

James Madison Park Master Plan and Shelter Design

Public Meeting #1 – Notes

5:30-8:00 PM, January 17, 2018
Madison Central Library, 201 W. Mifflin Street

Number of participants signed in: 45

Presentation

The meeting began with a presentation of the project goals and master planning process; site history and current uses; and existing conditions and opportunity areas related to the land, shoreline and architecture/buildings at the park.



Presentation Q&A discussion notes:

- A group of neighbors made plans for the park that were shared with city staff several years ago.
- The sea was constructed in the 1960's. It was built parallel to beach, so it has not had a huge impact on the natural lake bed/shoreline at that location.
- The existing park shelter was built in 1978.
- The 2013 park shelter study is not available online, but you may email Sarah Lerner at the Parks Division to have a copy emailed to you.
- Building a new shelter is a possibility and something the city would like community feedback on during this process.
- Connecting the park path to the Memorial Union lakeshore path is mentioned in the Downtown Plan as an opportunity, but would be difficult to achieve. This is decades from happening, if at all.

Open House

Participants circulated through three park information stations (architecture, land & water, and historical resources), talked with project team members, and provided input on precedent imagery and discussion questions.

See attachment A for precedent imagery dot voting results.

Architecture Station Input: (✓ = number of positive votes received)

What improvements would make the park facilities more useful to our growing community?

- Acoustics ✓✓
- Visibility ✓✓
- Concessions area ✓
- Sense of place ✓
- Toilet facilities ✓

Additional comments:

- Accessibility for all age groups
- Paved paths for elderly, wheelchairs, strollers
- More benches, west facing for relaxed viewing
- Improved playground for youngsters
- More picnic tables for families, social gatherings
- Accommodate voting in the park shelter
- Move a historic house into the missing tooth by the Cornelius Collins House
- Something to make movie showings easier (e.g., at Shrekfest); maybe a small amphitheater and place to hang a backdrop

Land & Water Station Input

What are your dreams for the park? What was your favorite experience in any outdoor public space?

- Passive Recreation ✓✓✓✓✓
- Views of the Park & Lake ✓✓✓✓
- Boating ✓✓✓
- Accessibility ✓✓
- Active Recreation ✓✓
- Ornamental Gardens ✓✓
- Produce Gardens ✓✓
- Dog park ✓✓
- Swimming ✓✓
- Nature-based play ✓
- Events ✓
- Concessions ✓
- Rentals ✓
- Winter Activities ✓
- Beach ✓

Additional comments:

- Bike path through park to stop and enjoy ✓✓
- Rain gardens, wetlands ✓
- Native habitat, pollinator friendly
- Terraced parking and basketball [in current location at west edge of the park]
- Improved park maintenance to deter vandalism and unwanted uses. Especially at entrance, enhance visibility.
- Living shoreline
- Less landscape please

Historical Resources Station Input

How should the past influence the future of James Madison Park?

- Waterfront recreational opportunities ✓
- Richer integration with larger community ✓
- Reminders of past uses; native landscape

Large Group Discussion

Participants worked in small table groups to fill out a “Brag, Worry, Envision, Wonder” exercise worksheet. Small groups then shared their top responses to each discussion topic with the full (large) group of participants. The top responses reported by the small groups are listed below, with check marks denoting the number of times a specific item was mentioned.

Topic 1 **Brag: Things to maintain and enhance.**

What do you love most about James Madison Park? What are its greatest assets and strengths?

Top Themes

1. Maintain natural open space.
2. Maintain physical and visual access to lake.
3. Maintain diversity of uses and users.
4. Maintain historic structures.

All responses:

(✓ = number of times an item was mentioned)

- Natural, open space ✓✓✓✓✓
- Water access ✓✓
- Views ✓✓
- Diverse uses and users ✓✓
- Boathouse ✓
- Gates of Heaven ✓
- Trees
- Historic structures
- Neighborhood space

Topic 2 **Worry: Things to address and improve.**

What concerns do you have regarding James Madison Park (present or future)?

Top Themes

1. Improve pedestrian safety and connectivity to and within the park.
2. Improve beach and lake health and shoreline safety.
3. Improve use of shelter.

All responses:

(✓ = number of times an item was mentioned)

- Improve use of shelter ✓
- Water safety
- Beach health and cleanliness
- Remove sea wall
- Lake health and quality
- Pedestrian/traffic safety, issues crossing Gorham ✓
- Path does not accommodate multiple uses (walking, biking, dogs)
- Improved path behind Verex Plaza
- Personal safety

- East portion of park is isolated
- Drug use in park
- Landscaping maintenance
- Proportion of shade & sun

Topic 3

Envision: Guiding vision

What is your dream vision for James Madison Park? What values should be expressed as it develops over the next 20 years?

Top Themes

1. Integrate environmentally sustainable design, including natural treatments for the landscape, play spaces and shoreline.
2. Provide opportunities for adult play and exercise.
3. Increase educational opportunities related to local history and sustainability.

All responses:

(✓ = number of times an item was mentioned)

- Adult play spaces and exercise equipment ✓✓
- Demonstrative environmental installations ✓
- Nature play spaces and equipment
- Sustainability
- Shoreline restoration
- Stone steps at the shore (like at the Memorial Union)
- Increased educational opportunities
- Opportunities to celebrate local history
- Interpretive walking path
- Place to meet new people, make friends
- Meditation space
- Increased diversity of park users
- Improved connection between east and west sections of the park
- Dog park
- Improvement to park shelter to allow for four season use
- Warming house

Topic 4

Wonder: Opportunities to explore

What opportunities do you see to meet this vision? How can the park best serve and celebrate our growing community?

Top Themes

1. Improve connections between the lake and the park by providing opportunities such as a public pier, water craft rentals and lifeguards.
2. Integrate public art through installations and interactive art spaces.
3. Integrate sustainable design demonstrations in the park and shelter.

All responses:

(✓ = number of times an item was mentioned)

- Public pier ✓✓ (courtesy docking)

- Stormwater filtration ✓ (demonstrative, educational)
- Lifeguards ✓
- Water craft rentals
- Improved boat access
- Improved access to lake
- Bike ferry
- Public art
- Art installation/play space
- Dedicated space for graffiti
- Youth activities
- LEED certified shelter
- Tennant for the park shelter (broad)
- Programming/exhibit in park shelter
- Rename the park
- More accessible for people of all abilities
- Trees for hammocks & slack lining
- Community garden/greenhouse

Additional Comments

The following comments were received from individual worksheets and by email following the meeting:

Topic 1: Brag

- Waterfront
- Paved walking trails
- Places to play and be active
- View to/from the capital
- Sandy lakebed, good for swimming
- Rooftop garden and landscaping
- The sunsets are stunning
- Historic architecture instills a sense of pride to care for our environment for future generations

Topic 2: Worry

- Bathrooms (maintenance, safety)
- Trash/recycling year round
- Under utilization
- Lighting
- Better utilize parking structure at Lincoln School Apartments
- Invasive plants/weed control
- Not enough parking
- Infrastructure for the elderly/handicapped
- A \$700,000 renovation of the shelter will still result in an underutilized, unsafely sited building with a road separating users from the water. A renovated shelter in the current location doesn't support the use of the Gates of Heaven. The highest and best use of the shelter footprint is open space. I would encourage a minimum of two master plan options deconstructing the existing shelter.

- Share budget information on ground leases, rentals and park impact fees that are generated for and by this park. Funding supports allowing the design team to create a greater vision for the shelter.
- How will weeds and debris be managed? A dumpster on the shoreline is not an acceptable solution.
- What is the footprint of the city stormwater that is drained directly into the lake in James Madison Park through existing storm lines shown on the survey?

Topic 3: Envision

- Park shelter visible from Gorham to increase rentals, obviously available for public use
- Make it a destination park with cultural/natural attraction
- Ski jump at the end of Blount
- Expanded play structure
- Improved signage
- More BBQ grills
- Fitness stations (pull ups etc.)
- Natural shoreline
- Wooded area
- Low walls surrounding the park, like those in the UW-Arboretum
- Imagine an infrastructure that visibly improves water quality with influence on behavior and policy beyond the park boundary. Our care for the lake should be our first priority. If stormwater management and traffic calming are beyond Park's scope, I urge the importance of these design priorities as something to be communicated with other departments as part of the Master Plan.
- With appropriate treatment of the edges of the park, we have the opportunity to be immersed in the natural environment while the view of cars and sound of traffic fades away. Imagine a sustainable landscape that provides visual interest and wildlife habitat all year.
- The end of Blount would be a beautiful viewing platform but does not offer an accessible route to experience the water.
- Enforcement that corrects behaviors while still welcoming visitors as a positive attribute in the park.

Topic 4: Wonder

- More events
- Expand shelter to make more visible from Gorham
- New marina near basketball courts
- Art/installations (ice sculptures) visible to drivers on Gorham
- Re-nature the park (trees and shoreline)
- More opportunities for play, structure in visible place
- Imagine a shelter connected to nature, on or near a rebuilt shoreline, inspired by an open-air boathouse nestled into the bottom of Mansion Hill to provide access to the lake and bring people together. The slope of the hill could allow a 2 story building accessible to all without an elevator but by using the topography. The water would be accessible. This location would have a strong association with our most recognized historic district – Mansion Hill. The shelter would be rentable on the second floor with public restrooms/storage space on the first floor always visible for safety from the length of the park.