

What analysis went into developing this plan?

Environment

Stormwater and Water Quality: The consultant reviewed the existing stormwater conditions on site and both onsite from the surrounding 64-acre watershed that outfalls through James Madison Park through two large box culverts at the end of N. Hancock Street. City staff and the design team had routine coordination regarding options for addressing eliminating surface runoff, increasing infiltration of stormwater from paved surfaces, opportunities to reduce phosphorous, as well as oil and grease treatment of the parking lot.

Lake Hydraulics and Shoreline: The design team obtained a bathymetric survey of the lakebed, in addition to reviewing historical lakebed data, historic water levels, seasonal water level fluctuation, wind and wave data, and historic ice cover and depth. A summary of the [Lake Hydraulic Information](#) that informs the design of the park was presented at the public meeting and is available on the city's website. City staff and the design team had routine meetings with the Department of Natural Resources and the Army Corp of Engineers. Additionally, city staff met with the Assistant Director for Dane County Land and Water Resources Department to review options for clean beach structures similar to what is being employed on other beaches in Dane County.

Existing vegetation: The existing vegetation was reviewed by the landscape architects on the design team, including an assessment by a certified arborist to identify species, size and condition of all trees. This is currently being aggregated for uploading to the city's website. Proposed design elements informed by this analysis include the preservation of significant, healthy, desirable species shown on plan, oak savanna, meadow/prairie behind residential properties in James Madison Park, shoreline plantings proposed along the majority of the shoreline.

Wetlands: A delineation of all wetlands onsite was performed by a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources assured wetland delineator. Two man-made wetlands were delineated including the raingarden east of the existing parking lot and a small portion of shoreline where the existing concrete abutment ends and becomes riprap.

Archeological Review: A Phase One Archeological Investigation was performed which identified that based on existing available documents, there is no record of historic structures or locations of archeological interest situated in the park (aside from those already identified). Fifty eight shovel tests were performed, along with a large number of soil probes. During field investigations, no archeological materials or buildings foundations were observed.

Accessibility

The two existing park structures (Gates of Heaven and the main park shelter and restroom building), do not meet current standards for ADA accessibility. Gates of Heaven does not have accessible restrooms, and portable restrooms must be supplied for any public meeting, community gathering, or event that requires accessible restrooms. The existing restroom building at James Madison Park does not have accessible parking or an accessible route from the street to the restroom building, nor does it have accessible restrooms.

The design team's analysis has included reviewing opportunities to provide ADA access as part of any new or renovated buildings, as well as working closely with Access to Independence and the WI DNR Accessibility Coordinator to identify "beyond compliance" opportunities to ensure that ADA accessibility is seamlessly integrated throughout the entire master plan as part of all future buildings, landscape, shoreline and lake access amenities. Some of these opportunities will be shown in the master plan diagram, while others will be included as written implementation recommendations in the final master plan report.

Historical

The design team, including an architectural historian from Cornerstone Preservation, developed an [Historical Chronology](#) to inform the design process of James Madison Park. A summary of this chronology was presented at the public meeting and the full report is posted on the City's website.

Public Safety

In 2017, there were approximately 700 calls for service to James Madison Park. Calls are made for a variety of issues, and public safety is one of the main concerns that has been identified by park rangers, neighborhood police officers and the community. In April 2017, the design team met with the City of Madison Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design officer, and the neighborhood officer. This conversation identified existing issues with the current design, as well as opportunities to improve public safety in the future. Top opportunities included moving and reconfiguring the parking lot, designing to reduce loitering around the basketball courts and shelter, reducing blind corners, maintaining a path that the police can drive on, and making any future building entries (e.g., for a café) visible from the street.

Traffic and Pedestrian Access

Safe pedestrian access to, from, and within James Madison Park is a priority of all future design. All paths and access points will be made ADA accessible and pedestrian connections between park amenities will be improved. The design will also seek to reduce pedestrian-vehicle conflicts in and around the proposed parking area, and will maintain and enhance views down adjacent streets leading to the park.

The City of Madison Traffic Engineering (TE) Division, which is responsible for changes made to public streets and sidewalks, has provided input at multiple points during the master planning process. Pedestrian crossing improvements that are being explored include installing a rectangular rapid flashing beacon at the Blount or Butler intersection with Gorham; crosswalk enhancements; and a curb bumpout at Hamilton and Gorham..

Due to safety concerns at the existing parking lot and the limited availability of street parking on adjacent streets, the design team is exploring the possibility of removing the existing parking lot and adding off-street parking in a linear configuration along Gorham Street. This option is supported by TE and the police department, and was viewed favorably by the majority of participants at the third public meeting. Other options, including angle and reverse-angle parking on Gorham, and allowing parking on both sides of Gilman and Butler, have been explored and were determined to be too dangerous.