 6.23.

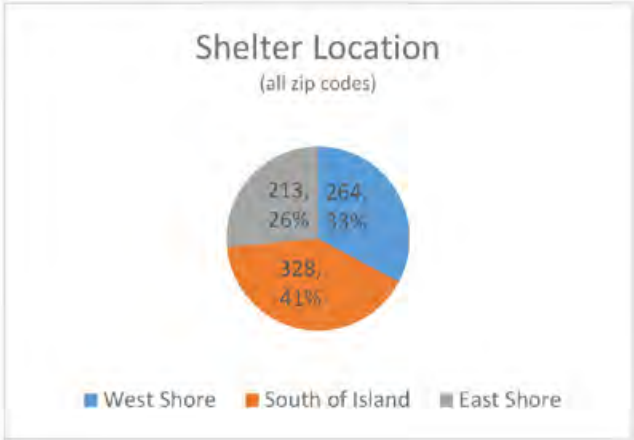


Figure 6.23. Question 1 Response

Question 2 – Vilas Park Drive (836 responses)

The concepts presented three options for Vilas Park Drive:

A. A meandering park drive.
B. Closed to vehicle traffic and replaced with a multi-use path.
C. Similar to existing.

A majority of respondents (62%) favored closing Vilas Park Drive to through vehicle traffic. Zip codes farther from the park found closing the road to vehicles slightly less favorable (50% to 55%), but it still received more votes than either of the other two alternatives. The results are shown in Figure 6.24.

Figure 6.24. Question 2 Response

Question 3 – Lagoons (858 responses)

The concepts provided three options for the future treatment of the lagoons, with the most favored (50%) being about 50% open water and 50% bog or wetlands. In this concept, the opportunity to have open ice for skating would be maintained. A full transition to a bog or wetland condition was rated second (33%) and

keeping the lagoons as fully open water was third (17%). The rankings were about the same regardless of the respondent's zip code. The results are shown in Figure 6.25.

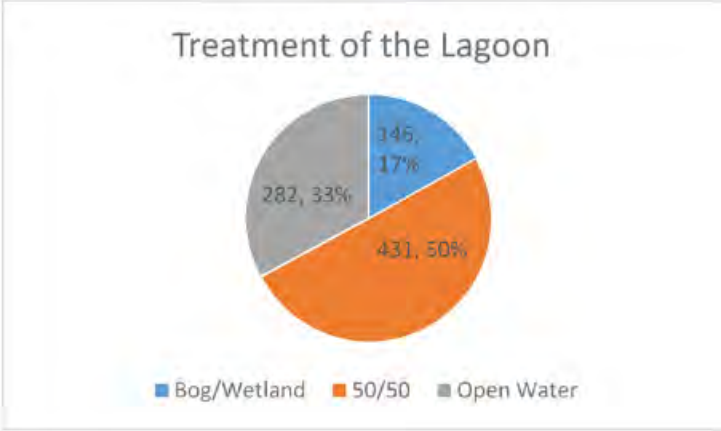


Figure 6.25. Question 3 Response

Question 4 – Playground (813 responses)

Within the concepts, five playground location options were provided for future playgrounds and survey respondents were asked to rank their favorites. The five options (Figure 6.26) were:

A. West
B. Mid-Park
C. South
D. East
E. Existing Location

Location D, near the existing dinosaur playground and burial mound, was the most favorable, with an average ranking of 3.4 out of 5. Tied for second was location C, near the beach house (ranking of 3.08), and location E, near the existing location (ranking of 3.04). The existing location had the second most "favorite" rankings (235), but also had the most "least favorite" rankings (241) of the five concepts.

- The results of this question are of particular importance because the most popular concept is in conflict with the recommendations provided by Bill Quackenbush (Ho-Chunk Tribal Historic Preservation Officer) during discussions with the project team The mound site is a sacred space to the Ho-Chunk and a playground is detrimental to the spiritual nature of the area. As such, Parks has made the determination, working in close consultation with the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for The Ho-Chunk Nation, that the focus of the mound sites will be to preserve and honor the sacred land in accordance with established standards – and that in its role as current and future stewards of the mounds within the City of Madison Parks system, it will not be placing children's play environments in proximity to mound sites.

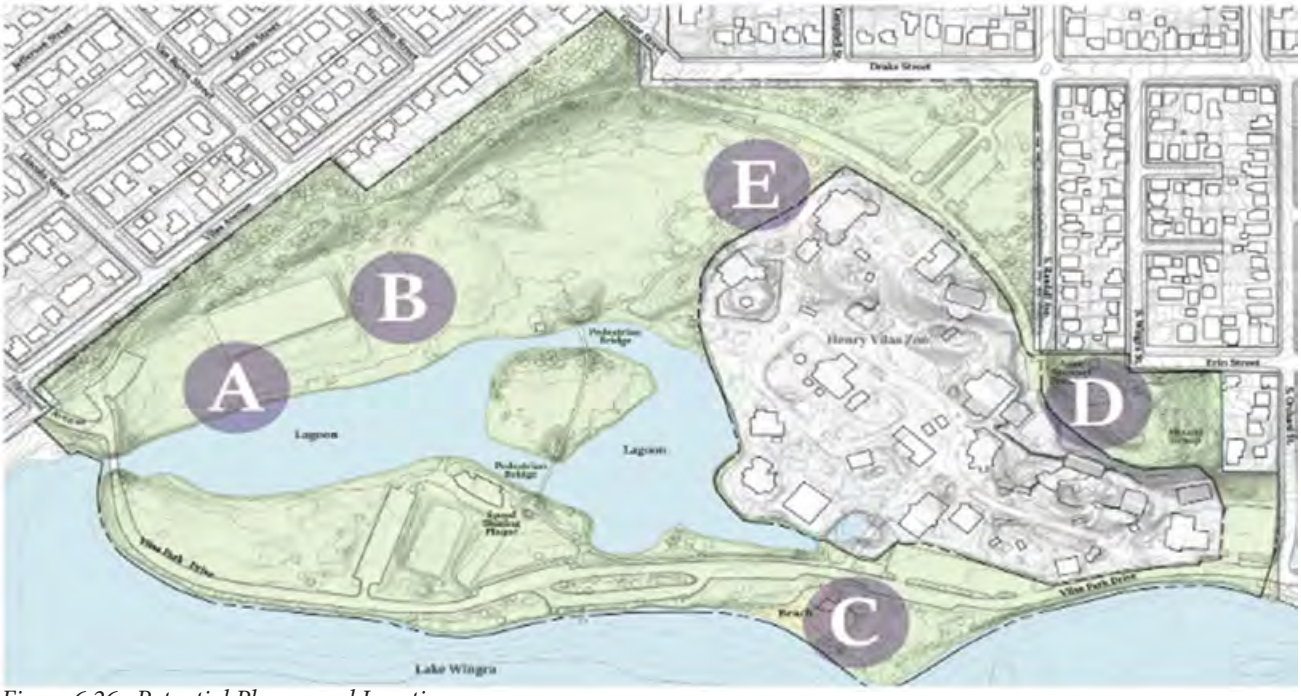


Figure 6.26. Potential Playground Locations

Master plan consideration could be given to including introspective spaces, such as benches and overlooks, as proposed by the Greenbush Neighborhood as well as accessibility enhancements to the site by pathway additions.

Question 5 – Southern Parking Layout (787 responses)

Respondents were shown three concepts for parking in the southeast portion of the park centered near the existing lot south of the zoo, as shown in Figure 6.27.

Concept B was favored by 41% of respondents. While not specifically identified within the survey text, it should be noted this concept also consisted of the closure of Vilas Park Drive to vehicle traffic. Concept A was the next most favored at 32% and Concept C received 27%. The results were similar for both the surrounding zip codes and those farther from the park. The results are shown in Figure 6.28.

Question 6 – North Parking Lot and Park Entrance (809 responses)

All concept plans provided similar options for overall parking layout in this location. Thus, the question was focused on the modified park entrance. Respondents were provided the following description and image (Figure 6.29) and then asked to rate the concept.

"The entrance to the north parking lot (north zoo lot) is eliminated from the Drake Street and Randall Avenue intersection. The existing angled entry is potentially hazardous to cross traffic as well as pedestrians in the

A

B

C

Figure 6.27. Southern Parking Lot Options

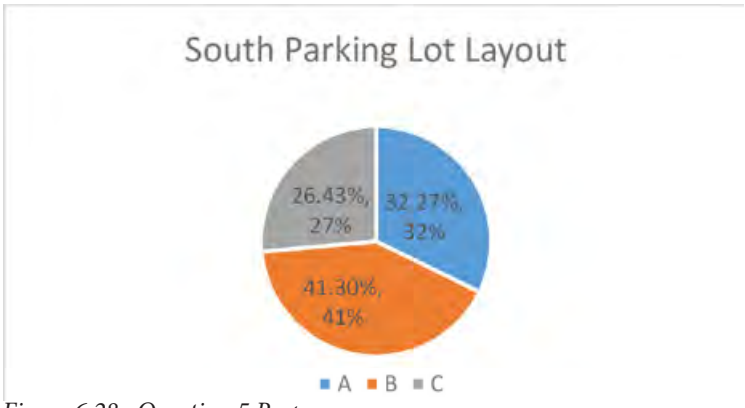


Figure 6.28. Question 5 Response

crosswalks. Moving the entrance to the opposite side of Drake Street from Campbell Street creates a standard four-way intersection. The pavement width of Drake Street provides enough space to add a left turn lane into Vilas Park. The landscaped islands at the entrance require the removal of 13 parallel parking stalls on Drake Street, which can be recouped in the park parking lot design. This intersection would not be a four-way stop. Stop signs will be located on Campbell St and at the park entrance road. The relocated entrance road allows for two-way traffic into and out of the park, eliminating the current one-way system."

The scale ranged from "dislike" (0) to "neither dislike nor like" (50) to "like" (100). The overall average score from all respondents was 68 out of 100. When viewed by zip code, those within walking or biking distance (53703, 53705, 53706, 53726), but not directly adjacent, gave a slightly higher rating (avg. 72).

Figure 6.29. North Parking Lot and Park Entrance Layout

Question 7 – Recreational Amenities (849 responses)

The various recreation amenities offered in the concepts were listed and respondents were asked to rank their preference for each amenity from "oppose" to "support." Multi-use paths for biking and walking and paths for running were overwhelmingly supported: 94% and 88%, respectively, selected "support" or were between "support" and "no preference." Open fields (86%), group picnic areas (85%), non-motorized boat access (83%), and skating on the lagoons (81%) were also strongly supported. Respondents preferred six tennis courts (67%) to three tennis courts (40%) or pickleball courts (38%).

The percent of responses in favor is listed below (either chose "support" or were between "support" and "no preference"):

94% - Multi-Use Path (Bike and Pedestrian)
88% - Walking and Running Paths
86% - Open Fields for Games
85% - Group Picnic Areas
83% - Non-Motorized Boat Access
81% - Ice Skating (on lagoon)
67% - Tennis Court (6)
60% - Ice Skating (on shore)
59% - Basketball Court
59% - Hockey Rink (on shore)
44% - Edible Landscape
40% - Tennis Court (3)
38% - Pickleball Courts
7% - Motorized Boat Access

While a motorized boat launch was not included in the design, the survey retained the option to provide verification that it was not a desired amenity. Only 7% of respondents were in favor of a motorized launch.

The full ratings for each amenity are shown in Figure 6.30.

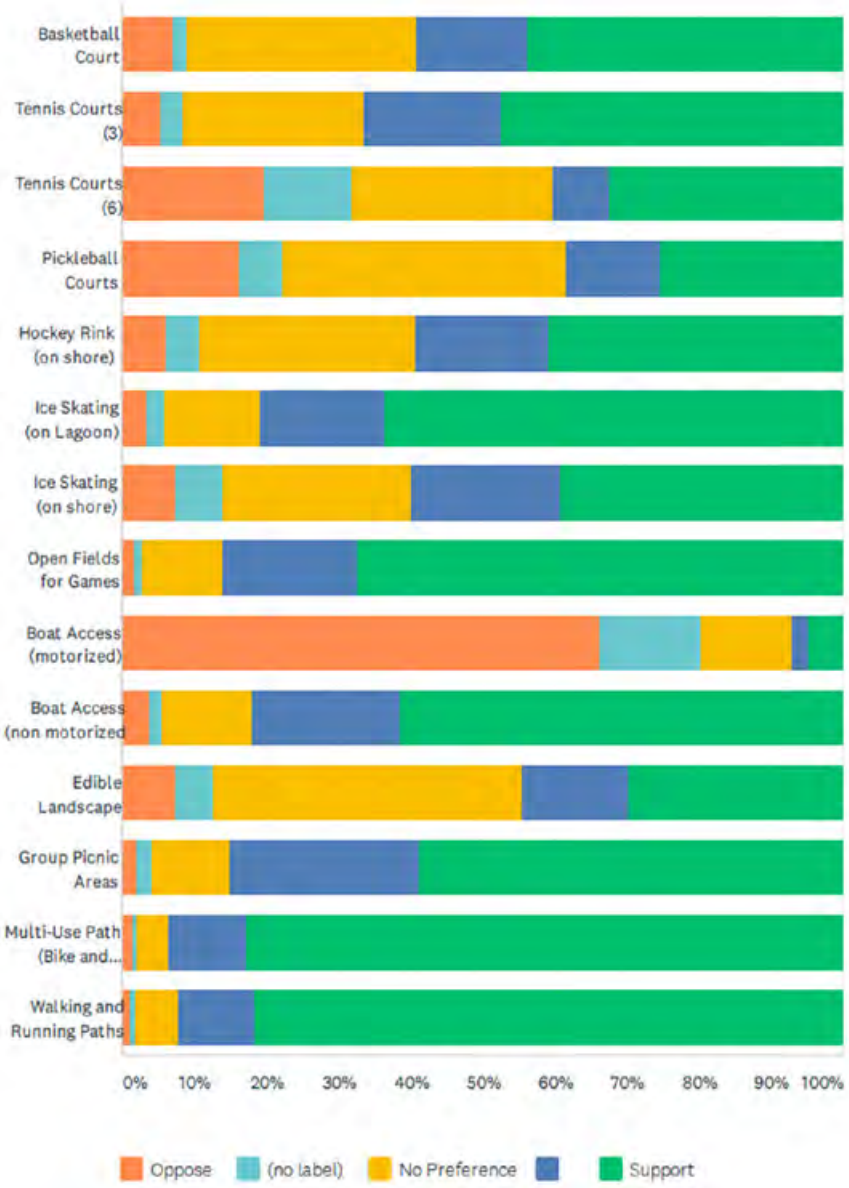


Figure 6.30. Question 7 Response

Question 8 – Favorite Features (608 responses)

Question 8 was open-ended, allowing for comments on the respondents' favorite features from the concept plans or features they felt were missing from the concept plans. Comments were reviewed and analyzed to determine main themes and were assigned a number for recording purposes. Where comments included more than one feature, up to two categories were noted. The total number of comments per main theme is reported on the graph below (Figure 6.31).

Examples of comments for each of the top five categories are shown below:

1. Remove cars from Vilas Park Drive (226 mentions)

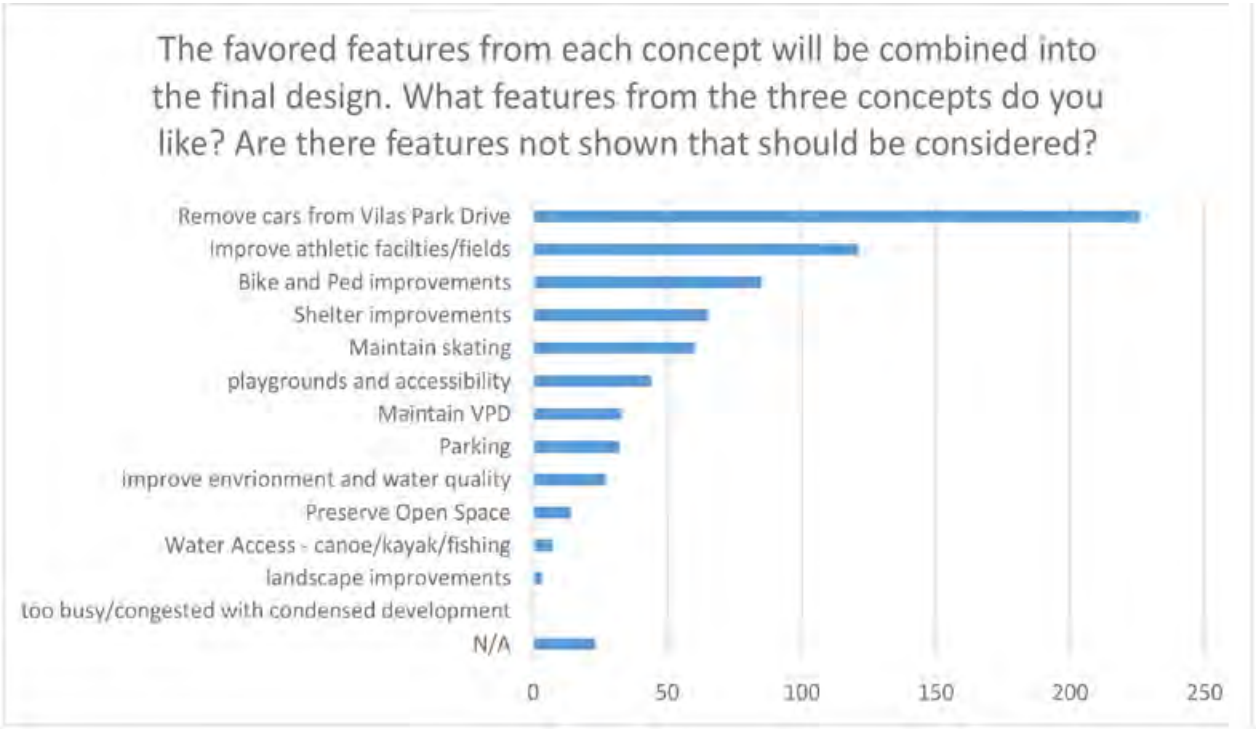


Figure 6.31. Question 8 Response

- "Getting rid of the roadway, and converting to a multi-use path, is genius. It changes the character of the park for the better, permitting more freedom for families wander around, and dramatically improving vistas and a sense of safety. Thank you for the proposal."

- "converting road to pedestrian/bike path. Also, minimizing incursion of motor vehicles into the central area for parking also seems very important. I could imagine tons of cars perpetually circling looking for open spots on popular days. Keeping parking at the periphery seems like a good solution."

- "I had not heard about the idea of eliminating the traffic from Vilas Park Drive. As the city grows, "quiet" spots - the feeling of being removed from all the hussle and bustle will take on greater importance. Keeping automobiles at the perimeter of the park - instead of driving through the middle, is brilliant. I also like the idea of having parking convenient to park shelters, playgrounds, etc. In my opinion, option B is far superior."

2. Improve athletic facilities/fields (121 mentions)

- "Keep the existing six tennis courts. Maintain the surface so more people will use them. (People are afraid of tripping now.) Add lights!"

- "Please keep the activities: tennis, basketball, skating, walking, biking. These are vital to the life of

people who live in a city and pay the high taxes to enjoy these activities rather than joining clubs that further segregate communities."

- "three tennis courts Location of shelter in concept B Lagoon wetlands in Concept A because it seems safer to skate on the shallow lagoon"

3. Bike and pedestrian improvements (85 mentions)

- "I made choices based on access by residents, not just the relatively high income housing units between the park and Monroe Street. As a biker riding through every few days, I'd love to see the road closed to traffic, but that eliminates lots who depend (or think they must) on cars for getting out. I hope plans consider heavily access to the park by users from the larger community."

- "More walking"

- "MORE multi use path for walking & biking are imperative. Lots of people walk & bike on current roadway along w cars & it's downright dangerous. I applaud the whole master plan idea."

4. Shelter improvements (65 mentions)

- "Make sure there are adequate restroom facilities in several locations in the park."

- "Main shelter in existing location, so it can also be warming house for ice skaters, parking near the main shelter that also serves beach and zoo. Encourage addition of small educational butterfly garden with labeled plants— and some milkweed."

- "Having a large playground near a shelter building worth bathrooms. I really liked the location of the shelter in A."

5. Maintain skating (60 mentions)

- "ice skating on lagoon- there are MANY luxury apartments going up on Park, Fish hatch street, with higher density of young singles/couples, who will want to ice skate. And its popular with families. Highly used. I appreciate widening the roads to allow safer passage."

- "Ice skating on the lagoon is a favorite of mine, and preserving pedestrian and bike paths through the park is a high priority."

- "maintaining the lagoon for ice-skating is the most important feature"

Question 9 –Missing features (336 responses)

Question 9 allowed for open-ended comments on features the respondents felt were missing from the concept plans. Comments were reviewed and analyzed to determine main themes and assigned a number for recording purposes. Where comments included more than one feature, up to two categories were noted. The total number of comments per main theme is reported on the graph below (Figure 6.32).

Examples of comments for each of the top five categories are shown below:

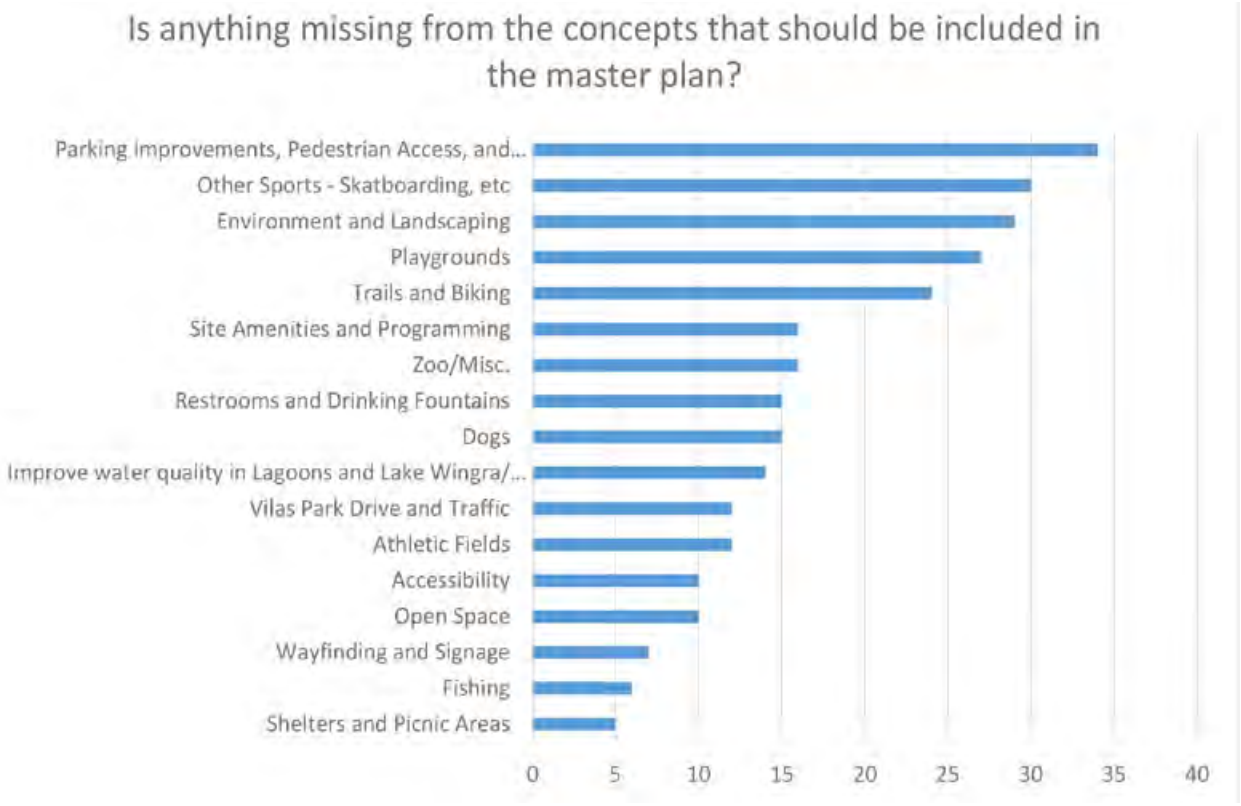


Figure 6.32. Question 9 Response

1. Parking improvements, pedestrian access and transportation (34 mentions)
   - "I strongly feel that there should be no more parking added to the west side of the park area. We live across the street and have rarely seen the current lot full. There is plenty of street parking along Vilas Ave and 3 "cut-throughs" from the street to the walking path close to Lincoln St and a couple places where more could be added. Those should be redone to make them more accessible for strollers, families, etc. to get through…."
   - "Remote parking and shuttle drop-off for the zoo."

2. Other sports – skateboarding, etc. (30 mentions)

- "Skatepark or small skate spot. Portland and Seattle are good models for incorporating small 'spots' into parks. We need more than one skatepark."

- "Outdoor equipments is an idea that should be put forth. Nowadays its hard for people to do vigorous exercises at any game fields."

3. Environment and landscaping (29 mentions)

- "Fully shaded walkways, driveways, and parking lots. Shaded sports viewing areas peripheral to and adjacent to sports fields for onlookers to enjoy the sport in shade. No over-lighting at night (especially of unused parking lots)... use of motion activated lights rather than lights on all the time along paths and parking areas at night. Use of native and flowering shrubberies and vines (these are rarely included in park design and should be) they create emotional nooks and crannies that enhance the park experience and inspire people beyond just fields of grass."
- "Management of plantings and animals and their droppings within the park, to improve land and water quality. Currently, there are areas which you cannot walk through without stepping in goose droppings, and these extra nutrients wash into the lake, compromising water quality. This could be much better."

4. Playgrounds (27 mentions)

- "The park can, and should, support more than 1 or 2 playgrounds. I can't support consolidating 3 existing playgrounds to fewer. Keep the main one near the zoo entrance, as many families and groups combine play there with a zoo visit. Also keep smaller ones scattered like the current locations, as they're a great neighborhood amenity and families can walk to them. Also, playgrounds should have rest rooms nearby!"

- "Again, multi-age playgrounds and also having the playground in close proximity to both parking and bathrooms."

5. Trails and biking (24 mentions)

- "Again: Bicycle air/repair stations, bicycle parking. Access to bathrooms (not part of a huge shelter that might be taken up by a big party) for bike/ped traffic."

- "A b-cycle dock and a kayak storage rack"

Question 10 – General Comments (319 responses)

Question 10 allowed for open-ended, general comments on the concept plans. Comments were reviewed and analyzed to determine main themes and assigned a number for recording purposes. Where comments included more than one feature, up to two categories were noted. The total number of comments per main theme is reported on the graph below (Figure 6.33).

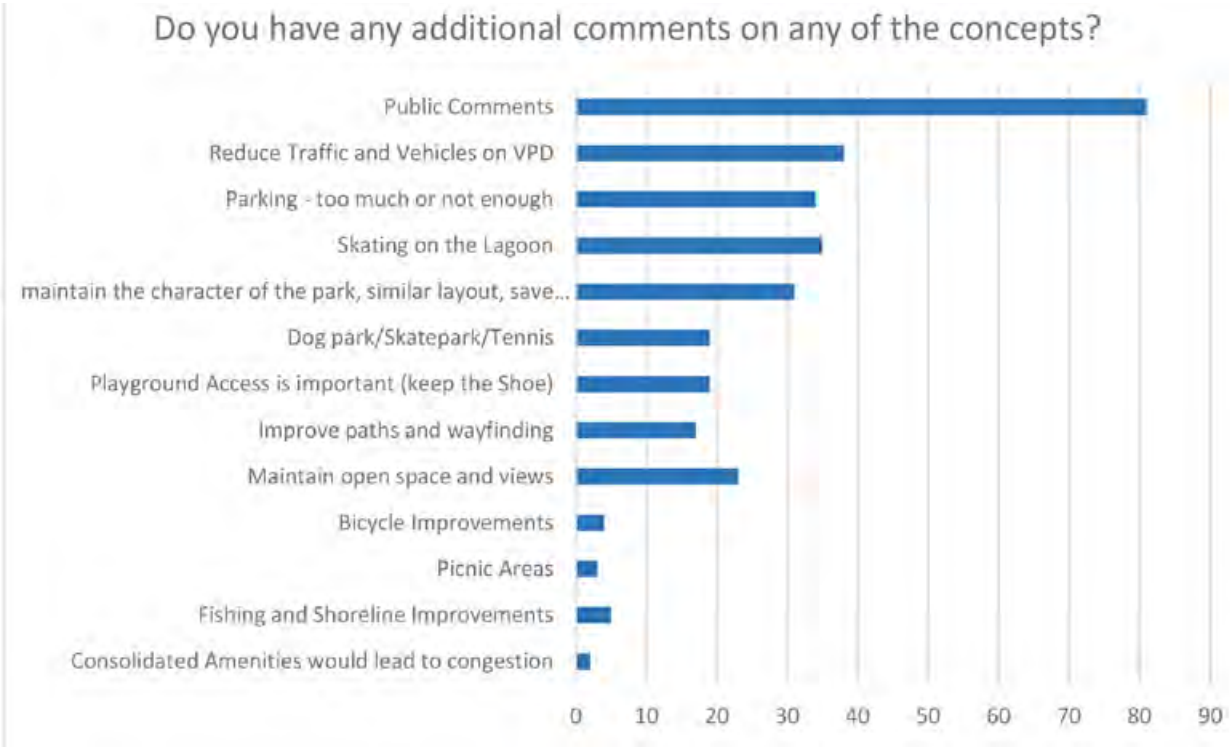


Figure 6.33 Question 10 Response

Examples of comments for each of the top five categories are shown below:

1. Public comment (81 mentions)
   - "I really appreciate all the work the City of Madison does! It feels like things are changing so rapidly here, and more often than not, for the better."
   - "It may be helpful to develop a sequence of changes within the master plan, i,e, Drake/Campbell entrance first, shelter relocation second, lagoon changes third zoo/beach house parking next"

2. Reduce traffic and vehicles on Vilas Park Drive (38 mentions)
   - "As many in our Vilas neighborhood have said, we have significant concerns about relocating the entrance to the park. A two way stop at Drake/Campbell seems like a disaster. If this goes ahead, it must become a four way stop, similar to the current Drake/Randall entrance…."

- "Surprised that only one includes elimination of car use. With the 'pilot' currently underway of closing it off, hope that this gains momentum."

3. Parking – too much or not enough (34 mentions)
   - "The more you accommodate for cars, the more complaints you'll get about parking and traffic. We drive here and have never found parking to be an issue within a few blocks. The desire for convenient, free, and abundant parking is a dragon you'll be unsuccessfully chasing your whole life. One of the three has to give."

   - "I understand that more parking is needed, but none of the current plans is ideal. I think Plan B offers the best options, parking-wise, except that the south parking area near the beach should not extend so far south. The beach and the open area to the east of it should not be sacrificed for parking or turned into part of the drive. The smaller south parking area in Plan C should be incorporated into Plan B…."

4. Skating on the lagoon (32 mentions)
   - "I have really fond memories of skating on the lagoon. Though I no longer skate, I hope the plan will keep lagoon skating for others."

   - "As one can tell from my answers, my primary use of Vilas is for ice skating. This is one of the gems of Madison's winter and it must remain so."

   - "Keep ice skating on the lagoon!"

5. Maintain the character of the park – such as similar layout and save existing trees (31 mentions)
   - "I would favor whatever concept involves the least disturbance. I feel very fortunate to live so close to Lake Wingra. It contributes massively to my psychic and spiritual health. I dread construction."

   - "Why all the new mosquito breading areas?"

   - "Emphasize that this is a city park. Keep the road going through the park for access. Thank you. Personally, I think the park is fine as is."

COMMON THEMES FROM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The themes identified in Phase I were updated to represent the coalescing of feedback from the community that addressed concerns, desires and goals for the future of Vilas Park from the variety of outreach methods during Phase II. The themes continued to serve as the basis for the refinement of the concepts, into the final Master Plan for Vilas Park. The themes as they evolved and become more specific, are listed below. Specific details of how these themes are implemented within the master plan are identified in Phase III of the report.

MOBILITY AND SAFETY

- Improve pedestrian safety along the Vilas Park Drive corridor by considering the closure of Vilas Park Drive to through traffic and replace with a multi-use path."
- Design of all new trails and park features to be accessible.

ENVIRONMENT

- Protect the existing character of the park while improving balance between passive natural areas and active use areas. Decisions impacting existing trees, vegetation, shoreline and open space should be transparent and defensible.
- Improve lagoon water quality and shoreline access and aesthetics through habitat enhancement.
- Increase quality and size of natural areas within the park through the consolidation of pavement and high use areas.
- Address stormwater and drainage issues in path and recreation areas.

COMMUNITY

- Continue engagement with neighborhoods and park users for improvements and programming changes.
- Provide space for community events.
- Incorporate park history into design and programming.

A PARK FOR EVERYONE

- Offer programmed active spaces for youth and adults.
- Consider allowing dogs in some areas of the park consistent with current Madison General Ordinances.
- Continue to offer amenities and activities that can be enjoyed year-round and are accessible by the entire Madison community.

CONNECTIVITY

- Improve the interconnection between the park and Madison through increased multimodal options (i.e. public transit, bike/pedestrian trails, bike rentals, canoe/kayak access).
- Improve existing and continue to expand pedestrian connections within park and through the zoo.
- Improve wayfinding to alleviate traffic congestion during heavy traffic times.

Page Intentionally Left Blank

7. MASTER PLAN

Page Intentionally Left Blank

Map 7.1. Vilas Park Draft Final Master Plan

Page Intentionally Left Blank

DRAFT FINAL MASTER PLAN DESCRIPTION

This section first describes the Draft Final Master Plan in its entirety. Next, the comments received from the public, City and State Staff are summarized. Finally, the changes to the Draft Final Plan are identified, followed by a summary of recommendations and additional description of the Final Master Plan elements. This arrangement best follows the planning process and provides the context specific to each portion of the planning process as you move through the report.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Feedback provided on the three concept plans presented in Phase II created the basis for the development of a draft final master plan. Overwhelmingly, comments approved of the plan's intent to close Vilas Park Drive to through traffic, although some respondents felt the closure would cause the loss of the pleasure drive character that has been part of Vilas Park since its inception. Ultimately, the planning team felt transitioning from a vehicular corridor to a pedestrian and bicycle route was the appropriate path forward. This and other difficult planning decisions were made based on analysis of both public comment, regulatory agency feedback and professional design standards. It is understood that the master plan will not equally please all residents. However, the plan aims to build consensus around a best alternative for the future of Vilas Park. What follows are descriptions of the improvements suggested for Vilas Park as shown in the draft final master plan. Feedback on the draft plan will be discussed later in the section as well as the edits made to arrive at the Final Master Plan.

GATEWAYS

In the early 1900's, O. C. Simonds designed a formal entrance to Vilas Park (Figure 7.1) that was known as Elm Court (see Section 6 for a detailed description). The Simonds' design provided a main focal point near the intersection of Drake Street and Warren Street (now Randall Avenue) with a strong pedestrian connection to the neighborhood with two large sidewalks. In this plan, the term "gateway" describes a welcoming design with landscape enhancements, monuments or signage that create a sense of identity at entrances, reminiscent

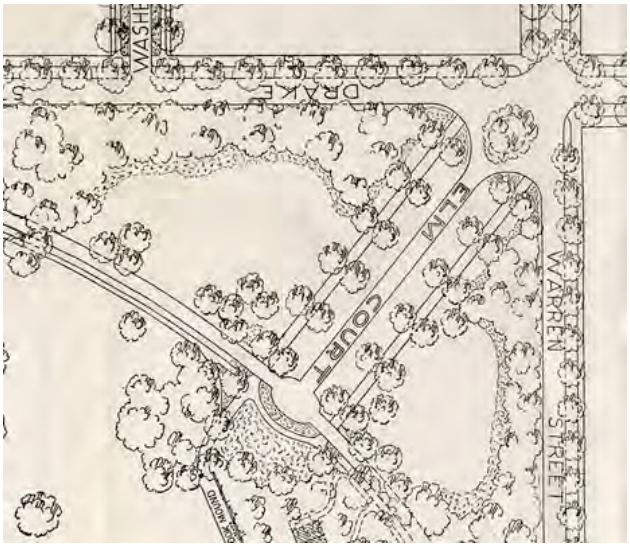


Figure 7.1. O. C. Simonds Elm Court Plan

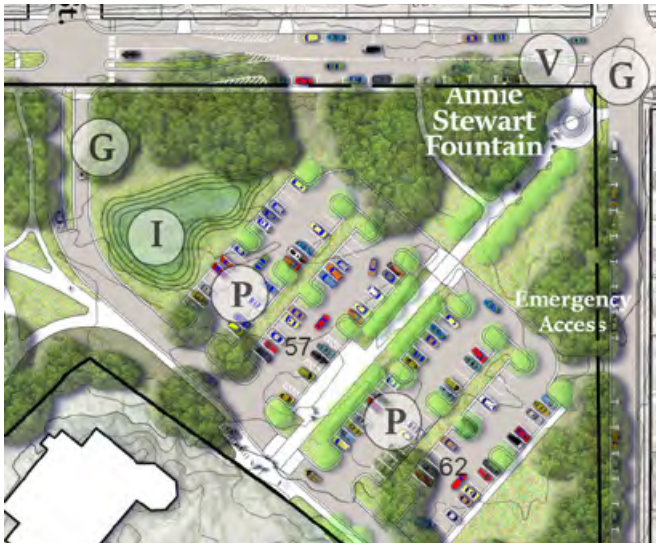


Figure 7.2. Proposed North Entrance

of the original Simonds intent. The gateways are indicated by the letter "G" on the draft final master plan (Figure 7.2, 7.3 & 7.4). While not new as thoroughfares into the park, each of these locations provides an important cross-roads of pedestrian and vehicular traffic as visitors and park users enter the park. Not shown on the plan, but recommended in the future planning are additional signage identifying parking areas and entrances, both to serve as acknowledgment of the park boundaries as well as provide visual aid to drivers navigating the neighborhood for the first time. This signage may need to extend to nearby collector roads such as Monroe Street and Park Street to help park and zoo visitors navigate the neighborhoods surrounding the park to find appropriate parking and amenities.

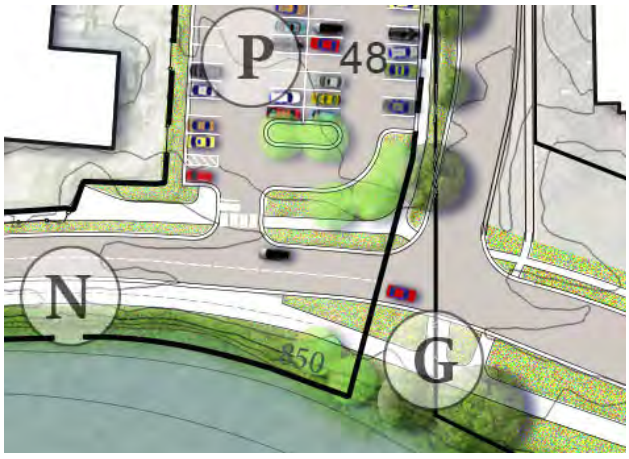


Figure 7.3. Proposed Wingra Drive Entrance

Figure 7.4. Proposed Edgewood Avenue Entrance

Figure 7.5. Proposed Campbell Street Entrance

CAMPBELL ST. ENTRANCE AND PEDESTRIAN PROMENADE

As shown in the concept plans, the master plan shows the vehicular entrance to the Park and Henry Vilas Zoo's north entrance moved from the existing intersection of Drake and Randall to align with Campbell Street. The existing angled entry drive and five-point intersection is potentially hazardous to cross-traffic as well as pedestrians in the crosswalks. This type of intersection is typically avoided in current roadway design and with future improvements to the entrance would not be advisable if an alternate could be provided. City of Madison Traffic Engineering reviewed the Drake Street right-of-way and pending future study determined an entrance may be feasible at the intersection of Drake Street and Campbell Street (Figures 7.6 & 7.7).

Additionally, replacing the entry drive with a pedestrian walkway strengthens the connection to the neighborhoods by developing a grand promenade into the park, reminiscent of the Elm Court design proposed initially by the O.C Simmonds plan for Vilas Park. Moving the vehicular entrance to the opposite side of Drake Street from Campbell Street creates a properly designed four-way intersection (Figure 7.5). The pavement width of Drake Street provides enough space to add a left turn lane to go south into Vilas Park. When design development occurs, signage, turn limitations, access limitations, and other traffic control tools can address concerns related to traffic flow to Bear Mound Park and Vilas Avenue. City of Madison Traffic Engineering would lead the implementation of a change to City owned right-of-way, such as Drake Street. Additional traffic study and impact analysis is expected prior to construction. Future improvements would include signage and traffic control consistent with the City of Madison standards at the time of construction. The appropriate signing of entry points into Vilas Park and the zoo will dissuade visitors from traveling north onto Campbell Street and into the residential neighborhood.

Figure 7.6. Existing Intersection of Drake Street and Campbell Street

Figure 7.7. Proposed Campbell Street Entrance

Figure 7.8. Existing Intersection of Drake Street and Randall Avenue

Figure 7.9. Proposed Pedestrian Entrance (Promenade)

As noted in the Concepts Section (6) of the report, the installation of landscaped islands along Drake Street at the entrance require removing 13 parallel parking stalls, mostly used by park users on the south side of Drake Street, which can be recouped in the redesigned park parking lot. There is no reduction of on-street parking on the north side of Drake Street. The relocated entrance road allows for two-way traffic into and out of the park, eliminating the current one-way system that extends through the north boundary of the park. The proposed design allows for removal of the park exit at the intersection of Grant Street, Drake Street and Garfield Street. This as the Drake Street and Randall Avenue entrance is an atypical intersection with poor site lines for both vehicles and pedestrians. Neighbors of the park reported often observing drivers entering the exit road. This type of unexpected vehicular movement is dangerous to pedestrians and bicyclists. Its removal further promotes safe pedestrian and bicycle access into and around the park, an early goal of the master plan based on feedback on the existing park.

NORTH PARKING LOT

Community input on the three concept plans, particularly from residents of the Greenbush and Vilas Neighborhoods indicated that participants felt the parking lot designs included too much parking in the north lot and too little greenspace along Randall Ave. In the draft master plan, the north parking area is shown with 123 parking stalls, which is reduced from 146 in Concept Plan A. The existing and proposed north parking lots are shown in Figures 7.10 and 7.11.

Figure 7.10. Existing North Parking Lot

Figure 7.11. Proposed North Parking Lot

MAIN PARK SHELTER AND PARKING

The main shelter is sized to include restrooms, a community room, storage and mechanical space, and a covered open-sided shelter. Additionally, it is anticipated the existing small pump house near the north pedestrian bridge would be relocated to a mechanical space within the new shelter further opening views to the lagoon and lake and reducing the need to maintain a separate, lighted building. Placement of the shelter allows for access to the western half of the lagoon for winter skating and the inland hockey rink. Like the current shelter, the new shelter is intended to act as a warming house for winter recreation and equipment

Figure 7.12. Shelter as Viewed from West Side of Lagoon

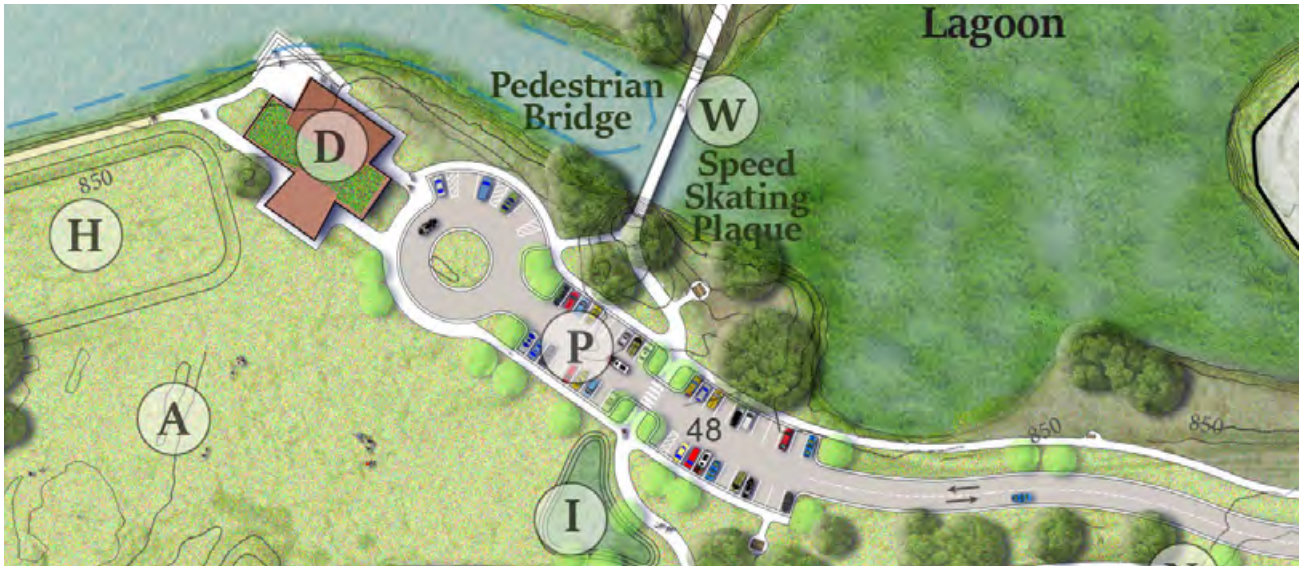


Figure 7.13. Proposed Shelter and Parking Lot

rental operations. The location of the shelter has a wide viewshed across the lagoons and central island but is situated in such a way that it does not impact the view from the meadow to Lake Wingra. This preserves an important characteristic of the park that came up early in neighborhood meetings. See Figure 7.12 for an artistic rendering of what a future shelter might look like. Final determination as to the building's design will be made with a future replacement project.

The main shelter ("D") would be served by two-way traffic from the east on the realigned Vilas Park Drive, terminating in a traffic circle/drop-off at the main shelter (see Figure 7.13). The parking lot ("P") serving the shelter would be reduced from the existing 65 stalls to approximately 48 stalls, including several ADA parking stalls.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

A need to retain the open space and rural feel of Vilas Park was identified early in the planning process during stakeholder engagement. Encroachment in native planting areas and removal of trees was considered closely and avoided where possible. The tree survey conducted during the planning process (see Section 5) identified a number of species that are undesirable in an urban tree canopy, such as ash. Improvements, like the Campbell Street entrance realignment, are designed to minimize the impact on healthy, desirable tree species such as oaks, maples and hickory. Ash and black walnut make up the majority of species impacted by the proposed park improvements.

The proposed natural areas within Vilas Park will be planned and maintained according to the Parks Land Management Plan and with future discussion with Park Operations staff. Characteristics such as final boundaries, plant heights, species selection and maintenance will come from additional site assessment and design development. Generally, the draft plan makes recommendations for lower height plantings along the lagoon and shoreline to maintain the viewshed while providing enhanced habitat and plant diversity. Examples of native plantings in other city parks are shown below in Figures 7.14 and 7.15.

Figure 7.14. Native Plantings (Olin Park, Madison, WI)

Figure 7.15. Native Plantings in Stormwater Basin (Olbrich Park, Madison, WI)

A frequent complaint from staff and park users is the soggy condition of the meadow (also noted on master plan as "open space for active and passive recreation"). A future lagoon dredging project could, in turn, accompany improvements to the grading and drainage of the fields (“A” in Figure 7.17). Additional stormwater treatment around the lagoon and the addition of native planting buffers would be designed to treat runoff from the fields to protect the lagoons from nutrients from grass clippings and fertilizers needed to maintain high-quality turf for recreation purposes. Management practices such as these would also assist in deterring resident populations of Canada geese, which was often cited as a problematic condition in the park in surveys and through comments received from the Friends of Lake Wingra.

Winter recreation in Vilas Park is just as important as the summertime activities, and maintaining an inland hockey rink was determined to be a priority early on. On the draft plan, the hockey rink ("H" in Figure 7.17) is moved to allow for a larger green space on the peninsula while maintaining proximity to the shelter for skate rental, restrooms, and access to the warming house. The existing rink's depressed design makes it marshy in the summer. Redesign of the rink could allow for better drainage, possibly allowing for use as a summertime recreation space.

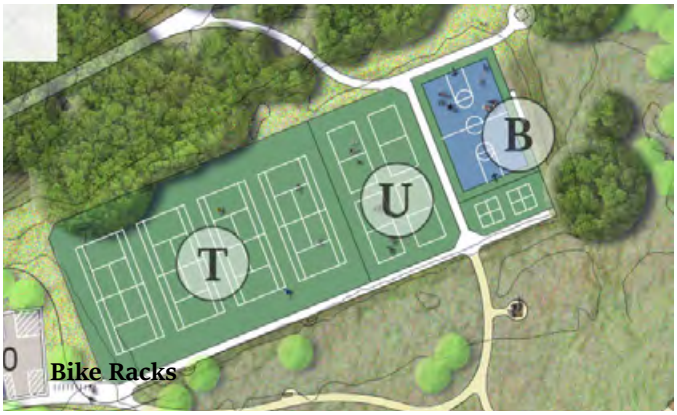


Figure 7.16. Proposed Layout of Court Sports

Figure 7.17. Proposed Inland Hockey Rink

Public input on the concept plans indicated that tennis was still a popular use in the park despite ranking low on the surveys and initial community meetings. Similarly, interest in pickleball expressed during the concept phase suggested that this was an amenity that would be a welcome addition to the park. The final plan shows four tennis courts ("T"), four pickleball courts ("U"), a basketball court ("B"), and two four square courts (see Figure 7.16). Basketball was moved south from its current location to be combined into a single court sports complex. The overall footprint is about the same as the existing six tennis courts and basketball court and allows for a contiguous sports complex connected through accessible pathways to adjacent parking.

LAGOON

The lagoon is an iconic feature of Vilas Park, existing in some form since the initial development of the park. The draft plan maintains the lagoon, but offers differing levels of management for the two halves based on public input, maintenance costs, and considerations of lagoon health and sustainability (Figure 7.18). Public comments desired maintaining the lagoon both for the character it provides to the park as well as opportunities for recreation including ice skating, hockey and fishing.

The health of the lagoon is a concern of many park users, and many of the proposed changes in the draft plan are designed to improve the lagoon. The expansion of native, no-mow landscapes serve to manage stormwater runoff and reduce goose populations, which helps limit the amount of bacteria that enters the water. Native plantings are also lower maintenance, which will allow city staff to spend more time on the upkeep of

Figure 7.18. Lagoon Treatment

playgrounds, athletic fields and shelters.

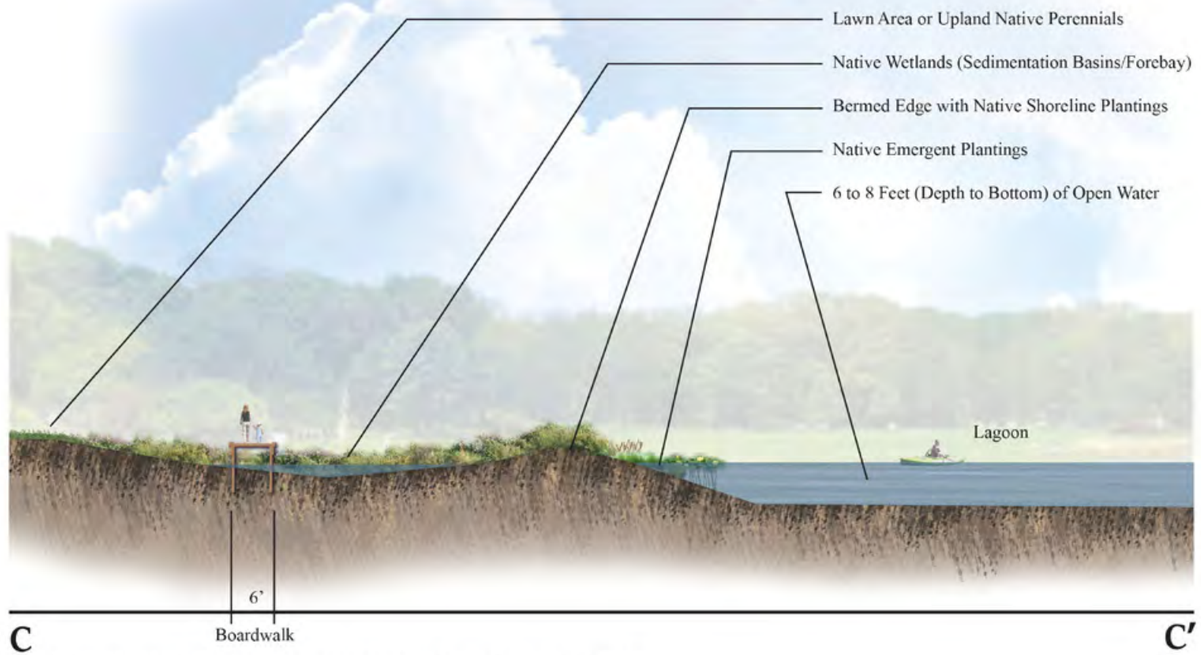
The west section of the lagoon is proposed to be maintained as open water, which will require significant ongoing maintenance, including dredging and weed cutting activities. The east portion of the lagoon is allowed to continue to transition to a wetland type landscape (Figure 7.18). The specific transition and maintenance plan is to be determined. Some images of the possible progression are included below in Figures 7.19 and 7.20.

Parks records indicate that the lagoon may not have not been dredged since the original installation. One goal of the 2021 Master Plan is to improve the water quality of the lagoons and maintain the ability to use a portion of the lagoon for ice skating, which was an interest expressed throughout the project as a priority to park users. To achieve these goals, the plan provides recommendation for forebays, native planting treatment on the shoreline, and the dredging of the west pond and the naturalization of the east pond. These recommendations

Figure 7.19. Native Plantings (Olin Park, Madison, WI)

Figure 7.20. Native Plantings in Stormwater Basin (Olbrich Park, Madison, WI)

VILAS PARK LAGOON CROSS-SECTION - EXISTING CONDITIONS



VILAS PARK LAGOON CROSS-SECTION - PROPOSED NATIVE WETLAND EDGE

Figure 7.21. Lagoon Cross-Sections (Existing and Proposed)

Page Intentionally Left Blank

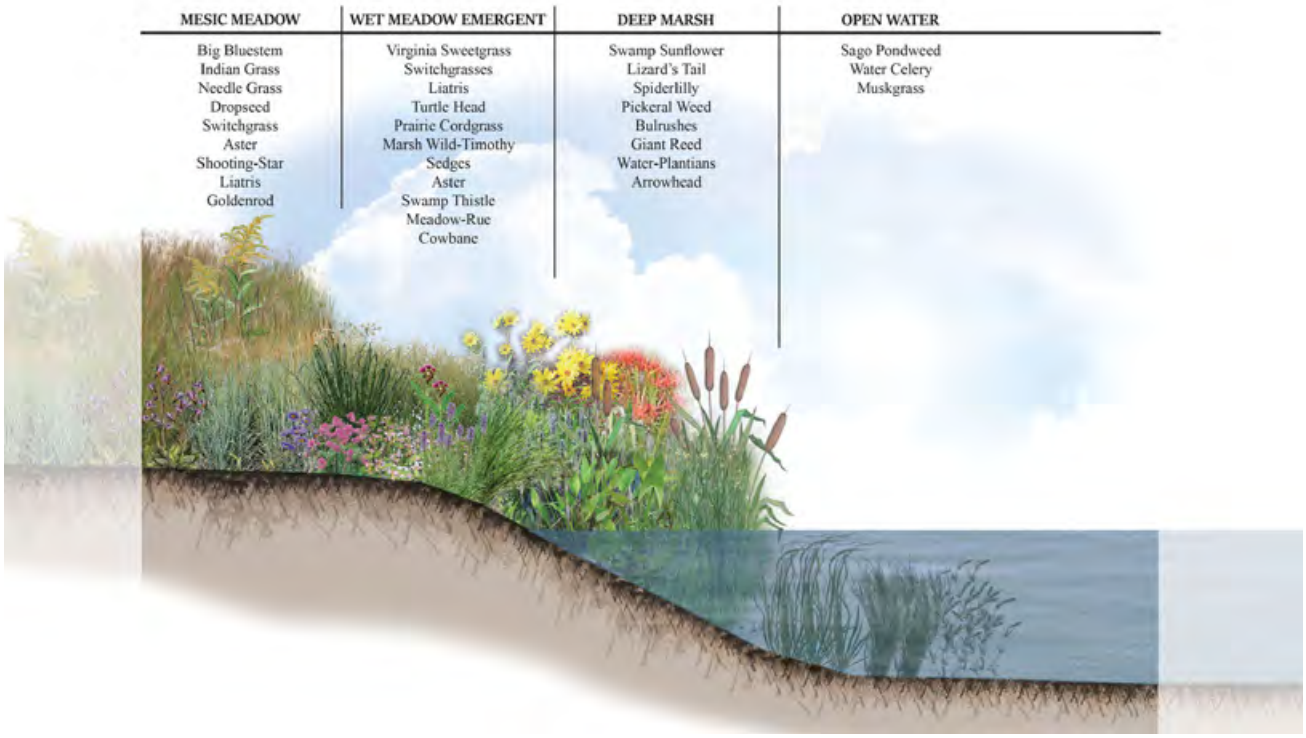


Figure 7.22. Typical Shoreline Vegetation Zones (Species selections from WI DNR).

are based on discussions that the project team had with Wisconsin DNR staff and current design best practices. Parks will contract with a consultant specializing in water quality improvements for water bodies similar to the Vilas lagoon to further study options to improve water quality, and to determine the best management practices to preserve them for the future.

Analysis of the lagoon and stormwater runoff by UW-Madison Civil Engineering 2020 Capstone Project[1] indicated the use of fore-bays would also help to improve lagoon water quality. Fore-bays are sedimentation zones that are a best management practice (BMP) for stormwater runoff. They allow sediment to settle out from incoming stormwater from piped systems and hardscapes prior to entering the lagoon. Another suggestion originating from the UW Capstone project appearing in the final master plan is the suggestion to allow the easternmost "finger" of the east side of the lagoon to return to the most vegetated condition. This design move was supported by the team's client, Clean Lakes Alliance.

A fore-bay is usually linear in plan layout and located adjacent to the larger BMP, or in this case, the lagoon. The fore-bay is separated by a narrow landmass that is set at an elevation higher than the high water mark. The vegetation is wetland and deep marsh natives in the lower basin portion along with the option to have some standing water or marsh. The edges are typically wet meadow emergent native plants transitioning into mesic meadow in dryer areas (Figure 7.22).

1 UW-Madison Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engineering CEE 578 - Senior Capstone Design - Improvements to Vilas Park

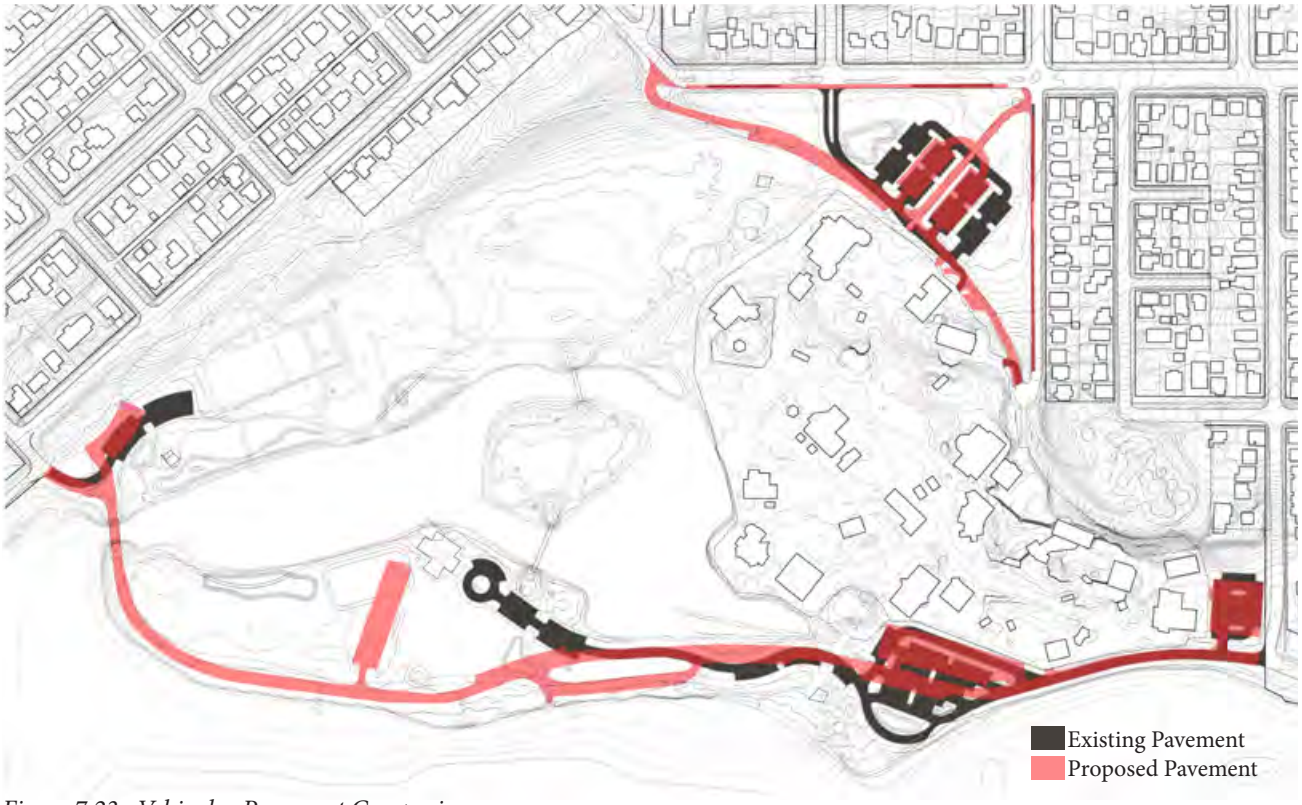


Figure 7.23. Vehicular Pavement Comparison.

VILAS PARK DRIVE

The most significant change shown in the draft plan is the closure of Vilas Park Drive to through-traffic (Figure 7.23) and its conversion to a multi-use path. Specifically, removing the roadway from the historic bridge near Edgewood Avenue to the proposed main shelter location. This change was favored in comments received in public meetings and surveys. Some comments were received that indicated a desire to maintain the road as a pleasure drive and others were concerned about accessibility to the shoreline, but overall public preference was in favor of removal and replacement with a multi-use path. For these reasons, the priority shifted to ensuring pedestrian and bicycle safety within the park. Figure 7.24 shows a cross-section of the proposed multi-use path and sidewalk on the peninsula.

Concerns regarding accessibility of the shoreline with removal of Vilas Park Drive are addressed in several ways. First, accessible parking stalls are shown in both the western lot near Edgewood Ave. and the main shelter parking lot. These spaces, in conjunction with shoreline improvements including additional ADA fishing piers, provide for accessible connections to the waterfront of both Lake Wingra and the lagoon. Lastly, an individual in a wheelchair or other mobility device should not have to travel more than 300 ft. from an accessible parking stall to reach the nearest accessible water access point from either parking lot.

Figure 7.24. Existing Vilas Park Drive and South Parking Lot

Figure 7.25. Proposed Vilas Park Drive and South Parking Lot

PARKING AND ROADWAY SURFACES

The plan seeks to strike a balance between maintain adequate parking and access for all visitors, while improving safety and predictability of roadways, and protecting water quality. Figure 7.23 shows existing and proposed pavement. The proposed plan shows 422 parking stalls, while the existing conditions provide 429 stalls.

The draft plan parking breakdown:

- North parking (including Drake Street and Randal Avenue parallel parking on park side) - 152
- Erin Street parking - 8 (no change)
- South lot parking - 174
- Main shelter and beach parking - 48
- Small shelter, basketball and tennis court parking - 40 (Figure 7.26)

Even though several of the parking lot footprints are enlarged, the plan stills shows a significant reduction of pavement dedicated to vehicles. This is due, in part, to the elimination of Vilas Park Drive from the historic bridge to the relocated main shelter and also to the reduction in pavement at the north end of the park, due to the elimination of the vehicular nose-in parking and travel lane existing at Grant and Drake Streets. Also, the south parking area is consolidated from several existing linear lots along Vilas Park Drive, which shortens internal service roads connecting the main lots together (see Figure 7.23). The existing pavement accounts for approximately 262,500 sq. ft., whereas the proposed improvements reduce that amount to 203,117 sq. ft. This difference returns approximately 1.3 acres of parkland to the site as greenspace without vehicular intrusion.

Figure 7.26 shows the proposed west parking lot. The lot is enlarged from the existing 30 stalls, by 10 spaces, to 40. Observations during the COVID-19 related closure of Vilas Park Drive during the summer of 2020 showed increased parking use at this end of the park. It is expected that with the proposed permanent closure of Vilas Park Drive this would continue.

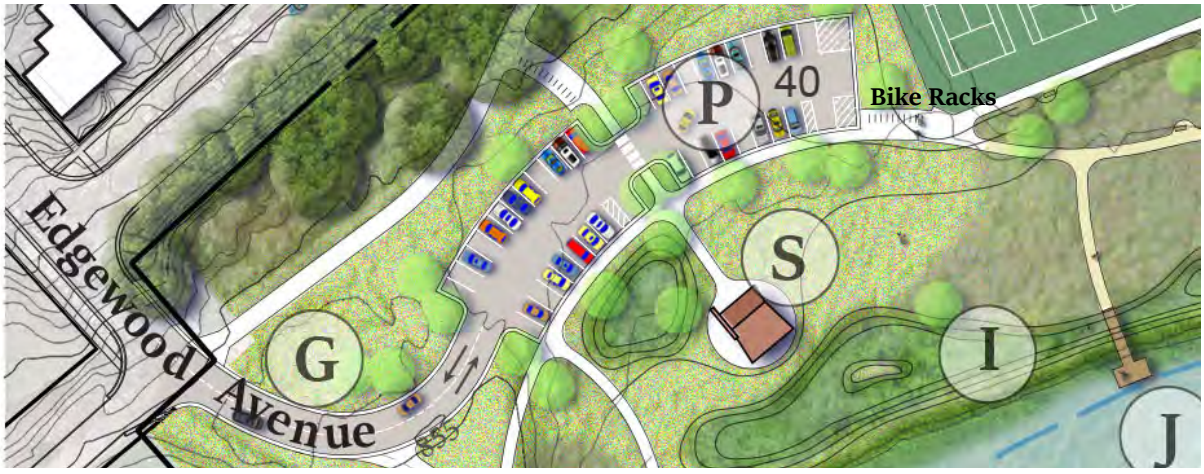


Figure 7.26. Proposed West Parking Lot

Legend

- (A) Shoreline Restoration with Native Plants
- (B) Natural Areas
- (C) Open Lawn
- (D) Wetlands
- (E) Bench

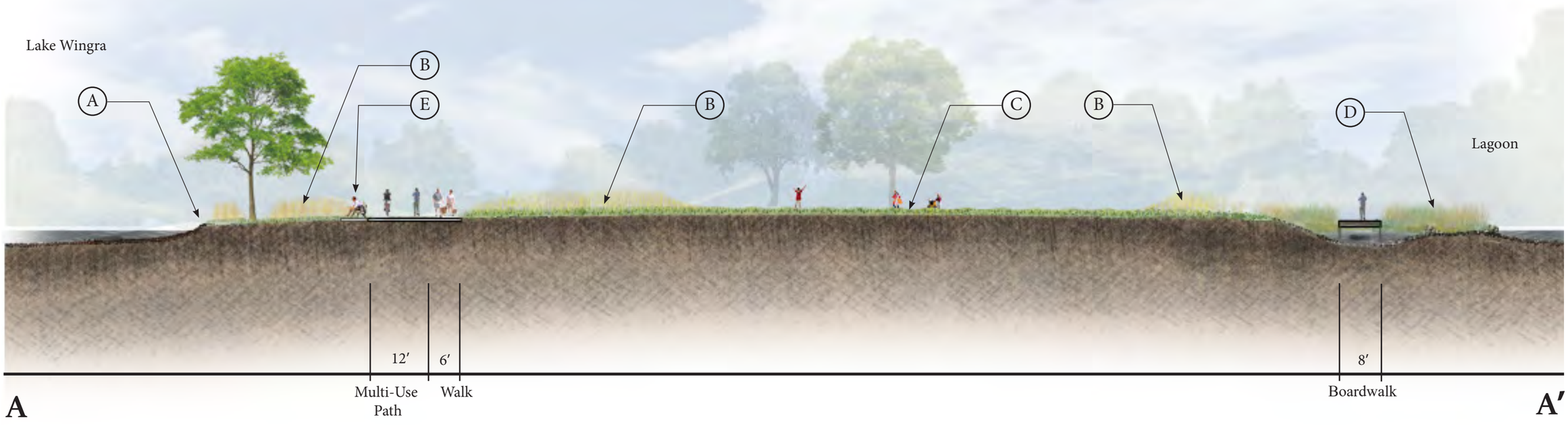


Figure 7.28. Vilas Park Drive and Peninsula Cross Section

Page Intentionally Left Blank

One of the early recommendations from City staff reviewing the concepts was the need for improvements to the park to meet City of Madison ordinance. Two areas of particular note are the lack of stormwater controls on the current roadway and parking lots and the extent of parking lots featuring long ranks of stalls without landscape islands. Both conditions would not be permitted currently and the plan addresses both through the proposed addition of planted islands, bioswales and other best management practices. The features shown in the plan are approximate and representative of the potential constructed condition. Further analysis of infiltration, treatment capacity and maintenance practices would be considered at the time of construction design document preparation. Figure 7.27 shows some examples of currently accepted treatments from Goodman Park in Madison.

Figure 7.27. Example Parking Island Plantings from Goodman Pool in City of Madison

TRAILS AND PATHS

The plan replaces Vilas Park Drive with a multi-use path to provide improved safety and access for bicycles using the park as well as a thoroughfare to connect to the Wingra bike path and downtown Madison (Figure 7.29). The path is shown as a 12 foot wide paved surface (asphalt) with an adjacent 6 foot wide pedestrian sidewalk for separation from faster moving bicycle traffic (Figure 7.30). The path is continuous from Edgewood Avenue to S. Orchard Street, creating safe pedestrian and bicycle corridor missing from the existing park (Figure 7.31).

Figure 7.29. Example of multi-use path

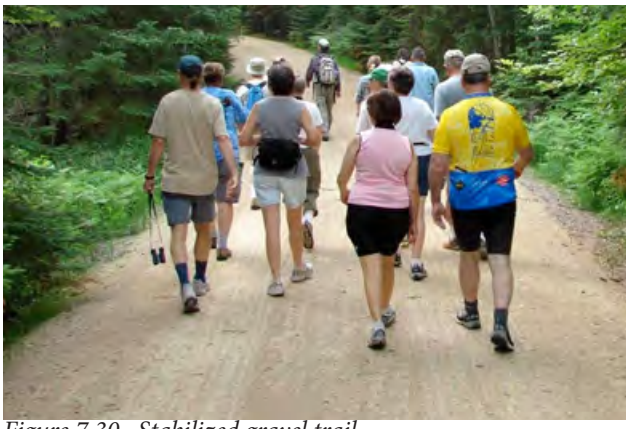


Figure 7.30. Stabilized gravel trail

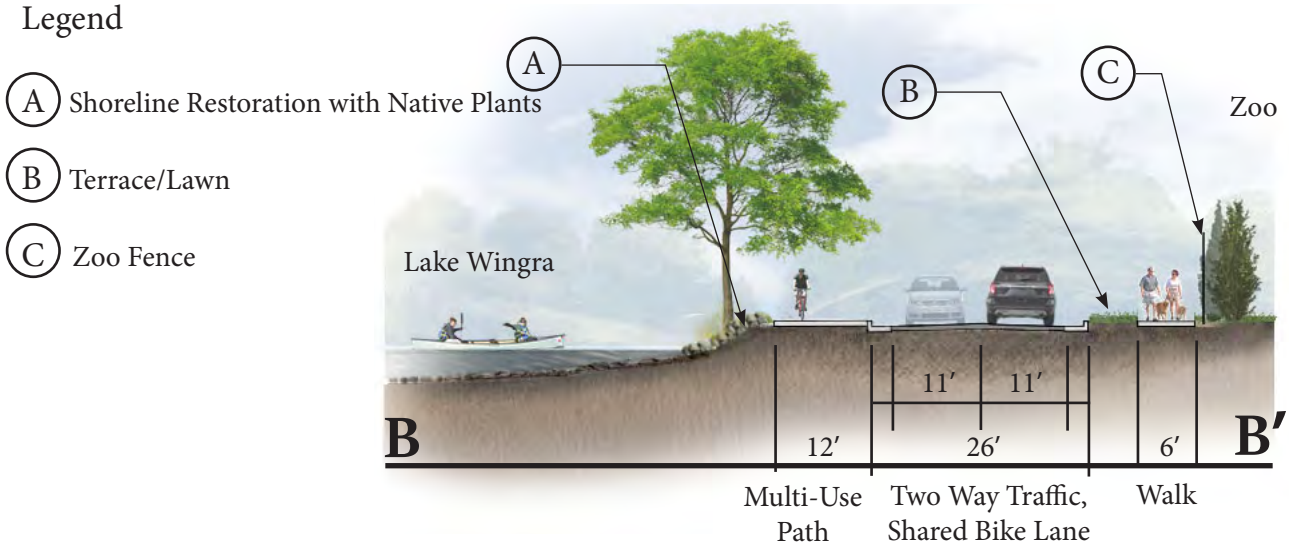


Figure 7.31. Vilas Park Drive cross-section at section B on plan

In locations where a formal paved path is not required, the plan recommends permeable pavement or gravel walking surfaces. These trails would be approximately 6 feet wide to accommodate walking in two directions. The surface chosen should maintain accessibility in a variety of conditions (wet or dry). A stabilized gravel path is one such option that is less costly to implement than asphalt or concrete and is easily maintained or repaired with common tools (Figure 7.30).

FISHING PIERS

Access to the lagoons for fishing is enhanced through the addition of several accessible fishing piers ("J" on Map 7.1). The existing accessible pier on the Lake Wingra shoreline is maintained, and an additional pier is added near the half-way point of the peninsula. A third pier is proposed in the lagoon. Fishing from the shoreline at unimproved locations such as piers or steps would generally still be allowed, although native vegetation would replace turf along much of the shoreline. Access point cut-throughs can be added as the naturalized vegetation matures for particularly popular locations for on-shore casting.. The piers and other improvements are provided to improve accessibility to the water for a variety of user abilities.

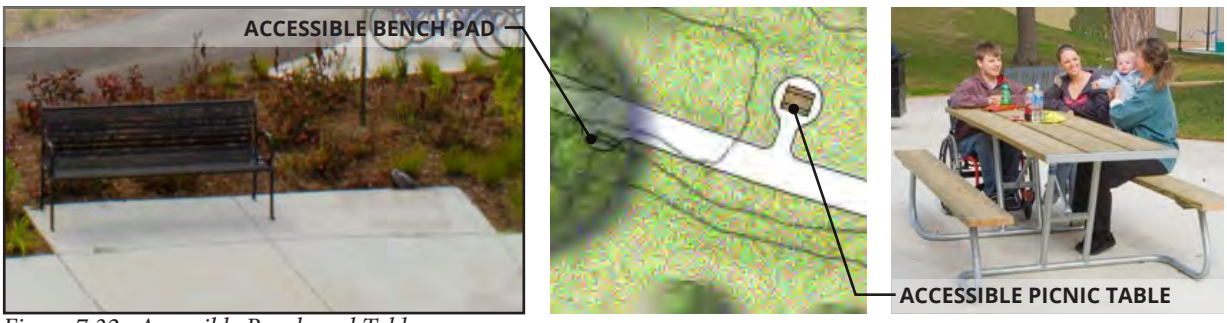


Figure 7.32. Accessible Bench and Tables

BENCHES AND PICNIC TABLES

The master plan shows possible locations for ADA accessible picnicking locations with paved pads for picnic tables connected to accessible routes. Similarly, benches are located throughout the park on accessible routes.

COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS PLAQUES

The Compassionate Friends of Madison were consulted to provide feedback on the future of the memorial benches within the park. Several of the existing benches need replacement and alternative placement options were discussed, including the possibility of relocating plaques to the recently replaced pedestrian bridges crossing the lagoon. City of Madison Parks and the Compassionate Friends will continue to discuss the memorial program outside of the scope of the master plan.

WINGRA OVERLOOK

Parks has made the determination, working in close consultation with the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for The Ho-Chunk Nation, that the focus of the mound sites will be to preserve and honor the sacred land in accordance with established standards – and that in its role as current and future stewards of the mounds within the City of Madison Parks system, it will not be placing children's play environments in proximity to mound sites. The plan shows a winding path to the perimeter of the identified mound group to connect the Erin Street and Greenbush neighborhoods to the park with an accessible route (less than 5% slope) (Figure 7.33) which is an amenity that Ho-Chunk representatives felt would enhance the site for their community's use for gatherings and offer appropriate access to those park visitors wishing to view the mounds and to further appreciate the qualities that this area of the park offers. Two introspective gathering spaces are shown ("O"), one at the zoo perimeter overlooking Lake Wingra. The other is near the existing location of the Annie Stewart fountain. Figures 7.34 and 7.35 show the existing and proposed conditions. This space provides room for small gatherings and could be constructed in such a way as to limit excavation and disturbance of the site as outlined by the City of Madison's Mound Management Plan and State Historic Preservation Guidelines. Figures 7.36 and 7.37 show the known extent of the mounds.

Figure 7.33. Plan view of "Wingra Overlook" space and mound group

Figure 7.34. Existing view from existing "Wingra Overlook" space

Figure 7.35. Proposed improvements at the "Wingra Overlook"

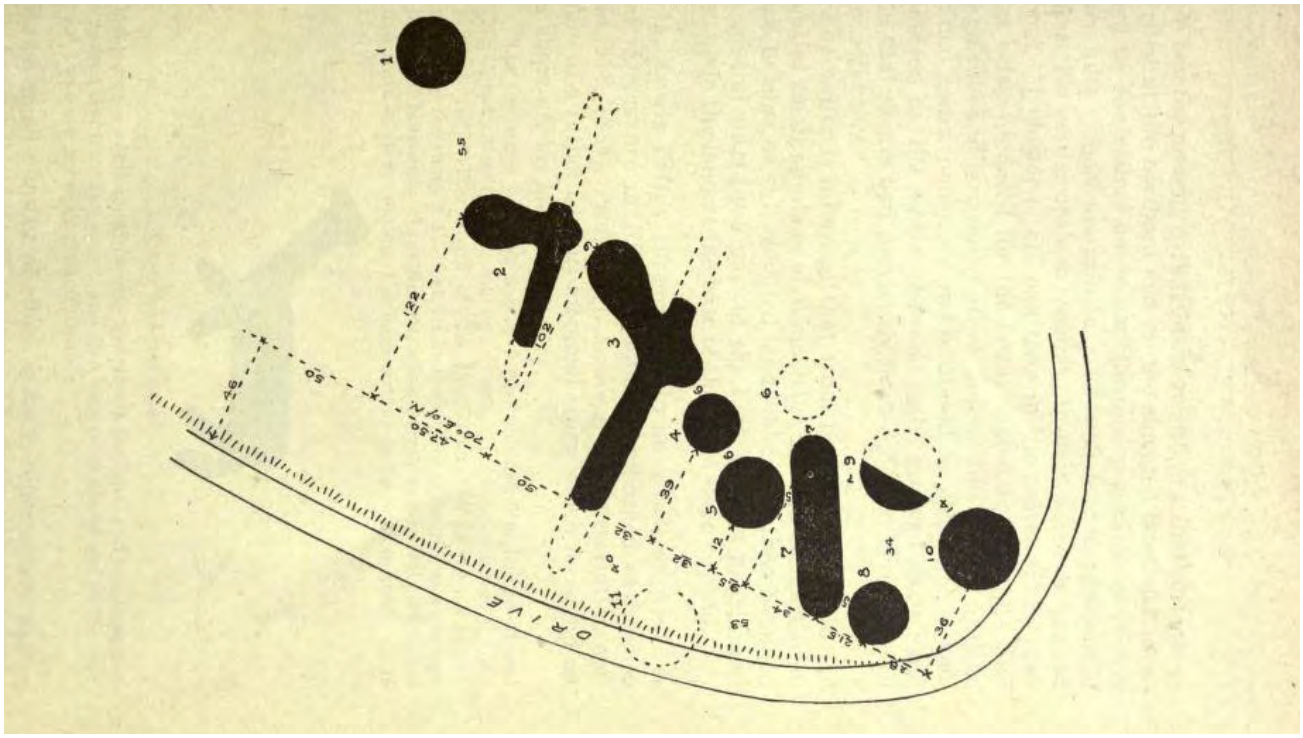


Figure 7.36. Dividing Ridge - Original Survey by Increase A Lapham 1850, Redrawn by W W Warner 1914 (above)

"The preservation of the mounds now remaining was secured through the purchase by the City of Madison, in the years 1910 and 1913 of the hill-top and adjoining lower land. As may be noted from the accompanying plate there originally were in this group a total of eleven mounds. Eight of these were conical (burial), one a linear and two effigy mounds. One of the burial mounds was destroyed and several of the other mounds mutilated in past years by the erection of several swelling houses, the cultivation of garden patches and the cutting of a rad across the land. Portions of the wings of both of the bird effigies were thus removed."

The Wisconsin Archaeologist Lake Wingra, Charles E. Brown, Vol. 14 September 1915

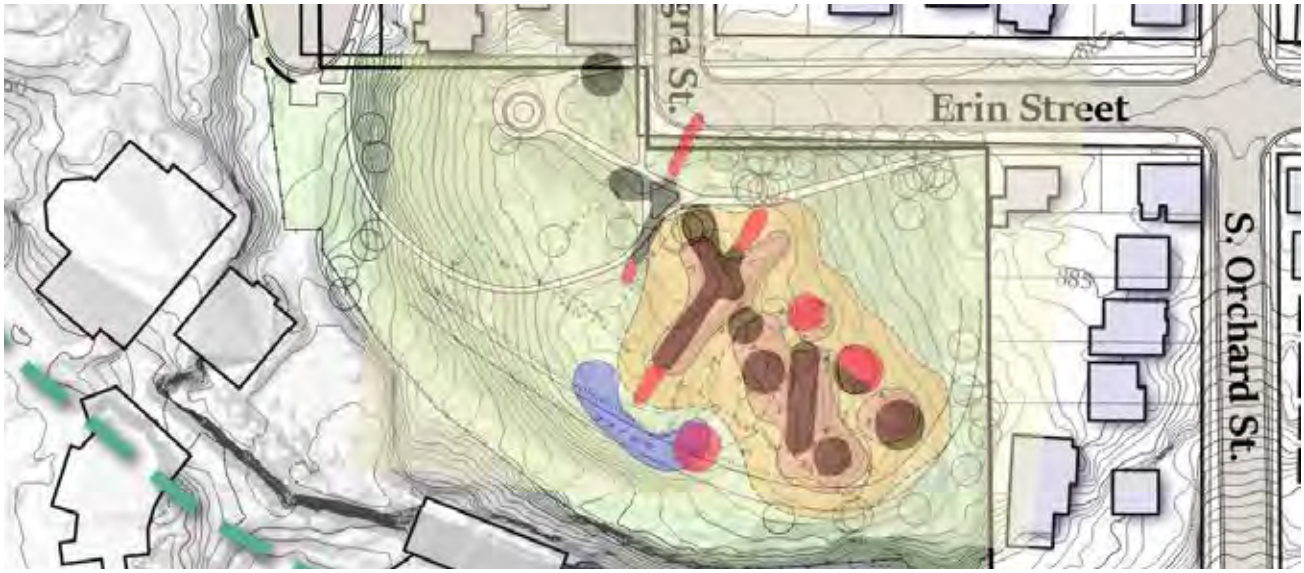


Figure 7.37. Lapham map overlay

PLAYGROUNDS

Community Parks within the City of Madison Park system typically have a large playground featuring equipment designed for both 2-5 year olds and 5-12 year olds. . The plan calls for maintaining the iconic Old Woman in the Shoe playground by developing a larger multi-faceted play area to replace the existing eastern and western meadow playgrounds (Figure 7.38). The western playground is omitted from the draft plan in favor of the inclusion of a playground by the beach (Figure 7.39). Access to a shelter and restroom from the playground came up in public comments, and the beach location provides both. The added amenity serves users of the beach as well.

The dinosaur playground is removed from the plan per the mound management discussion in the preceding section. Because its location infringes on historic mound footprints as identified by Lapham in 1859 (Figure 7.37, see further discussion under the Wingra Overlook section), removal of the equipment will need to be performed under the guidance of the Wisconsin Historical Society and Ho-Chunk Nation and will likely limit the ability to reuse the existing equipment elsewhere.. Its location infringes on historic mound footprints as identified by Lapham in 1859 (Figures 7.37, see further discussion under the Wingra Overlook section).

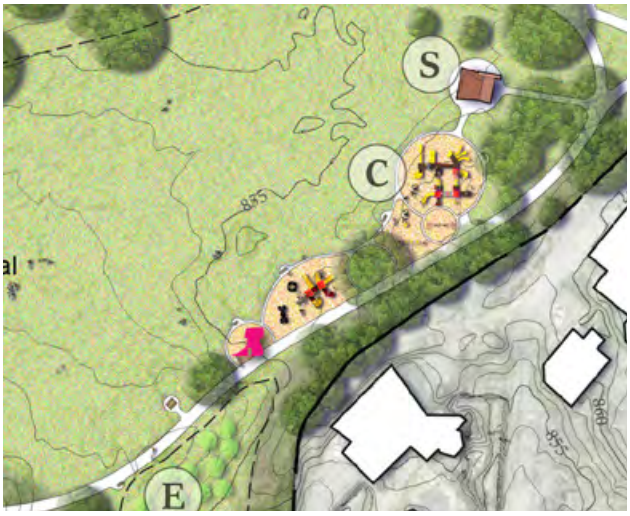


Figure 7.38. Main Playground

Figure 7.39. Beach Playground

REVIEW AND INPUT ON THE DRAFT FINAL MASTER PLAN

In Phase III the effects of COVID-19 pandemic continued to keep public engagement virtual. The draft final master plan was presented to the community at a public meeting and, as with the concepts, was accompanied by an online public survey. The survey was open for two weeks following the Resident Resource and Community Partner Advisory Groups meeting and accompanied the official public comment period on the draft, which extended the opportunity to those interested in doing so to provide comments via email as well. The stakeholder groups and City of Madison interagency staff also provided feedback on the draft plan and it was shared at the City's Development Assistance Team (DAT) for further agency review and feedback. Appearance at the DAT session led to informational presentations at the Urban Design Commission (UDC) and South Metropolitan Planning Council (SMPC) as well. Outreach specific to the focus groups was challenged by a lack of ongoing programming due to COVID-19. Analysis of the survey responses, however, showed that the respondents were representative of the focus groups.

Several design decisions were controversial to neighbors of the park and several formal statements regarding neighborhood resident positions on the plan were received and are included in this report. It is important to note that while neighborhood input was valued and that many changes appearing in the final master plan are reflective of that input, Vilas Park is a community park with a wide service area, which also needed to be considered when developing the draft final plan. The following pages are a summary of feedback received from the community and interagency staff.

STAKEHOLDERS

Community Partners Advisory Group and Resident Resource Group

The public engagement kickoff to review the concept plans was a combined meeting of the Community Partners Advisory Group (CPAG) and the Resident Resource Group (RRG), which was held virtually via Zoom on October 15, 2020. Participants were provided with the presentation prior to the meeting and asked to come to the meeting with specific questions about the draft plan. A completed response and chat transcript can be found in Appendix B.

Takeaways from the meeting included:

- Additional analysis of traffic and parking needs was desired relative to the proposed changes in the North parking lots and the intersection of Drake Street and Campbell Street.
- Participants felt that too much space near the north entrance was dedicated to parking at the loss of a well-used open space.

- Participants felt that the area dedicated to natural areas was too high, specifically around the west side of the lagoon. A better balance of natural plantings and open lawn was desired for picnicking and recreation.
- Closure of Vilas Park Drive to through traffic was supported.
- Treatment and maintenance of the lagoon should be based on science and the ecological impacts on Lake Wingra and benefits to local fauna.
- Definition of the type and extent of natural areas shown on the plan should be included in the report.

Vilas Neighborhood Association Statement

Below is an excerpt from the statement, which was submitted on May 3, 2020, by association president Sarah Buddohin on behalf of the Vilas Neighborhood Association. The full statement is available in Appendix B.

"Thank you for providing this opportunity for public comment on the Draft Vilas Park Master Plan. The following is a statement of the Vilas Neighborhood Association on the draft plan, including comments and recommendations based on input from residents of the neighborhood we represent.

The VNA has been involved in the park planning process since its early days. We have two appointed representatives on the Resident Resource Group advising the plan who provided updates at our monthly VNA Council meetings, which neighbors are encouraged to attend. We have solicited input from our neighborhood on key points throughout the process. Our outreach and input have included hosting an in-person neighborhood discussion of issues relating to future of the park in January 2020, soliciting written comments from neighbors on the three design concepts presented in May, and hosting a virtual meeting on the draft plan on November 18, 2020, followed by an invitation to submit written comments. The results of our outreach have been shared with the park planners at each step.

This statement represents a consensus position of the neighborhood in areas where there is widespread agreement, based on response to the draft plan and backed up by results of our earlier outreach efforts. We have not taken a position on those issues where there is insufficient information or where opinion is divided and there is no widespread, general agreement. The absence of an express endorsement of or opposition to any particular feature of the plan should not be taken as implied support; it simply means that we are unable to take a position at this time.

There is much to like in the plan, and there are some significant features that warrant reconsideration. Our comments and recommendations fall into the following categories: (1) support for elements included in the Master Plan; (2) requests for changes to the draft plan; and (3) identification of issues where additional analysis is needed prior to making decisions about what to include in the final plan."

(1) Support for Elements in the Draft Master Plan

The Vilas Neighborhood Association supports the following elements included in the draft Vilas Park Master Plan:

1. *Ending commuter and other vehicular through traffic on Vilas Park Drive*
2. *Maintaining open, flexible use of green space.*
3. *Improvements to pedestrian and bicyclist safety at the "pinch point" between Lake Wingra and the Zoo*

4. *Improving walkways that currently suffer from drainage problems*
5. *Retaining and expanding the Shoe playground*
6. *Creating a playground at the beach*
7. *Maintaining ice skating on the lagoon and dredging at least half of the lagoon if needed to improve ice quality and safety.*
8. *Fixing drainage problems throughout the park.*
9. *Retaining and improving the tennis courts.*
10. *Adding bicycle parking and a bus stop to provide alternative ways of accessing the park.*

(2) Requested Changes to the Draft Master Plan

The Vilas Neighborhood Association recommends incorporating the following changes to the draft Vilas Park Master Plan:

1 *Retain and improve the Van Buren Street playground*
2. *Remove the proposed parking lot expansion and small picnic shelter west of the tennis courts from the plan.*
3. *Remove the relocated north entry to the Park and the Zoo at Drake and Campbell Streets from the plan.*
4. *Remove the eastward expansion of the north parking lot from the plan.*
5. *Designate additional shoreline areas to be accessible for informal recreational uses.*

South Randall Avenue Neighbors Statement

Eleven property owners on the 500 block of South Randall Ave. co-authored a series of questions in reply to the draft plan. An excerpt of the statement is included below, and the full statement can be found in Appendix B.

"We appreciate you taking the time to listen to our concerns, answer our questions and provide some clarification to the northeast corner of the Vilas Park Master Plan. We were left with some additional questions that we're hoping you can answer and help clarify regarding the North parking Lot and the emergency exit. We have also offered some parking solutions in order to distribute parking more equitably throughout the park.

Q1. Why does the North Lot by the zoo require a second access road but the south parking lot by the shelter has none? As we expressed, we believe the existing road should be maintained rather than a new exit placed in the middle of our street. Not only do we believe there are several safety concerns with adding an exit to our very narrow street, this new exit would mean a loss of valuable street parking.

Q2. What is the proposed capacity for the North Lot as there are conflicting numbers? The Decision Matrix & RRG/CPAG Q&A states 119 while the current draft plan indicates 123 (61+62). The RRG/CPAG Q&A indicates that this has been updated in presentation but we are not seeing it. Also, it is unclear if S. Randall Ave street parking counted as part of the total parking capacity of the North Area. If it is not included, can you share why?

Q3. Can the North Lot be expanded only to the west and additional parking be distributed more equitably throughout the park? Expansion of the East Wing in the North Lot eliminates most to all of the green space, which is the only buffer for S. Randall homes to the parking lot. All other adjacent homes to Vilas Park have substantial buffer zones and are not visible from much or most of the park. These homes are afforded a greater sense of separation and spaciousness. This green space is widely used by park and zoo goers

alike as it is shady, flat, dry and free of goose poop. We would encourage Parks to consider adding some picnic tables to this area. We ask that Parks consider reconfiguring the parking lots in other areas of Vilas Park in order to eliminate the expansion of the East Wing of North Lot and distribute the parking more equitably throughout the park. We have come up with a few solutions.

Solution 1. Expand west wing of north lot to 83 spots as shown in Concept C.
Per Concept C plan, this would maintain and support the wetland. This would bring the total at the north end to 159 spots, which is 10 shy of most current proposal BUT 15 more than currently exists.

Solution 2. Maintain hockey rinks where they are currently located and pave them so they could double as parking lots during peak months. In winter, these parking lots may be flooded to create two adjacent hockey rinks. In summer, more parking for beach and lake use. Here are a few websites that discuss turning hard surfaces into ice rinks.

Solution 3. Expand the South end parking lot "P" near the shelter described in Concept B and would add 111 spots. This is an additional 13 spots compared to most current proposed plan.

Q4. It was mentioned that Parks doesn't design parking for peak demand? If that's the case, how is parking demand measured and quantified?

Q5. Has City Parks had discussions with Madison Metro regarding the possibility of a bus route on Drake Street?

Q6. We are concerned about what feels like a lack of transparency in how information is gathered from the community and how decisions are made. The first survey failed to include questions about parking and removing green space. You also indicated that there is no current plan to send out another survey. We feel strongly that a survey should be done related to parking and the removal of the greenspace along S. Randall Ave. Furthermore, we'd like to better understand what process (exactly) will be used to decide on details (how many parking stalls, what trees need to be lost, what vegetation will be planted to provide screening for neighbors, what signage will be used, etc.) for now and later on (a few/several years from now), when implementation is being planned and budgeted?

Q7. Equity has been mentioned several times in conversations regarding VPMP. It was brought up again in conjunction with our concerns to the expanded parking lot. Can you define equity as it relates to the VPMP? Can you elaborate on how equity is being assessed? What areas have been identified as inequitable and what steps are being put in place to address inequity in these identified areas?

Thank you for help in addressing our additional questions.
Sincerely,
Patrick Corcoran 509 S. Randall
Cindy Schlichte & Alex Wong, 513 S. Randall
Tim & Eileen Storm, 517 S. Randall
Bob Andresen, 521 S. Randall
Rhonda Lanford, 529 S. Randall
Taralinda & Dale Willis, 533 S. Randall
Karolyn & Jason Pionek, 537 S. Randall
Jaime Kulbel, 541 & 543 S. Randall
Kelli & Erich Palecek, 545 S. Randall
Peter & Deena Williams, 547 S. Randall
Sharon Hutchinson, 551 S. Randall

FOCUS GROUPS

Accessibility

Email correspondence with Keith Wanta, from Access to Independence, provided the following suggestions:

"1. First and foremost, make ALL handicap parking space [accessible aisle] width 96". It's a huge headache to get parked in and can't get into your own vehicle because someone is ignorant of what a [accessible aisle] is!!!"

"2. Crosswalks are in these maps? These are very difficult for blind or visually impaired individuals. We'll probably need to have a really clear crosswalk indicator on the ground (bumps for their cane) or something a visually impaired person recognizes easily. They are terrified of them! That and stairs. I'm wondering if they have a standard for them? Spoke to some blind friends of mine on Facebook. I think it'll be important to implement an APS at each crosswalk and some kind of map for blind people. If you'd like to discuss the APS options and map more, we should set up a call together."

Online Survey

A copy of the online public survey was distributed by the Badger Rock Neighborhood Center. The survey was available in both English and Spanish. Despite several attempts to promote the survey only two responses were received. These were combined with the overall survey results due to the small sample size.

The effort to reach underrepresented residents has been challenging with social distancing regulations in place. In the current phase of the project, this effort has continued to focus on the neighborhood centers known to serve those residents, including the Badger Rock Neighborhood Center and Bayview Community Center. We sought input by promoting the online survey to and through each community center. Badger Rock staff were responsive to our outreach and posted the information to their social media page, resulting in several survey responses. Bayview staff had indicated earlier this year that they were operating with limited client contacts and reduced staffing. They were not responsive to contacts seeking help promoting the survey in this phase.

INTERAGENCY REGULATORY MEETINGS

City of Madison Interagency Staff

In September 2020, representatives from City of Madison Traffic Engineering, Parks Division, Engineering and Planning Divisions, as well as representatives from the UW Arboretum, Henry Vilas Zoo and Madison Metro Transit met to review and provide feedback on the draft master plan. Interagency staff provided insights on functionality and maintenance requirements of potential changes to the park and how best to balance wants and needs. Key takeaways from this meeting are summarized below by topic.

Metro Transit

- Possible shuttle service to park (south zoo entrance) from existing routes/stops, future bus rapid transit, etc.
- Bus drop-off must accommodate bus passing. Buses prefer to not cross pedestrian travel areas.
- Shortest route possible needed to make route feasible.
- Look at revising east lot for turnaround.

- Consider routing of Erin -> Orchard -> Vilas Park Drive/Wingra Creek Drive.
- Drake St. and Grant St. as a possible bus route. Sidewalk on south side of Grant and Drake needed for wheelchair access.

Henry Vilas Zoo

- Desires an emergency access to east onto Randall as shown in draft.
- 800,000 + visitors in 2019, parking is a necessity to manage congestion in neighborhoods.
- New main entry alignment to the north is consistent with master plan. Timeline for improvement is within the next 5 years.
- Semi-deliveries to south-west parking lot.
- Zoo will likely maintain 2 public entrances for public safety and access control.
- South entrance is only closed during current COVID-19 pandemic.

Stormwater

What are allowable treatment types – detention basins, catch basins, subsurface treatment, etc.?

- https://www.cityofmadison.com/engineering/documents/MGO37_changes_2-10.pdf - see link for current ordinances and stormwater requirements.
- Target improvements at 80% TMDL [total maximum daily load] reduction as if it were all new development (60% required for redevelopment).
- Treatment/bio-retention will be required – plan will not show specific treatment options other than approximate areas dedicated to surface treatment. Recreational facilities (basketball courts, park shelters etc) count towards the added impervious surface, but since they have such low TSS loading, it usually only makes sense to treat the parking lot.

Other thoughts to consider closer to the actual implementation of the master plan:

- A creative way to help reach TSS goals could be a Delaware skimmer and sediment traps.
- Depending on construction phasing: if dredging the lagoons is part of the project, then plan to use lagoons as a treatment area. If no dredging, then plans should identify space to control erosion and protect the lagoons as a separate system.

Traffic

Feasibility of relocating entry on Drake St. at Campbell St.?

- Not part of original scope, but conceptual operational analysis possibly desired.
- Signage potentially needed to keep traffic from going north on Campbell.
- Width of Drake should allow for appropriate turn lane and possible central median.
- 5 point intersection increases congestion, as it is not efficient for traffic movement.
- Drake is not at design capacity and could allow for bike lanes.
- Impact of traffic on Grant St. is of more concern than Drake St. City of Madison Traffic Engineering can analyze earlier tube counts vs. known neighborhood streets data and estimate impacts if Vilas Park Drive were to be closed.

Actual feasibility of closing Vilas Park Drive to through traffic?

- If desired, will need to know what the process and timeframe is for an actual closure – i.e., study, review, approvals.
- Additional public input possibly required.
- Main concern is about emergency access – EMS/PD has confirmed Vilas Park drive is NOT a necessary access route.

- Volume (trip count) on Vilas Park Dr. is limited, diverting traffic should have a limited effect on the surrounding road network.
- From a Parks standpoint, either terminating through-traffic or improving a section of Vilas Park Dr. would both mitigate traffic-pedestrian conflicts.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

The project team corresponded with the WI DNR via email. Below are comments from DNR staff regarding the lagoon that the project team will address in the final master plan or master plan report:

- *"Our conversation centered around the desired open water scenario on the west lagoon, where an open water condition is desirable for fishing and paddling access but I am not as familiar as Sue w/ the current plant status or species in there. From their plans/ goals, we discussed dredging depths to get to a 'doughnut hole' look with a littoral rim vegetation with a deeper middle area where it is too deep for plants to get sunlight and dominate, what depth would you recommend to achieve a true open water with few plants ? I suggested 6 ft minimum for the west lagoon. The current plan indicates keeping the eastern portion largely as -is with minimal dredging, allowing emergent plants but managing for ice skating access. "*

- *"quiet lagoons like these are very difficult to manage for plants anywhere. Eurasian watermilfoil can grow in very deep water and is quite tolerant of turbidity – this seems to be one of this species' advantages as an aggressive weed.*

- *"In addition to EWM being a surface-matting, aggressive species, our native coontail is also turbidity tolerant, and lacking true roots, tends to show dense surface matting. Both of these species do very well in quiet, nutrient rich waters like the Vilas lagoons. In short, I would not expect open water in the summer and fall in the Vilas lagoons, despite dredging as deep as possible. If open water is a high priority, you should expect the necessity of ongoing plant management techniques, all of which are publicly visible, often controversial, and never cheap. I am certainly willing to sit down and discuss the pros and cons of various methods, and what could possibly be helpful in this setting."*

COMMUNITY INPUT MEETING (#3)

On November 16, 2020, a meeting was held via Zoom to publicly present the draft final master plan and provide time for discussion. About 160 participants registered for the meeting. The meeting began with a presentation, which provided a description of the draft plan broken down by the key design elements:

- Traffic on Vilas Park Drive
- Location of the main park shelter
- Parking layout
- Open space and recreation opportunities
- Playground location
- Lagoon (and ice skating) management

Numerous individuals spoke or submitted comments expressing a desire to omit or request further study of

the proposed entrance at Drake Street and Campbell Street. Comments included:

- *"Concern about the Campbell Street entrance pushing traffic around the Bear Mound Park. Narrow street and sidewalks with families walking down the road and cars moving in the wrong direction on the one-way circle. Safety issues."*
- *" Could cars exiting the park per the new design be required to turn left or right onto Drake only (and not cross straight onto Campbell)."*
- *"The traffic problems at the current zoo entrance are not a function of folks turning into the zoo, its cars rolling through straight on Drake St"*

Additionally, several participants expressed concern that additional options for the entrance had not been presented publicly. During the meeting, an argument was also made for maintaining a second playground in the location of the existing western playground. Some referenced the ability to walk to the playground from the neighborhood or fond memories of their children running across the meadow between the two playgrounds.

Other comments included:

- *"I would like to see the drive retained. I know many elderly people who park along the drive to enjoy the park.... I see it as an accessibility issue as well as a way to enjoy the shore and offer greater equity in essence since it would keep open the option to fish alongside your gear etc."*
- *"Our park represents one of the few where you can drive up, park next to a lake, get out and enjoy sitting lakeside (between bridge and beach). Especially important for those with accessibility issues. Proposed plan eliminates that feature"*
- *"A BCycle station at the Zoo entrance would encourage bike visitors and reduce car traffic."*
- *"The BCycle station at the entrance to the Arboretum is heavily used; often with all bikes out. A Bcycle Station at both entrances to the Zoo (when both are open again) would be well used. And/or a Bcycle station at the Beach."*
- *"have you reached out to St Mary's about a public-private partnership for parking rather than having so much of the park itself lost to parking?"*
- *"With the proposed mutli-use path and drive for cars to/from the shelter, won't there be access for people to park and then access the lake shore with wheel chairs, walkers, on foot, etc. They won't be able to drive all the way through any more, but design of walkways and dedicated handicap parking slots could still provide access to the lakeshore for those who need it. Perhaps even improved access."*
- *"Please plant trees between soccer courts to provide shade."*
- *"Will the tennis leagues be able to play with less than 6 courts?"*
- *"I think creating separate pickle ball courts is a poor use of space. Pickle ball can be played on tennis courts. Tennis cannot be played on pickle ball courts."*

- *"thank you for prioritizing preservation of the important mound group and supporting indigenous reparations and cultural reclamation."*

- *"I understand the issue with the mounds, but what about the side of the fountain? There was a comment that the play ground degrades the mounds. But there is people playing frisbee and drinking and the latter would certainly increase without the playground."*

ONLINE PUBLIC SURVEY

Following the Community Information Meeting, from November 16, 2020 to December 4, 2020, a public survey was available through a link posted on the City of Madison Parks Division's Vilas Park Master Plan Project website. The distribution of the survey link occurred through postings on City social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter), as a City of Madison website news item[1] and during the community and stakeholder group meetings. Additionally, the survey was shared through the Badger Rock Neighborhood Center's social media. A Spanish language version of the survey was also made available. A total of 298 responses were received to the survey, 297 to the English version and one to the Spanish.

The survey presented short descriptions of the draft final plan's design to provide context to respondents who may not have participated in previous project meetings or surveys. The survey then asked respondents to select if they agreed that the draft plan either met an objective ("Yes"), did not meet an objective ("No"), or were "Unsure" of the plans ability to satisfy the stated goal. The survey results are summarized below. The full results can be found in Appendix B.

Demographic information provided by respondents suggests that the most common survey taker was between 30-39 years old (24.7%), consistent with responses to the concept survey completed during Phase II of the project, but not a direct reflection of the City of Madison demographics. According to Data USA, the highest percentage of Madison residents are between 18-24 years of age (see Figure 7.40)[2]. Although the relative percentages of age groups from the survey did not correlate exactly to Madison's numbers, the survey was able to obtain input from a broad range of ages, from persons 10 or younger up to 70 or older (Figure 7.41).

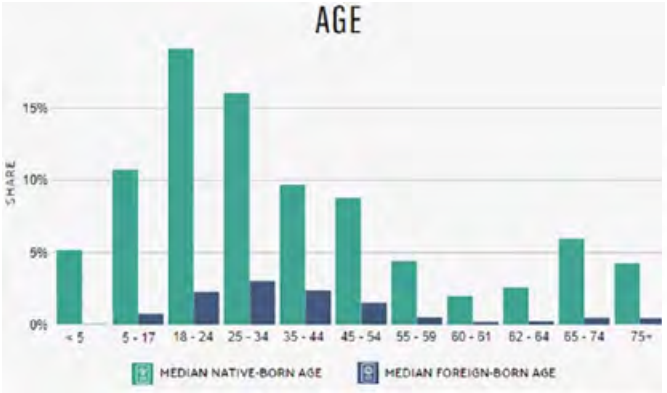


Figure 7.40. Data USA City of Madison Demographics

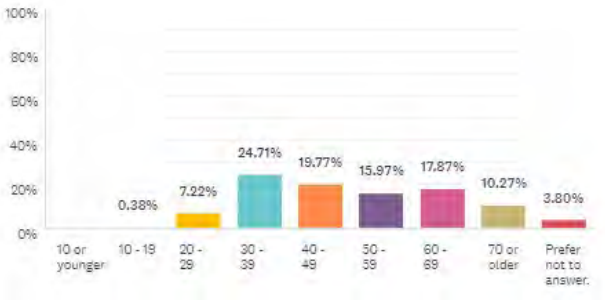


Figure 7.41. Public Survey Respondents by Age

1 https://www.cityofmadison.com/calendar/vilas-park-community-input-meeting-3
2 https://datausa.io/profile/geo/madison-wi/#demographics 2017

Survey respondents were also asked to identify their race/ethnicity and also their neighborhood of residence (Figures 7.42 and 7.43). Eighteen respondents (7%) identified as something other than “White/Caucasian" or “Prefer not to Answer." Seven respondents (3%) indicated the 53713 zip code as home, which has a lower household income and higher minority resident profile than other areas. Review of responses from these stakeholder subsets shows a wide variety of interests and perspectives. Among these responses, the majority support the various design directions, while disagreements or critiques are consistent with others heard from the full sample of stakeholders, including preferences for more playgrounds, less on-site parking, and keeping the status quo on the number of tennis courts.

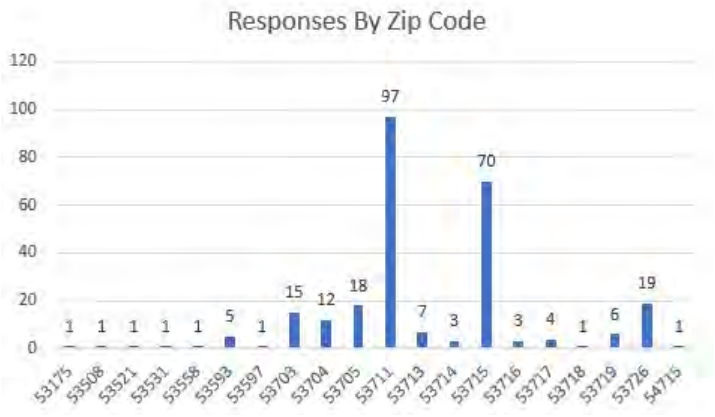


Figure 7.42. Responses by Zip Code

49	Vilas
45	Greenbush
40	Dudgeon-Monroe
17	Regent
12	Bay Creek
6	Westmorland
5	Sunset Village
4	Midvale Heights
3	Nakoma
3	University Heights

Figure 7.43. Top 10 Neighborhoods by # of Responses

Residents from neighborhoods surrounding Vilas Park, which include the Greenbush and Vilas neighborhoods as well as the Dudgeon-Monroe neighborhood, made up 54.5% of the survey responses. This is notable as these three neighborhoods also were represented within the Resident Resource Group stakeholder meetings, providing them with additional access to the planning process.

Question 1 (Responses = 295): "Community responses across all platforms (public survey, stakeholders, focus groups) preferred the option to remove Vilas Park Drive as a vehicular thoroughfare. The plan puts emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle circulation along the Lake Wingra shoreline and lagoon. The draft final master plan proposes a multi-use path connection to replace Vilas Park Drive." The question asked : "Do you feel the draft final master plan has accomplished the goal of reducing vehicular traffic within the park and provided better pedestrian and bicycle amenities?"

Respondents strongly agreed that the Draft Master Plan met the stated goal. About 82% of respondents answered "Yes," 7.8% chose "No" and 9.8% were "Unsure" (Figure 7.44). When viewed by geography, the surrounding neighborhoods (Vilas, Greenbush and Dudgeon-Monroe) were 10% less likely to agree with the plan. The surrounding neighborhoods responded 77% - Yes, 13% - No, and 10% - Unsure.

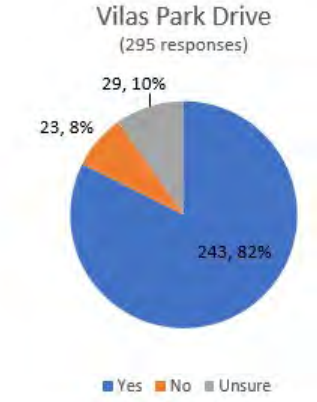


Figure 7.44. Public Survey Question 1 Results

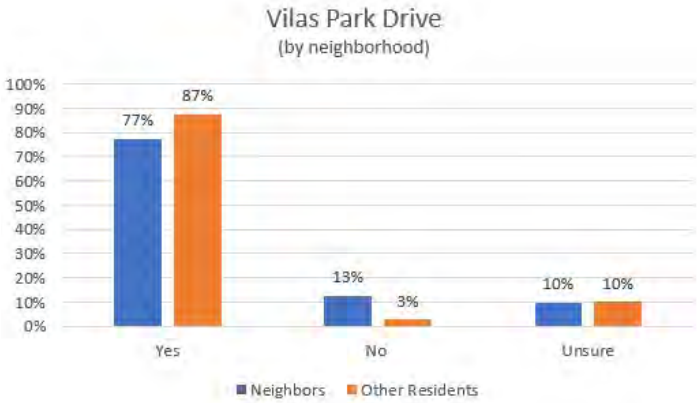


Figure 7.45. Public Survey Question 1 Results by Neighborhood

Comments (66) submitted to the question included:

- *"Do not expand parking lot in zoo area - do not live entrance so can keep street parking on Drake. Keep northern section parking lot next to tennis courts the same size."*
- *"I also appreciate that you can still access the shelters by car, which is important for disability accessibility."*
- *"In some ways yes, the plan reduces vehicular traffic such as restricting commuter traffic, however, I think the access road to the new shelter should be limited in use similar to Garner Park and that parking for winter activities for the shelter can be at the south zoo lot when zoo use is down. The south zoo lot is less than 1/4 mile away and according to the City of Madison that is a "walkable distance" for bus stops so why not here? That way kids using the bridge path do not have to cross through an area with motor vehicles."*
- *"While there is definitely improved pedestrian and bicycle amenities, the draft master plan c loses Vilas Park Drive and then re-introduces vehicular traffic through the park with the proposed location of the shelter. Move the shelter to the other side of the bridge to reduce vehicular traffic and prevent a serious impediment to pedestrian safety and enjoyment of the park (as walking and enjoying nature/views has consistently been important and consistent public input responses)."*

Question 2 (Responses = 288): "The proposed main shelter is located to support the desire for maintaining both lagoon and land rink skating. Amenities such as a community meeting room, restrooms, and covered picnic table area are also well served at this location. The addition of two covered, open-sided picnic shelters was identified in public comment and supported by the high demand within the Park system." The question asked : "Do the proposed shelter facilities meet the needs of each part of the park?"

Responses were heavily in support of the placement of shelters within the park: 79.2% of respondents said they agreed with the stated objective, 8.3% chose "No" and 12.5% were "Unsure" (Figure 7.46). Similar to Question 1, the respondent's neighborhood did not significantly affect the survey results. The surrounding neighborhoods responded 75% - Yes, 9% - No, and 16% - Unsure (Figure 7.47).

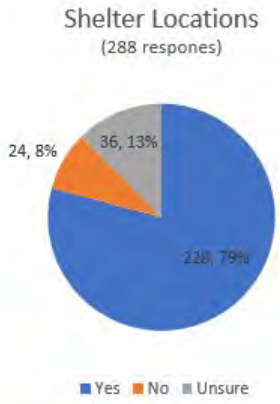


Figure 7.46. Public Survey Question 2 Results

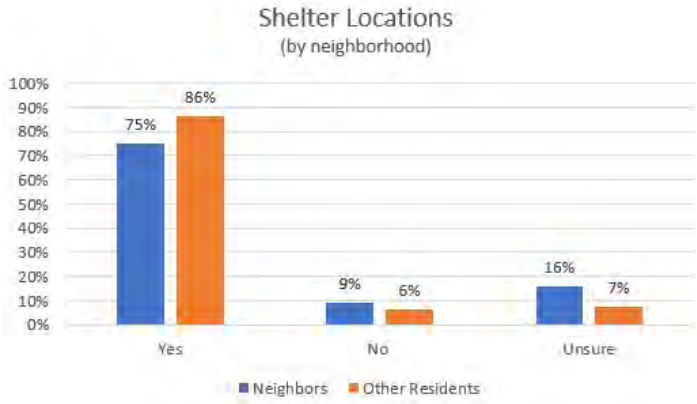


Figure 7.47. Public Survey Question 2 Results by Neighborhood

Comments (60) submitted to the question included:

- *"I think so, yes. I do not think the shelter amenities have to be at all fancy - they can be very basic in terms of amenities and still achieve their function."*
- *" The main shelter location may be better situated for ice skating if it is to the east of the pedestrian bridge along the lagoon. When the lagoon was maintained for ice skating around the island (and under the bridges) it was wonderful. The 2 proposed open-sided picnic shelters are not necessary in Vilas Park and will be a detriment to the current uses enjoyed there; we need more open space for recreation and flexible picnicking--these shelters will diminish the diverse uses currently enjoyed in the park"*
- *"Would prefer to also see restrooms on the north side of the lagoon - either near the courts or the zoo."*
- *"I think one of the main goals of having park land is to preserve natural, open/wooded areas within the city. Adding additional buildings to the park (the 2 new open sided shelters) works against this, and I think having just one main shelter is preferable."*
- *"The two new covered picnic shelters are unnecessary. The additional level of maintenance that seems like would be required does not seem justified. Do the shelters require concrete pads as well? I'd rather have additional playground space if you are going to add maintenance burden. The main shelter continues to make sense and supporting both the skating on the lagoon and the man-made rinks makes sense.*

Question 3 (Responses = 288): "The plan seeks to maintain adequate parking and facility access for all visitors while improving safety, predictability, and water quality protection (which will be enhanced with each new project). The question asked: "Does the plan provide an acceptable balance of those demands?"

Responses were generally in support of the parking layout: 56.4% of overall responses said they agreed with the stated objective, 26.2% chose "No" and 17.4% were "Unsure" (Figure 7.48). In the surrounding neighborhoods, responses were 51% - Yes, 33% - No, and 17% - Unsure. Responses from the remaining neighborhoods not surrounding the park were slightly more favorable: 64% - Yes, 19% - No, and 17% - Unsure (Figure 7.49).

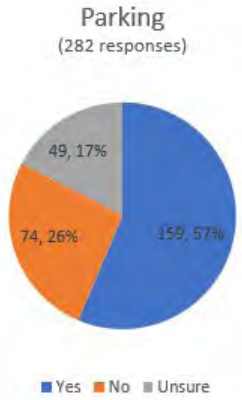


Figure 7.48. Public Survey Question 3 Results

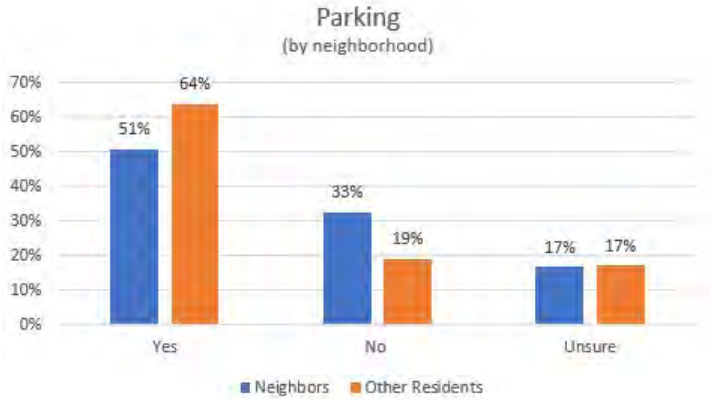


Figure 7.49. Public Survey Question 3 Results by Neighborhood

Comments (125) submitted to the question included:

- *"It still seems like there is too much of the park dedicated to parking on the south side, I am particularly thinking of the small east section of parking lot C and wondering if that could be removed to provide for more room for people to enjoy the beach and surrounding shoreline."*
- *"Green space is precious in the city, and even though the proposed number of parking spaces is slightly fewer than in the park today, that isn't the perception created by the plan. Larger parking lots make it look like there is more parking, even when there isn't, and that detracts from the park. Ideally, I would like to see a parking garage at the southeast entrance to the drive, in the lot across from the St. Mary's day care center. It would not visually dominate the park and could actually increase parking capacity. Even if cost prevents something like this in the near future, I think it would be better than expanding the surface lots. That said, I do think the bus access by the south Zoo entrance is a good idea, and so is some landscaping for the parking lots. I find it hard to answer the questions with a yes, no or unsure. I am not unsure, and I don't want to seem to endorse the plan in its entirety. Nor do I want to reject it. It has a mix of good things and things that I would like to see changed."*
- *"The only issue I have is the loss of greenspace to the east of the beach, between the road and the lake. This area is very commonly used by people who want to be near the beach, but not at it, especially as an area for frisbee, catch, picnicking, and other activities that use larger space. Reducing the area of this spot would lessen enjoyment of the beach area more than I feel is acceptable."*
- *"Please see the answer to question 1. The pedestrian experience in the park would be greatly improved by not placing a parking lot right at the end of the path with the pedestrian bridges, and it would be safer and more tranquil to have the possibility of walking through the park and to the shoreline multi-use path without having to worry about traffic or walk through a parking lot."*
- *"Parking is a huge issue for neighbors, and it seems that more could be done to address neighbor's concerns. I live about 1/2 mile from the park and almost walk or bike to reach the park. I largely agree with adding more parking near the zoo at location A. However, the Master Plan has not made a strong case for re-aligning the entrance and exit at lot A. It may be that doing so makes a lot of sense and will enhance the park (and neighborhood). ...."*

- *"Concerned about the overall loss of parking as it's already difficult to find parking near the zoo when it gets busy."*
- *"I would still like to see less pavement and parking. I worry the large new parking lot near the beach will detract from the serene setting that existed."*

Question 4 (Responses = 280): "Public feedback was in support of flexible, open space for recreation consistent with the existing park uses. The plan will recommend (but does not show graphically) modification to improve drainage of the existing and proposed recreation areas. Additionally, maintenance of the existing court sports (tennis and basketball) and the addition of pickleball was supported by public comments. The youth focus group suggested foursquare be included as an additional amenity. The overall pavement area for the proposed courts is about the same as the existing park. The plan also shows multiple improvements for access to the lagoon and Lake Wingra for fishing. The existing accessible pier is maintained, with additional piers and access points (stone steps) added. Fishing is not limited to these areas; these are locations where ADA and other access improvements are focused." The question asked : "Do you feel the proposed uses are an appropriate mix of options for this park?"

Responses were heavily in support of the placement of shelters within the park: 77.5% of overall respondents said they agreed with the stated objective, 10.4% chose "No" and 12.1% were "Unsure" (Figure 7.50). The respondents neighborhood did not significantly affect the survey results. The surrounding neighborhoods responded 74% - Yes, 13% - No, and 13% - Unsure. Responses from the neighborhoods not surrounding the park were 83% - Yes, 5% - No, and 12% - Unsure (Figure 7.51).

Comments (78) submitted to the question included:

- *"Although it seems like the area between the shore and the multiuse path is quite narrow, thereby inhibiting people hanging out near the shoreline, for picnics, reading, hammocking, just taking in the view, etc. The beach area seems very small, similar to what it is currently. I would like to see the beach area expanded. I am wondering if the intent is to get rid of the second land ice rink and only have the lagoon and hockey rinks. I think that could be fine. However, I am thinking of 2 years ago when the lagoon ice was inconsistent and it was nice to have the second land ice rink. I wonder with warming winters, if it would be nice to keep the second land ice rink."*
- *"I'm occasionally use the existing softball field with my Senior League team, and we would like to maintain this field (improved, preferably) because it is centrally located to virtually our entire team."*
- *"I love the addition of foursquare (great idea!), however much of the current maintained open flexible recreational space is removed in the draft plan for natural areas and wetland/bog. These maintained open spaces that are proposed for removal are heavily used now for diverse forms of recreation such as fishing, picnicking cross country skiing, ice skating, hammocking, playing etc., Vilas Park is an active park, not an arboretum."*

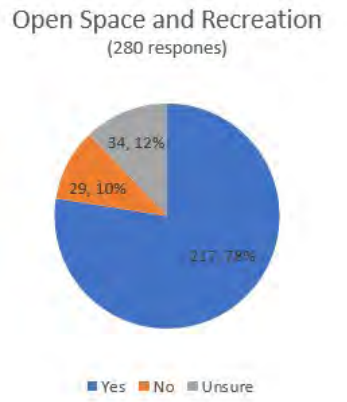


Figure 7.50. Public Survey Question 4 Results

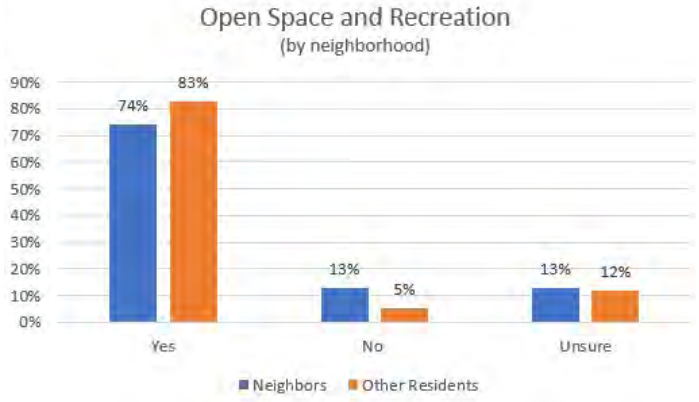


Figure 7.51. Public Survey Question 4 Results by Neighborhood

- *"I would like to see some of the large open space dedicated to a soccer field and/or volleyball courts."*
- *"Though I'd prefer that the basketball courts were removed. Also, there is no reason why the multi-purpose open space for recreation couldn't have more peripheral landscaping done to enhance the park experience. For example, flowering shrubs and trees could be added at the edges to add to color and fragrance. Sports enthusiasts could then enjoy playing or watching in shaded areas and smell the flowers of a bush as they enjoy watching the game. It could be better than just grass. Even the tennis court fences could have native vines or clematis growing on it. We need more botanical/horticultural planning integrated in with our park plans. Sports and good landscaping can and should be integrated to compliment each other and enhance the park-goers' holistic experience."*
- *"Would like to see parking added to hockey area instead of area A ... that lot could double as the hockey rink in winter."*

Question 5 (Responses = 276): "All of the existing playground equipment in Vilas Park is near the end of its life cycle. Main/Shoe Playground - The draft plan proposes the two playgrounds in the meadow be consolidated into one. This will allow for a single multi-faceted playground space with features designed for multi-age ranges and abilities. Less duplication of play features will enable Parks to provide a site with higher play value. Additionally, the design allows for the "Shoe" to remain in its current location. Dinosaur Playground (Near the intersection of Erin Street and Wingra Street) - Parks has made the determination, working in close consultation with the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for The Ho-Chunk Nation, that the focus of the mound site at Vilas Park will be to preserve and honor the sacred land in accordance with established standards – and that in its role as current and future stewards of the mounds within the City of Madison Parks system, it will not be placing children's play environments in proximity to mound sites. Beach Playground - As an outcome of public engagement, a playground near a shelter or restroom was desired. The addition of a playground at the beach allows for another type of play to be introduced into the beach area and the existing bathhouse provides the desired infrastructure without additional cost." The question asked : "Are proposed

playground locations acceptable to meet the needs of both neighborhood and regional visitors?"

Responses were in support of the placement of playgrounds within the park: 64.9% of responses said they agreed with the stated objective, 22.8% chose "No" and 12.3% were "Unsure" (Figure 7.52). More so than in previous questions, the respondents neighborhood was more likely to provided some variability in survey results. The surrounding neighborhoods were 17% less likely to feel the plan's approach to playgrounds was appropriate. Neighboring residents responded 56% - Yes, 31% - No, and 13% - Unsure. Responses from the neighborhoods not surrounding the park were 73% - Yes, 13% - No, and 14% - Unsure (Figure 7.53).

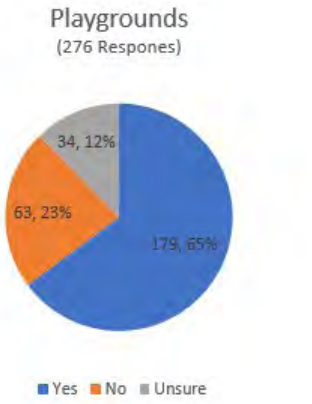


Figure 7.52. Public Survey Question 5 Results

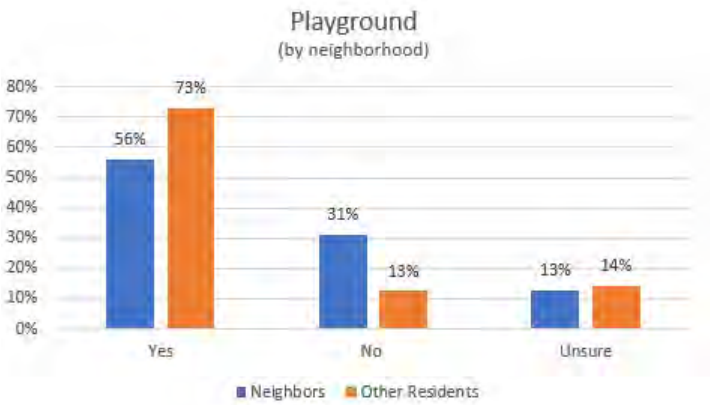


Figure 7.53. Public Survey Question 5 Results by Neighborhood

Comments (111) submitted to the question included:

- *"I encourage the park to consider natural playgrounds. The preschool playground at the Aldo Leopold Nature Center could be a model, although designed for a wider age range of kids, especially older kids. I know there are other innovative playgrounds around the country t hat are able to keep kids outside and active much more than that of typical standard playgrounds that stop challenging and interesting kids when they are still in elementary school."*
- *"As with other things about the plan, I like some of what is proposed for playgrounds and not others. Adding a small playground near the beach and beach area picnicking is a good idea. The dinosaur park is distinctive and charming, but in this more culturally sensitive era, it is probably time to see it go. If feasible, perhaps the dinosaur climbing structure could be moved to one of the new playgrounds. Everybody loves the Shoe and I am glad to see it incorporated into the new playground plan. A little more play equipment in this area could also be an asset, given that it is so heavily used. Neither of the above changes should require elimination of the westernmost playground, which is also heavily used. This playground serves the neighborhood well and is also used by visitors from other parts of the city and region. It's location near the Vilas/Van Buren St. access to the park means that people can (and do) park their cars on Vilas Avenue and surrounding streets and walk the short distance to the park and playground."*
- *"The separate small playgrounds with different types of equipment have always been one of the main attractionS of Vilas Park. For parents of young children it is much better to have*

the small playground spaces where you can easily keep track of your children and allow them more of a free roaming experience. We used to make a day or half day excursion out of it by going from one playground to the other, getting a change of location and type of play as we moved. Each playground had its own character, and there were unique features (the train for young children, the balancing structures for older kids) that were unique. If you have kids of different ages parents can stay with the younger kids while letting older children go to the other playground "on their own" which is exciting for middle aged kids."

- *"A greater respect for the mounds is a good move, and past due."*
- *"It would be nice to have another playground near the tennis/basketball courts"*
- *"I'm happy to see the the playgrounds more concentrated. I would love to see a large and semi enclosed dream park like Monona has. When my kids were young it was very stressful having them spread out and pulling towards different play areas across the park."*

Question 6 (Responses = 280): " The west section is proposed to be maintained as open water, which will require significant effort, including dredging and ongoing maintenance. The east portion of the lagoon is allowed to continue to transition to a wetland/bog type landscape. The plan will include upstream stormwater runoff treatment to help improve water quality in the lagoon. The specific transition and maintenance plan is to be determined. Additional research is required for full analysis of the proposed changes on the overall success of the lagoon, however, a recent analysis by UW-Madison Civil Engineering Capstone Students[3] found the proposal to be viable and an acceptable compromise between the cost of maintaining open water throughout the entire lagoon and letting the lagoon revert to a wetland or bog-like state." The question asked : " Is the treatment of the lagoon an acceptable balance of aesthetic, recreation, ecological, and cost factors?"

Responses were in support of the plan for the lagoon (68.6%) (Figure 7.54). However, a greater number were "Unsure" (21.5%) than other questions. Several comments submitted suggested respondents felt more data was need to make a determination. 9.8% said they did not feel the lagoon treatment was acceptable. The respondents neighborhood of residence did not significantly affect the survey results. The surrounding neighborhoods responded 68% - Yes, 21% - Unsure, and 11% - No, while the remaining responses were 75% - Yes, 21% - Unsure, and 5% - No (Figure 7.55).

Comments (94) submitted to the question included:

- *"In theory this sounds good but I would like more information on the impact to the wildlife in the area as well as potential issues that may arise from dredging and maintaining the lagoon area."*
- *"I like the idea of the eastern portion going back to a natural bog. I'm curious what this will look like and what habitat it will create."*
- *"I think it makes more sense to just let the entire lagoon transition back to wetlands. Maintaining open water seems wasteful and ecologically unsound. Dredging does a lot of*

3 UW-Madison Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engineering CEE 578 - Senior Capstone Design - Improvements to Vilas Park

damage to the ecosystem, and the ongoing maintenance required would be costly and detract from the natural beauty of the area. We have a bunch of open water in the lake right next door for fishing and boating, and there are many other locations (including the artificial rink) where people can skate in the winter. This area is obviously naturally inclined to be wetlands, and the ecological balance of the park will be much healthier when we let it transition back."

- *"For aesthetic and recreational purposes, this is a good compromise, though it would be up to ecologists, and not engineers or the public, as to whether it is acceptable not to return the entire lagoon to a wetland state for the health of the ecosystem. With winters getting shorter and shorter due to climate change, there is less and less reason to keep the open water maintained for skating.."*
- *"Don't know enough"*
- *"I like the concept here, but can't speak to acceptable balance of cost factors without seeing what the cost elements are..."*
- *"I like the idea of improving the ice quality and water quality of the lagoon. If dredging is the best way for that to happen, that's fine. Also think about climate adaption re: ice skating. Could native conifers be planted on the south side and west sides of the hockey rinks to provide shading from the late winter sun? Trees could also double as dispersed picnicking/ hammocking spots in summer. This is a minor point, but as a professional ecologist, I strongly advise you to not call the undredged portion of the lagoon a "bog". Bogs rarely occur in southern Wisconsin, and then take 1000s of years to develop. If unmaintained, the area will eventually become a cat-tail marsh dominated by non-native species (hybrid cat-tail, Phragmites, etc.), and in the short term (possibly for the next 50-100 years), it will be continue to be filled with algae, pondweeds, and dense beds of Eurasian water milfoil, which I don't think is what most people want...."*

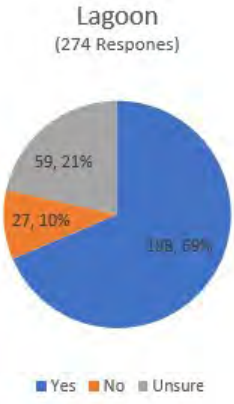


Figure 7.54. Public Survey Question 6 Results

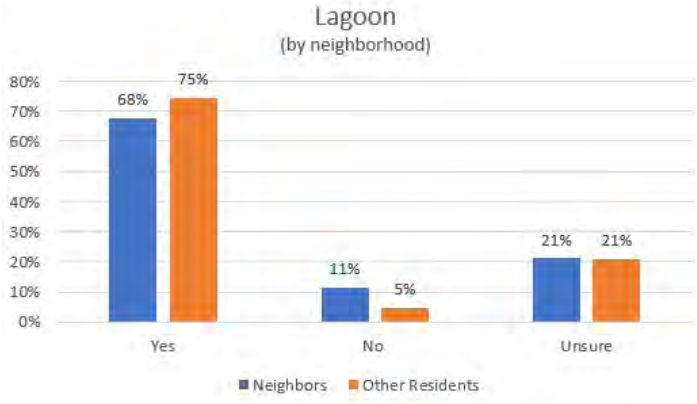


Figure 7.55. Public Survey Question 6 Results by Neighborhood

Overall, the responses to the survey showed a positive perception of the draft master plan, but identified several areas where revisions or more description were needed.

Key takeaways from the survey:

- Parking needs to be developed that ensures the lowest impact to existing open space and vegetation.
- Closure of Vilas Park Drive and replacing the road with a multi-use path is preferred.
- Additional information needs to be presented on the impacts of the new entrance at Campbell Street prior to implementation.
- Additional playgrounds are desired.
- The final plan should describe type and quality of vegetation in and around the lagoon and other natural areas.

EMAIL AND PHONE COMMENTS

Following the community meetings, public comment was also accepted via email through December 4, 2020. Over 70 emails were received. The full emails from the public comment period can be found in Appendix B. A summary of the responses is included below.

Many of the comments submitted expressed concern regarding the proposed entrance at Drake Street and Campbell Street. Some had questions about the specific design of the proposed intersection, others expressed concerns about removal of trees and the potential impact of a perceived increase in traffic on Vilas Avenue, surrounding Bear Mound Park.

"we strongly oppose the proposal to move the park entrance the corner of Campbell and Drake St and prefer to keep the entrance at the 4 way stop at Randall and Drake. Moving the entrance to Campbell street will undoubtedly increase the traffic on Campbell and around Bear Mound Park."

"Homes on Drake St. are not currently visible from much or most of the park, creating a sense of separation and spaciousness. How will the Campbell St. entrance affect the view from the Park? How wide will the opening be and how many trees will be cut down?"

"The 5-way intersection at Grant is horrible, and I am happy to see it gone. Without the driveway there, would the stop sign be retained? It is a rolling stop that nearly nobody stops at today. Without the driveway there, it will become moot. (Turning left from Garfield to Drake already is not often possible because of this). Similarly, it is unclear to pedestrians if they should cross on the Drake portion or further up. Coming from the south, this is compounded by missing sidewalks to the north of the intersection."

"I'm most concerned about the area near Drake Street. I oppose the proposed entrance/exit at Campbell Street,across from my house. The proposal is a rehash of 1970s proposal that was rejected. Collector streets vs. narrow, winding Campbell St. Concern for the Native American burials and mound in Bear Mound Park at Campbell and Vilas.

- *We were told at the November 9 meeting that two of the large trees near the proposed entrance/exiit could be saved. But we were not allowed to plant trees that near the corner; how would the park get away with it?*
- *Drake Street is for more than park users. A new park entrance would require removal of parking spaces used by delivery people and guests coming to the neighborhood. Our mail carrier has expressed opposition to the proposed road.*
- *Traffic: The proposed traffic patterns would mean more left turns and more backed-up traffic*
- *Cost"*

Some respondents offered suggestions for the Campbell Street entrance.

"*If the north entrance (and exit) "must" be moved to Campbell then*

- *that exit should allow only right or left turns--i.e. no through traffic across to Campbell as the grade and narrows are a definite pinch point.*
- *Similarly, traffic entering the intersection from Campbell should also be allowed only right or left turns*
- *This issue was mentioned in the plan--but without specifying these as possible mitigations."*

Other general comments:

"One of the great things about the Lake Wingra shore is looking over towards the arboretum and seeing almost nothing but trees. Coming into Vilas Park one gets a spectacular view of mixed shade and open green space--with Wingra beyond! Let's keep it that way. Clearly there has been a lot of effort put into this plan--thank you all so much for working so hard for these beautiful gems."

"Grass areas need to be maintained in the Vilas Park Master plan -not taken away. These grassareas are multi- use locations for many activities, sports, and gatherings and are being obliterated by too many paths – whether concrete, pourous, or woodchips. (uncertain of material) People and groups are very creative at using this grass space."

FINAL MASTER PLAN

The draft final plan was modified based on public and professional comments identified in this section to produce the final master plan. As outlined in earlier phases of the project, the development of the final master plan followed the following themes:

MOBILITY AND SAFETY

- Improve pedestrian safety along the Vilas Park Drive corridor by considering the closure of Vilas Park Drive to through traffic and replace with a multi-use path.
- Design all new trails and park features to be accessible.

ENVIRONMENT

- Protect the existing character of the park while improving balance between passive natural areas and active use areas. Decisions impacting existing trees, vegetation, shoreline and open space should be transparent and defensible.
- Improve lagoon water quality and shoreline access and aesthetics through habitat enhancement.
- Increase quality and size of natural areas within the park through the consolidation of pavement and high use areas.
- Address stormwater and drainage issues on paths and in recreation areas.

COMMUNITY

- Continue engaging with neighborhoods and park users to discuss improvements and programming changes.
- Provide space for community events.
- Incorporate park history into design and programming.

A PARK FOR EVERYONE

- Offer programmed active spaces for youth and adults.
- Consider allowing dogs in some areas of the park consistent with current Madison General Ordinances.
- Continue to offer amenities and activities

CONNECTIVITY

- Improve the interconnection between Vilas Park and the City through increased multimodal transportation options (i.e. public transit, bike/pedestrian trails, bike rentals, canoe/kayak access).
- Improve existing connections and continue to expand pedestrian connections within the park and throughout the zoo.
- Improve wayfinding to alleviate traffic congestion during heavy traffic times.

A major challenge of this planning process has been balancing the needs and desires of neighbors of the park with other City of Madison residents and those who visit from outside of the City. The final master plan reflects the thousands of individual comments and feedback received throughout the planning process. Specific changes to the draft final master plan are outlined in the following section.

Map 7.2 Final Master Plan

Page Intentionally Left Blank

MODIFICATIONS TO THE DRAFT MASTER PLAN

The following are specific changes to the draft master plan as presented at the community information meeting on November 16, 2020. Figure 7.56 shows the approximate location of the changed feature(s).

I. Reduced parking capacity in north lot to retain additional green space.

Public comment, specifically from the Greenbush neighborhood advocated for the reduction in total parking in the north lot to preserve existing lawn space that functions as a picnic area and neighborhood open space. This change has a limited impact on the overall number of parking stalls. A total of approximately 30 stalls were removed from the draft master plan with this change.

II. Added nature-based play area east of Vilas Ave. on west side of meadow.

Results of the survey and comments at the community meetings clarified the importance of the western playground to the community, specifically Vilas neighborhood residents. To minimize the duplication of play offerings in the proposed eastern playground (the shoe playground), a nature-themed play area is proposed to replace the existing play equipment in this location.

III. Removed several of the proposed paths around the lagoon to reduce amount of impervious surface.

Public feedback suggested the plan had too many paths on the west side of the lagoon. The reduction and realignment of proposed paths still meet required accessibility guidelines. There was little support to maintain the extra paths, so removal was deemed inconsequential.

IV. Reduced parking capacity and moved open shelter closer to tennis courts. Flipped location of tennis courts with pickleball courts. Added 'wall ball'/bounding board. Added call-out for sledding hill northwest of parking.

In response to public comment, the parking lot at the tennis courts was reduced from 40 to 36 stalls. This allows for additional open space at the bottom of the slope that runs parallel to the multi-use trail that is used by some as a sledding hill. The shelter is moved closer to the tennis courts which are flipped with the pickleball courts. A bounding board is added for wall ball.

V. Reduced amount of space dedicated to "natural areas" west of lagoon, now shown as "maintained open space."

While many public comments were interested in sustainability and natural areas in the park, many felt the draft plan dedicated too much valuable open space to natural areas around the lagoon. The final plan maintains a buffer of native species around much of the perimeter of the lagoon to aid in stormwater management, reduce goose population and improve aesthetics. It was noted during the community and stakeholder meetings that the

Figure 7.56. Final Master Plan with changes to draft plan noted.

final species selection and extent of natural areas would be refined during construction. Any plantings would be maintained as outlined in the City's Natural Areas Management Plan.

VI. Recommending further study of lagoon management.

Responses to the online survey clearly identified a need to better describe the intent of the lagoon treatments identified in the draft master plan. While the scope of the master planning process did not include formal study of the lagoon's vegetation or hydrology, several basic assumptions can be made.

- The entire lagoon is unlikely to continue as clear, open water. Dredging will be required to make these improvements to water quality/clarity.
- Further study will be conducted at the time improvements are implemented. This may include a maintenance plan and environmental impact statement.
- All improvements will be permitted and approved by the WI DNR and Army Corps of Engineers, and follow all applicable City of Madison ordinances in place at the time of construction.

VII. Playground by beach was removed in favor of a nature-based play area per item II above.

Early in the planning process, the Parks Division identified the desire to consolidate the playground areas within Vilas Park to allow for reduced implementation and maintenance costs associated with new playgrounds. Strong opinion for maintaining two playgrounds within the meadow area meant the beach

playground would be removed to avoid duplication of similar amenities within the park, allowing the two proposed play areas to have maximum play value.

VIII. Possible Metro Transit stop shown at intersection of Orchard Street and Wingra Drive.

In keeping with the need to improve access for public transit, Metro suggested a possible stop at the corner of Orchard Street and Wingra Drive. Metro is unlikely to service the interior of the park due to the number and scale of pedestrian movements. This proposed stop, along with a potential stop at the corner of Drake Street and Randall Avenue, would be improvements to the current access at Erin Street and Mills Street. Any routes would need to be discussed and approved by Metro. At the time of the master planning process, Metro was undergoing a route analysis. Final determination of any stop would be made outside of the scope of this master plan.

An event or peak hours shuttle could also be considered and evaluated as part of future planning efforts. Additionally, the City has begun discussions with St. Mary's about possible use of a staff parking lot for weekend park and zoo visitors. No decision has been made at the time of this report.

IX. The Annie Stewart Fountain is shown in its original location. A separate planning effort is underway to determine the future of the fountain.

Despite the intent to show an option for the Annie Stewart fountain to be relocated, it was determined that any discussion about the future of the Annie Stewart fountain should remain the focus of specific planning efforts related to the fountain. The final master plan shows a placeholder at the Drake and Randall Avenue entry gateway for a future feature.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS ON THE FINAL MASTER PLAN

COMMUNITY INPUT MEETING (#4)

On February 4, 2021, a virtual meeting was held to publicly present the final park master plan and provide time for questions and comments. Registration to the meeting was requested by more than 135 people. The meeting began with a short presentation to review the plan for those who may not have participated in past meetings. The presentation included descriptions of the concepts broken down by the key design elements:

- Traffic on Vilas Park Drive
- Location of the main park shelter
- Parking layout
- Open space and recreation opportunities
- Playground location
- Lagoon (and ice skating) management

Participants were allowed three minutes each to speak during the meeting to provide comments or ask questions about the master plan. Some participants expressed concerns about the Campbell Street entrance including possible traffic leaving the park and heading north on Campbell Street into the narrow Vilas Avenue circle around Bear Mound Park. Others were more generally concerned about signage and logistics at the entrance. Some of the comments included:

"Since there is so much neighborhood concern about increasing traffic on Campbell Street with the new north entrance, have you considered making Campbell Street one way or even closing it to Vilas Ave so that vehicles exiting or entering the park could only do so from Vilas Ave? Just a thought."

" Campbell Street entrance - there are also several medium/large oak trees there which it appears will be cut down."

"There is a lot of concern in the Vilas neighborhood about the proposed new entrance on Drake and Campbell. Could you talk about why you need to make that change.

In addition to the Campbell Street entrance discussion, several participants expressed a desire for a playground to be shown at the beach as was in the draft master plan.

"When removing the playground by the beach and not the natural playground on the west side of the park, did you consider equity at all? The people who access the fishing area and the beach from the south side of Madison are generally lower-income and more people of color than the neighborhood on the west side of the park (which will now have 2 playgrounds)"

"I want to second having a small playground by the beach - swing set and a slide - might be enough. This shouldn't really be much maintenance and would add a lot to the beach atmosphere."

EMAIL AND PHONE COMMENTS

Following the community meetings, public comment was also accepted via email and phone through February 18th, 2020. Forty-three emails were received, including statements from the Vilas Neighborhood Association, Greenbush Neighborhood Association and Friends of Lake Wingra. Comments from these three groups is discussed as part of the Resident Resource Group to which all are members. The full emails from the public comment period can be found in Appendix B. A summary of the responses is included below.

Numerous neighbors of the park wrote comments concerned about the proposed relocation of the park entrance to Drake Street at Campbell Street, some of their concerns included removal of mature vegetation along Drake Street, increased traffic on Campbell Street and ultimately Vilas Avenue, :

" The proposed Campbell Street entrance should not be considered part of the Master Plan because not enough data is available to justify this change. A thorough traffic study, an environmental impact study, and more public forums need to be conducted before any recommendations regarding the entrance to the park can be made."

" The proposed relocation of the primary 'northern' park entrance to Drake/Campbell continues to demonstrate some key advantages: A) it would eliminate the awkward street layout of the 5-point Randall/Drake intersection and the clumsy Drake/Park/Grant/Garfield mash-up; B) it would place a new stop sign in the middle of the Drake Street speedway between Grant and Randall, currently hazardous for park and neighborhood pedestrians; and C) it would open more contiguous 'meadow' area to park users. We would hope that Traffic Engineering would retain the stop signs at Grant and Drake to reduce the "drift-through stop" on Grant/Drake, and enforce neighborhood level speed limits.

However as we heard, the relocation of the main park entrance to a four way intersection also increases neighbors' concern about added traffic to the Campbell/Vilas Bear Mound Park area. If this main entrance relocation moves ahead, we continue to suggest that Traffic Engineering (and Parks create an engineering solution to reduce traffic north on Campbell, such as making that single block of Campbell Street one-way south, building in large street bump-outs, or creating a right-turn only exit from the park to discourage cars from driving north on Campbell and adding traffic to that residential and historical area."

Additionally, concerns were raised over the Emergency Access Route shown connecting from the parking lot to Randall Avenue. City of Madison Fire Department (MFD) identified that

"The MFD has approved emergency access roads that are barely distinguishable as fire lanes... Secondary emergency access roads are rarely used but when they are needed they allow responders to do their jobs as effectively and efficiently as possible. The connection to S Randall was put on the plan as an option or placeholder by the design team. As the funding for the parking lot comes available, the MFD will work with Parks to fund the optimal location and connection for a second emergency access point. Fire lanes or emergency access points can be designed to prevent regular vehicle traffic, but may be used for pedestrian and bike access points and even walking paths for the neighborhood. The MFD has approved bollards, gates, rolled or mountable curbs and paddle gates to stop unauthorized traffic and allow emergency access."

Several messages included support for the closure of Vilas park Drive, however one respondent did note the following:

" On another subject, I would like to encourage a deeper look at how the park can be accessed by those who no longer can walk, bike or run through the park. Yes, it is wonderful to provide for those activities. But I have a 90 year old friend who loves nature and it is her joy to have me drive her into the park to watch the lake, look for birds and relax. Is there not a way to allow vehicular traffic by creating traffic bumps and calming devices, by posting "No Through Traffic" between the hours of 5 am and 9 am? Please try to find a way for those of us who do not qualify for handicapped stickers, those of us who are not fully mobile, but love nature, those of us who simply want to be refreshed by the tranquility of the park, to be able to access the park."

COMMUNITY PARTNERS ADVISORY GROUP AND RESIDENT RESOURCE GROUP

The end of public engagement came with a combined meeting of the Community Partners Advisory Group (CPAG) and the Resident Resource Group (RRG), which was held virtually via Zoom on February 18, 2020. Participants were provided with the presentation prior to the meeting and asked to come to the meeting with specific questions or comments regarding the final master plan. A full

summary of the meeting, as well as the full statements of the Greenbush and Vilas Neighborhood Associations can be found in Appendix B.

Takeaways from the meeting included:

- A desire for a statement in the master plan report regarding further study of the Campbell Street Entrance before any further planning or development.
- Participants desired a better understanding of the analysis of cultural resources such as burial mounds conducted as part of the master plan.
- Interest in the proposed management of the lagoon and how this is presented in the master plan Report. Similar to Campbell Street entrance, desire for note regarding what types of analysis would be
- conducted as part of future projects.
- Understanding of the trail types and materials proposed.

The Greenbush and Vilas Neighborhood Associations as well as the Friends of Lake Wingra provided formal statements as part of their membership in the Resident Resource Group in representation of their respective memberships.

Selections from each statement are included below. The full statements can be found in Appendix B.

Friends of Lake Wingra

"We strongly encourage flexibility in the interpretation of how park features get implemented. This comment is not in reference to the color of a shelter or the slope of the roof. It is in regards to the general process of how the design is influenced for different park features.

We acknowledge and appreciate that some components of the master plan have avoided language that puts "all the eggs in one basket." We would like to see this enhanced. For example, our understanding, from conversations with those in the community, is that further archaeological analysis is needed to inform respectful placement of certain park features. Based on the findings of these analyses, what is proposed in the final draft plan might not be possible without some major conflict. Will the plan offer guidance for if conflicts like this happen?

Similarly, the land surrounding Lake Wingra has a rich history. Contributions and recommendations from the HoChunk deserve public acknowledgment, consideration, and clear opportunities for the public to understand these recommendations and why they might be important. We feel this could be improved moving forward.

This recommendation originates from our December 2020 comments and we feel it deserves another mention. Spicing up the antiquated public engagement framework of input-output type of feedback and

decision making could allow for better discussions, conflict resolution, and consensus building between draft and final versions of designs."

Greenbush Neighborhood Association

"Background and Rationale for GNA Statement on Wingra Overlook:

GNA asks that the Vilas Master Plan explicitly identify the need for flexibility in future options for the Wingra Overlook area. We are not comfortable with any implication that all decisions related to this part of the park incorporated into the plan are final, and we ask that the plan clearly stipulate that special circumstances exist which mean that these decisions are understood as tentative and specifically open to future amendment after much-needed further community engagement.

In particular, GNA believes that, before implementation is considered and budgets are developed related to the Wingra Overlook part of Vilas Park, additional inclusive community engagement is needed that judiciously takes into consideration:

- *Protecting and honoring the mounds and the perspectives offered by the Ho-Chunk*
- *Options for continued Greenbush Neighborhood access to a small, toddler-friendly play area*
- *Decisions on the future of the Annie Stewart Memorial*

Because we understand that this is a somewhat challenging request, we are providing relevant background and rationale here, organized in two categories:

1. *Special qualities of the Wingra Overlook and of Greenbush Neighborhood's relationship with it*
2. *Limitations imposed by the park master planning process.*

Limitations imposed by the park master planning process:

Greenbush residents have not been consistently provided sufficient and timely opportunity to engage collectively on key issues and to respond effectively to rapidly-changing and/or poorly communicated successive versions of plans and rationales for decisions. Such limitations are key reasons for our request that additional engagement opportunities be provided before long-term decisions on the Wingra Overlook are finalized. These process limitations are in part a result of the pandemic (which MSA and Parks acknowledge to have created special challenges in ensuring timely and effective communications) and in part due to the loss of Urban Assets (initially contracted to provide expertise in public engagement) from the project."

Vilas Neighborhood Association

"The VNA continues to support the following elements included in the final draft master plan:

1. *Ending commuter and other vehicular through traffic on Vilas Park Drive.*
2. *Maintaining open, flexible use of green space.*
3. *Improvements for pedestrian and bicyclist safety.*
4. *Retaining and expanding the Shoe playground*
5. *Maintaining ice skating on the lagoon and dredging at least half of the lagoon, if needed to improve*

water and ice quality and safety.
6. *Fixing drainage problems throughout the park.*
7. *Retaining and improving the tennis courts.*
8. *Adding bicycle parking and a bus stop to provide alternative ways of accessing the park."*

Recommendations (descriptions have been omitted from this section of the report but can be found in the Appendix.)

"The VNA recommends incorporating the following changes to the Vilas Park master plan:
1. *Remove the relocated north entry to the Park and the Zoo at Drake and Campbell Streets from the plan.*
2. *Remove the proposed parking lot expansion and small picnic shelter west of the tennis courts from the plan in order to maintain flexible open space in and views of the water from this section of the park.*
3. *Create a playground near the beach, as included in the initial draft master plan.*
4. *Conduct a more thorough analysis of options for the lagoon before finalizing decisions about related park features.*
5. *Include language in the plan that provides flexibility about the location of proposed park features pending further analysis of the Park's potential archaeological and cultural value."*

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FINAL MASTER PLAN

The final master plan for Vilas park is a representation of 21 months of planning and design including: four community meetings, seven stakeholder meetings, online surveys, email comments, among others. City staff and State agencies provided input on regulatory and statutory requirements. In many cases, public comment drove the design by providing important perspectives on features that have worked well and areas that require improvement.

A planning process of this scale must seek to balance the needs and wants of neighboring residents, the larger community and outside visitors within environmental, regulatory and budgetary constraints. The ultimate goal of the master plan is creating a community park for all, regardless of age, race, gender and ability.

Recommendations for Vilas Park in response to site analysis, community engagement and regulatory agency feedback are listed in the following section. Type and scale of improvements or areas requiring further study are identified where possible.

Vilas Park Drive Summary and Recommendations

One of the most popular suggested changes to Vilas Park was the closure of Vilas Park Drive through the vacation of the right-of-way from the historic park bridge near Edgewood Avenue to the east side of the lagoon. Removal of vehicular circulation and associated pavement from the core of the peninsula provides opportunity for reclaiming valuable lake frontage for park users. Pedestrian and bicycle circulation is maintained by the addition of a multi-use path with additional sidewalk to emphasize pedestrian safety.

- Close Vilas Park Drive to through traffic and vacate right-of-way, replacing roadway with a multi-use path.
- Public media campaign should precede closure to notify and educate the community about the intent and identify alternate routes.
- Permanent signage ("G") should direct park and zoo users to the appropriate entrances and parking areas.
- Maintain access to shelter for two-way traffic from the east.
- 12-ft wide multi-use path ("N") and 6-ft sidewalk should be paved for maximum versatility, accessibility and function as an emergency access route. Asphalt is the most cost effective solution but other materials, including permeable pavements could be considered.
- Accessible features such as piers ("J"), benches should be distributed to provided equal access from both the west (Edgewood Avenue) entrance and east (main park shelter/south zoo entrance).

Figure 7.56. Final Master Plan Vilas Park Drive and multi-use path

North Park Entrance and Parking Summary and Recommendations

The Campbell Street Entrance Exit was a topic of much discussion and concern. The master plan includes this feature as the existing entry and exit do not meet current traffic design standards. However, prior to the proceeding with the design development for the new Vilas Park driveway, Parks and Traffic Engineering will complete an analysis regarding Drake Street/Randall Avenue and zoo and park traffic.

Preliminary assessment by City of Madison traffic engineering and MSA Professional Services suggested the existing right-of-way on Drake Street in both size and vehicle carrying capacity could accommodate the relocated entrance at Campbell Street. The purpose of the suggested realignment is to reduce conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians by combining two atypical intersections (Drake Street at Randall Avenue and Drake Street at Grant Street) into a single controlled intersection at Campbell Street and Drake Street. The Greenbush and Vilas Neighborhood Associations requested further study effects of modified entrance on surrounding streets including Drake Street, Randall Avenue, Campbell Street, and Vilas Avenue. As this change would require modification to right-of-way outside of the park boundary, City of Madison Traffic Engineering would be involved in design and approval of any modifications.

- City of Madison Parks and Traffic Engineering to study the feasibility of the proposed entrance realignment, including traffic and environmental impacts. Surrounding neighborhoods to be provided
  results of any such study.
- Develop a public engagement plan to provide updates and community input as design is developed.
- Remove the park road and parking along the Drake Street boundary of the park, combine parking areas in a central location to maximize use and minimize pavement.
- Maintain an open green space along Randall Avenue.
- Incorporate integrated stormwater management with bioswales or other best management practices in the parking lot design.
- Improve the existing small wetland by expanding its size to accept pretreated stormwater from hardscapes and by landscaping it with native plant materials.
- Update park signs and improve wayfinding.
- Improve pedestrian crossings at Drake Street and Randall Avenue. If appropriate consider features such as Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) or Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB).
- Coordinate with Madison Arts Commission for a focal feature at the start of the pedestrian promenade.
- Suggest METRO provide bus service at Drake Street and Randall Avenue.

Figure 7.57. Existing North Parking Lot

Figure 7.58. Proposed North Parking Lot

South Parking Lot and Beach Summary and Recommendations

The existing south lot serves both park users as well as those visiting the zoo. The design provides safe routes for pedestrians and bicycles, characteristics lacking from the existing park, particularly along the narrow portion of Vilas Park Drive south of the zoo.

- Suggest METRO provide bus service at Orchard Street and Wingra Drive.
- Redesign parking lot to include a school and tour bus drop off. Bus parking should continue to be off-site.
- Incorporate integrated stormwater management with bioswales or other best management practices in the parking lot design.
- Pedestrian safety through proper signage, crosswalks and traffic calming features.
- Improve accessibility at the beach.
- Renovate the existing bathhouse.

Figure 7.59. Character of existing meadow.

Open Space and Active Recreation Summary and Recommendations

Maintaining the overall character of Vilas Park was broadly heard from all participants in the planning process. The park's variety of natural spaces and maintained open space provide a unique character and sense of place (Figure 7.59). The "Meadow" has been a core of the park since it's original design by O.C. Simonds and the multitude of recreation options it affords, both active and passive should be preserved.

- Consider adding drain tiles to the meadow to lessen standing water and wet areas in the maintained lawn area.
- Remove invasive species and maintain the understory of the woodland canopy with native plants.
- Lessen high maintenance lawn areas with a bordering prairie (Figure 7.60, also see Existing Conditions section for existing land cover).
- Establish native perennial planting in the lower and wetter areas between the courts and lagoon.

Figure 7.60. Map of landcover types, legend shown at right.

- Relocate the basketball court to the current tennis court location, reduce the number of tennis courts to four. Add pickle ball and four square in the remaining footprint of the existing tennis courts.
- Replace the basketball and tennis courts with appropriate subbase materials and adequate depth and cover with new pavement and colored top coating.
- Enlarge the parking lot to account for court use, the proposed open-air shelter and canoe/kayak launch.
- Add a path (crushed stone) that connects to the main paths and trails along the north side of the lagoon.
- Add picnicking opportunities.

Playground Summary and Recommendations

Playgrounds are ubiquitous to public parks and the need for engaging play spaces for children within the park is essential. Locations of playgrounds should provide for equitable access for all park users.

- Maintain the "Old Woman in the Shoe" play structure in its current location.
- Develop a combined, multi-faced play area adjacent to the "Shoe" in the location of the current eastern playground.
- Play equipment should be designed and located to develop age appropriate play spaces, equipment should be accessible to users of all physical and intellectual abilities.
- Provide shade, benches and other amenities near the playground.
- Remove the Dinosaur Playground in the "Wingra Overlook" area in compliance with the City's Mound management Plan as well as recommendation of the Ho-Chunk.

Figure 7.61. Old Lady in the Shoe

Figure 7.62. Nature-themed play area

Figure 7.63. Age appropriate play options

Lagoon, Lake and Shoreline Summary and Recommendations

The Vilas lagoon, in its current format, was dug in the 1950s as part of an earlier master plan. Park's records indicate that it has not been dredged since the original installation. One goal of the 2021 master plan is to improve the water quality of the lagoon and maintain our ability to use some of the lagoon for ice skating. To achieve these goals, the plan provides recommendation for forebays, native planting treatment on the shoreline, and the dredging of the west pond and the naturalization of the east pond. These recommendations are based on the best available information. Parks will contract with a consultant specializing in water quality improvements for water bodies similar to the Vilas lagoon to further study options to improve water quality, and to determine the best management practices to preserve the lagoon for the future.

As the scope of a master plan is to provide a framework for improvements and maintenance, several questions remain regarding the future of the lagoon in Vilas Park. Analysis by UW-Madison Civil Engineering students[4] identified several scenarios including a similar blend of open water and marsh as shown in the master plan as well fully open water throughout the lagoon. The cost of maintaining open water in the full lagoon is likely outside of the available budget of the Parks Division, however future management techniques or community

4 UW-Madison Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engineering CEE 578 - Senior Capstone Design - Improvements to Vilas Park

desire may alter the management plan. The proposed blend of open water and marsh provides recreation opportunity for canoeing and kayaking (Figure 7.64), fishing and winter skating or hockey. The proposed marsh would offer a variety of habitat for aquatic and species.

- Study ecological and water quality impacts of proposed lagoon management, including maintenance costs.
- Add wetland sedimentation forebays to collect runoff in the park and add an off-site stormwater discharge prior to the runoff entering the lagoon (Figure 7.65).
- Dredge lagoon to increase depth of open water, reducing the habitat for some invasive aquatic species.
- Continue active management of aquatic invasive species within the lagoon.
- Add access points such as stone steps or wood piers along the north side of the lagoon. Distribute locations for accessibility.
- Reduce the total area maintained as open water, east side of lagoon suggested to transition to marsh.
- Minimize turf grass at shoreline.

Figure 7.64. Example of kayak/canoe launch and native plantings along shoreline.

Figure 7.65. Example of a lagoon with forebays and native shoreline.

Park Shelters Summary and Recommendations

Park shelters are often iconic representations of the overall character of a park. The future shelter in Vilas Park should provide this character while respecting the communities desire for a feature that blends into the landscape. Sustainable design and multi-purpose space are key to successful and lasting park faculties.

- Fully accessible facility (universal design).
- Facility must act as a warming shelter for skating and hockey in the winter.
- Provide a community meeting room.
- Consider views from shelter onto lagoon and lake and views from park to shelter
- Existing (main) shelter to remain in place while changes to Vilas Park Drive and multi-use path are developed. Allowing time for budgeting and community involvement.
- Add open-sided park shelters for picnicking and small gatherings, shelters should be placed to align with accessible routes.

Figure 7.66. Possible shelter with large windows, indoor and outdoor spaces.

Figure 7.67. Community room with large windows

Page Intentionally Left Blank