

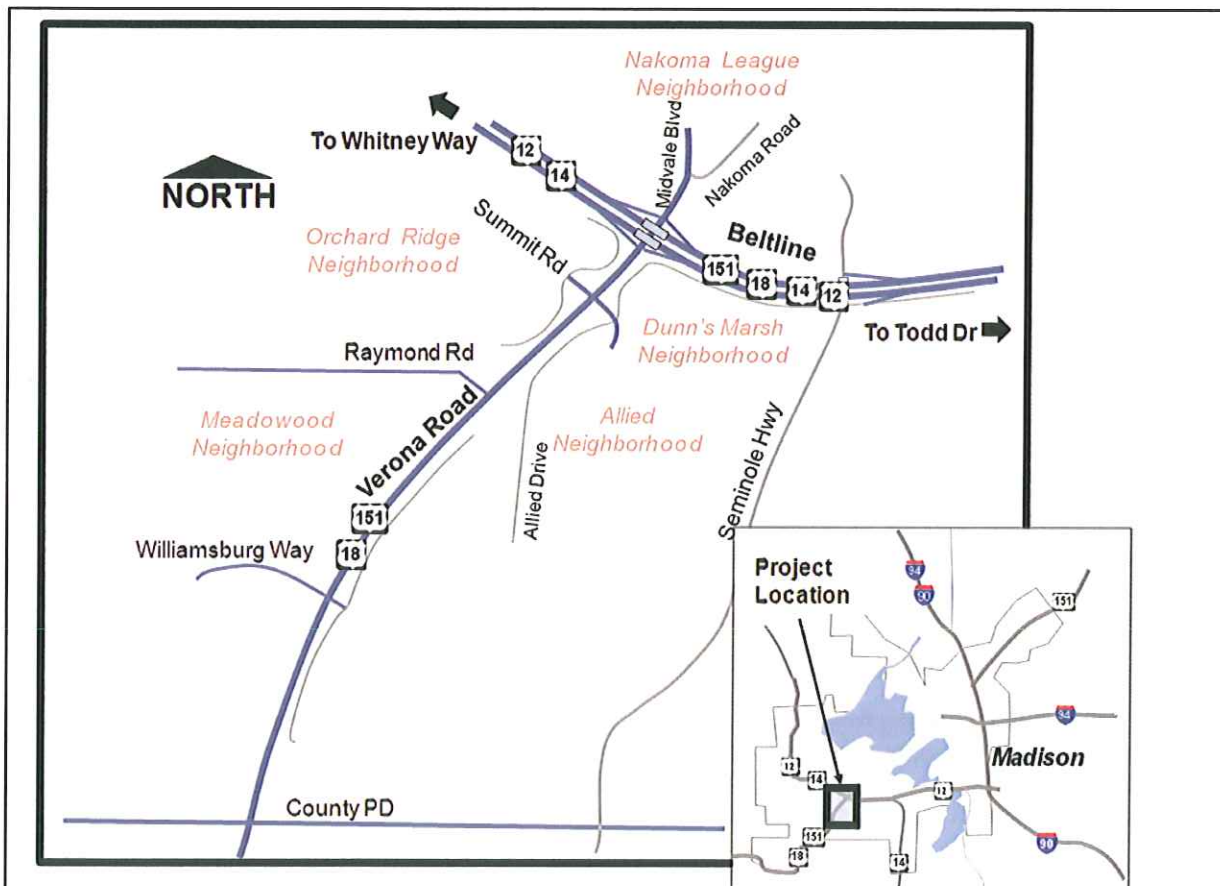
WISCONSIN  
 FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
**SECTION 4(f) DETERMINATION AND APPROVAL**  
 UNDER THE  
 NATIONWIDE 4(f) EVALUATION FOR  
**ACQUISITION OF PUBLIC PARKS,**  
 RECREATION LANDS AND WILDLIFE AND WATERFOWL REFUGES  
 (DECEMBER 23, 1986)

**Description of Project:**

Federal Project Number:  
 WISDOT ID: 1206-07-03  
 Route: United States Highway 18/151 (Verona Road)  
 Termini: County PD to USH 12/14 (Beltline)  
 Whitney Way to Todd Drive  
 County: Dane County  
 Name of Resource: Britta Park

**Project Location and Purpose and Need**

The project addresses the US 18/151 (Verona Road) corridor in the southwest quadrant of the Madison metropolitan area in Dane County, Wisconsin. The study corridor is bounded by US 12/14 (Beltline) to the north and County PD to the south. The study also addresses portions of the Beltline that influence the Verona Road interchange, which includes the Beltline section from Todd Drive to Whitney Way. Side-road intersections that connect with Verona Road include Summit Road, Raymond Road, and Williamsburg Way. Figure 1 presents a corridor location schematic.



**Figure 1 Study Corridor Location**

The purpose of this project is to:

- Enhance the mobility of motorized travel in the US 151 backbone corridor to operation levels that are consistent with a Corridors 2020/Connections 2030 Backbone Route.
- Improve travel safety on the Verona Road corridor to levels consistent with US 151's classification as a Corridors 2020/Connections 2030 Backbone Route.
- Preserve the mobility of motorized travel in the US 12/14 (Beltline) corridor near the US 18/151 (Verona Road) interchange to levels that are consistent with a Corridors 2020/Connections 2030 Connector Route.
- Enhance nonmotorized travel accommodations and connectivity in the Verona Road and Beltline corridors.

Primary components of the Purpose and Need for the Verona Road corridor include:

- US 151 (Verona Road) System Continuity and Consistency with the Corridors 2020/Connections 2030 State Highway Plan

US 151 (Verona Road) is classified as a Backbone Route in the Corridors 2020/Connections 2030 State Highway Plan. This is the same classification as the Interstate Highways and shows the route's importance. In 2008, the US 151 Backbone Route became a full four-lane expressway/freeway facility from Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, to Dubuque, Iowa, except for the 2-mile section that is a focus of this study (see note about Backbone bypass around Madison).

- Verona Road Capacity

WisDOT policy states:

*"The highest level of service thresholds are applied to the Corridors 2020/Connections 2030 system in recognition of its importance from a mobility and economic development perspective. On Corridors 2020/Connections 2030 routes, only 'minimal' congestion is allowed, except on Connectors within urbanized areas, where slightly higher congestion levels are permitted."*

Increasing traffic volumes and associated congestion are compromising the mobility of the corridor. The Verona Road/Beltline interchange already operates at extremely congested conditions during the evening and morning peak hours with average intersection delays exceeding 100 seconds per vehicle, corresponding to level of service (LOS) F.<sup>1</sup>

- Safety

As traffic volumes on the Verona Road corridor grow, congestion-related crashes are increasing. These crashes are a product of the vehicle conflict points inherent with the six signalized intersections in this corridor.

- Neighborhood Connectivity–Transit/Nonmotorized Travel

Verona Road, the Verona Road/Beltline interchange, and the Beltline separate the Allied-Dunn's Marsh neighborhood from other Madison neighborhoods north and west. There is one entrance to the neighborhood on Verona Road and two entrances on Seminole Highway. The Verona Road corridor and its heavy traffic volumes contribute to the physical isolation of the neighborhood

- Metropolitan Traffic Movements and Local Access

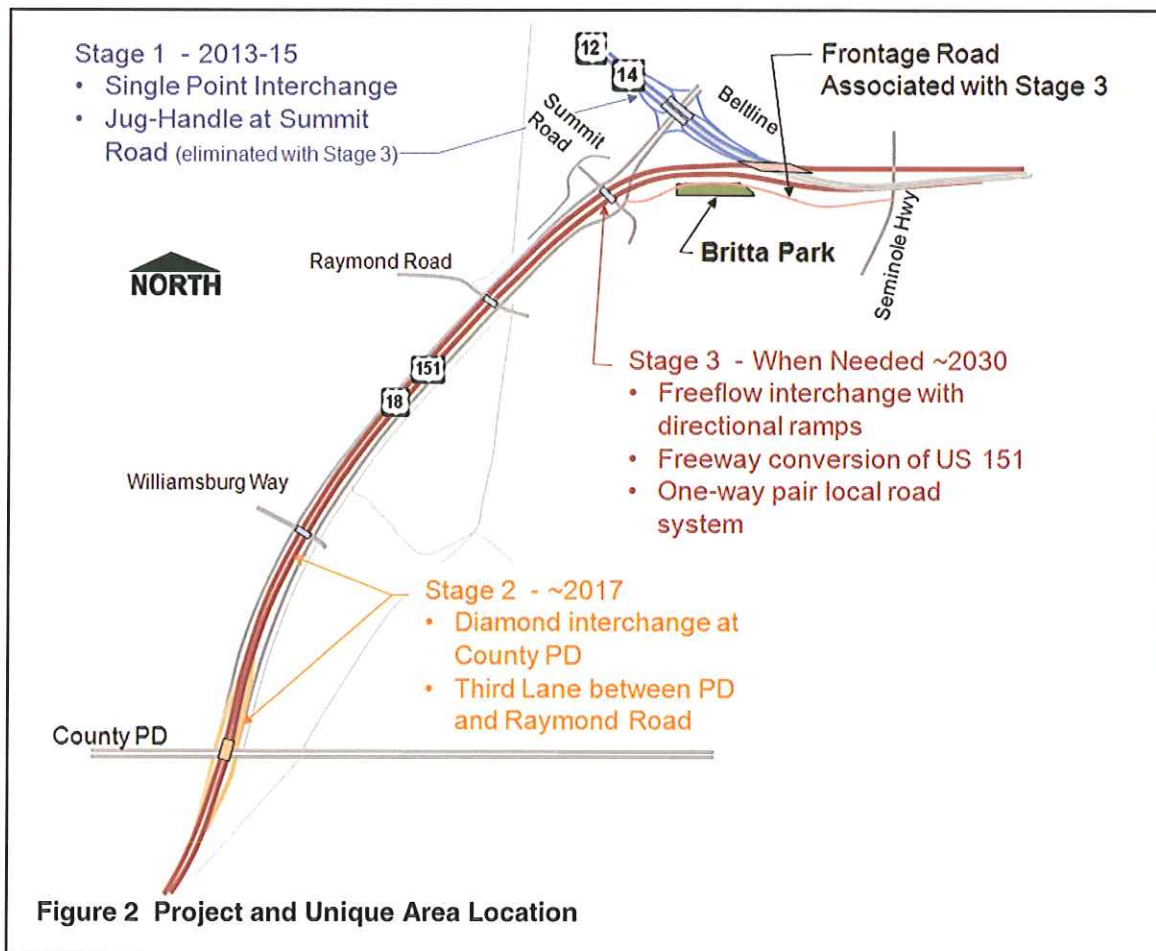
Verona Road regularly experiences congestion during the morning and evening rush hours. This congestion affects not only regional traffic but also metropolitan traffic that originates and ends within the Madison metro area. Because of this congestion, many metropolitan trips are diverted to local and neighborhood streets. Area residents regularly express concerns over nonlocal traffic cutting through

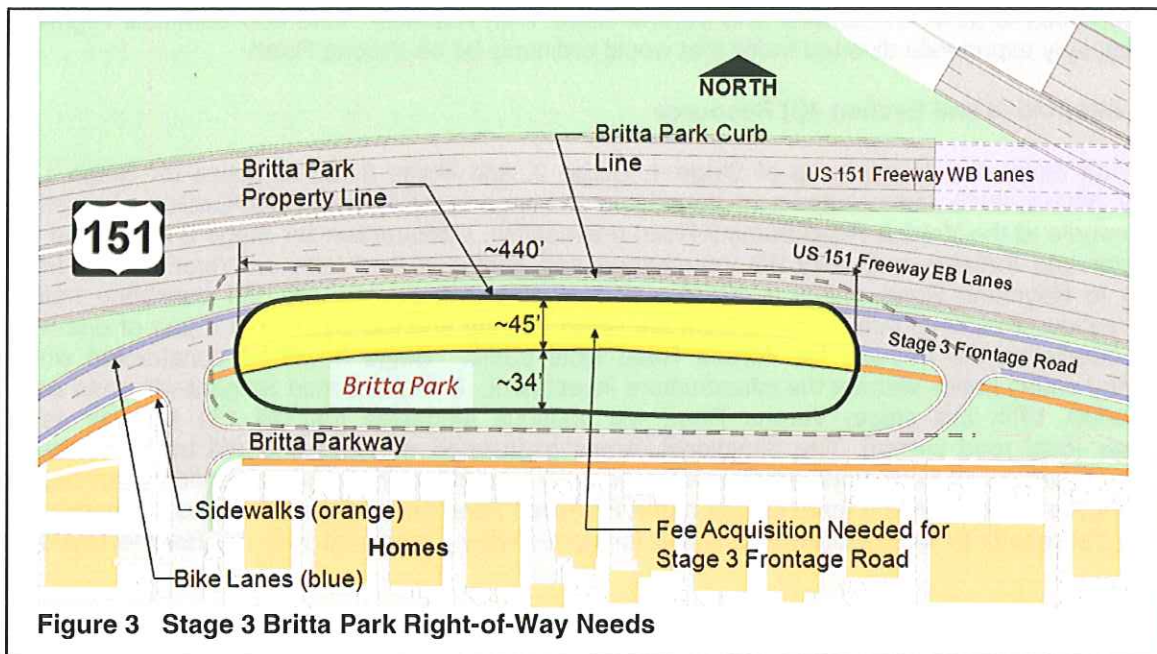
<sup>1</sup> Levels of Service are measures that describe the operation of a roadway and its congestion levels. They range from A (not congested) to F (very congested).

neighborhoods to avoid the Beltline and Verona Road. Fish Hatchery Road and Seminole Highway both regularly experience diverted traffic that would ordinarily be on Verona Road.

### Preferred Alternative and Section 4(f) Resource

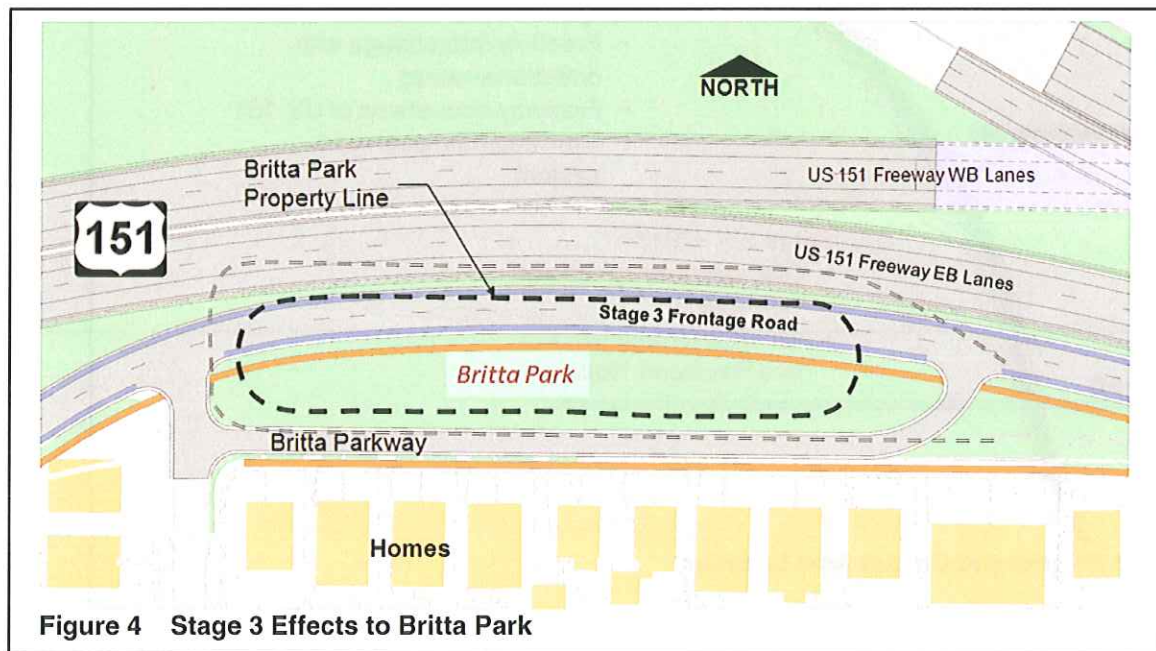
The Preferred Alternative is made up of Stage 1, Stage 2, and Stage 3. Construction for Stage 1 is planned for 2013 to 2015 and includes a single-point interchange at the Verona Road/Beltline connection and a jug-handle at the Verona Road/Summit Road intersection. Construction for Stage 2 is planned for 2017 or later and includes a County PD interchange and adding a third lane on Verona Road from County PD to Raymond Road. Stage 3 includes a freeway conversion for US 151 backbone traffic, including freeflow directional ramps to and from the south Beltline and the creation of a pair of one-way roadways paralleling the freeway for Verona Road local traffic. Stage 3 will be constructed when operation and safety needs warrant the infrastructure investment. It is anticipated Stage 3 will occur near the year 2030. With this stage, Verona Road will continue alongside the US 151 freeway as a one-way-pair local road system. The directional ramps associated with Stage 3 will travel across a neighborhood park called Britta Park, which is a Section 4(f) resource owned and managed by the City of Madison. Figure 2 illustrates the three stages of the Preferred Alternative. Figure 3 shows the portion of Britta Park that needs to be acquired in Stage 3 for right-of-way associated with the Beltline frontage road.





#### Direct Impacts to Section 4(f) Resource

Stages 1 and 2 do not impact Britta Park. Stage 3 of the Preferred Alternative requires the acquisition of about 60 percent of Britta Park, or 20,400 square feet of 34,000 square feet. Some of this land would be needed for the construction of the US 151 freeflow ramps. The majority of this land is needed for the rerouting of the frontage road and the provision of sidewalks around the perimeter of the park. Figure 4 shows the new frontage road alignment and the remainder of Britta Park. Only 40 percent of the neighborhood park would remain with Stage 3.



### Type of Section 4(f) Resource, Activities, and Users

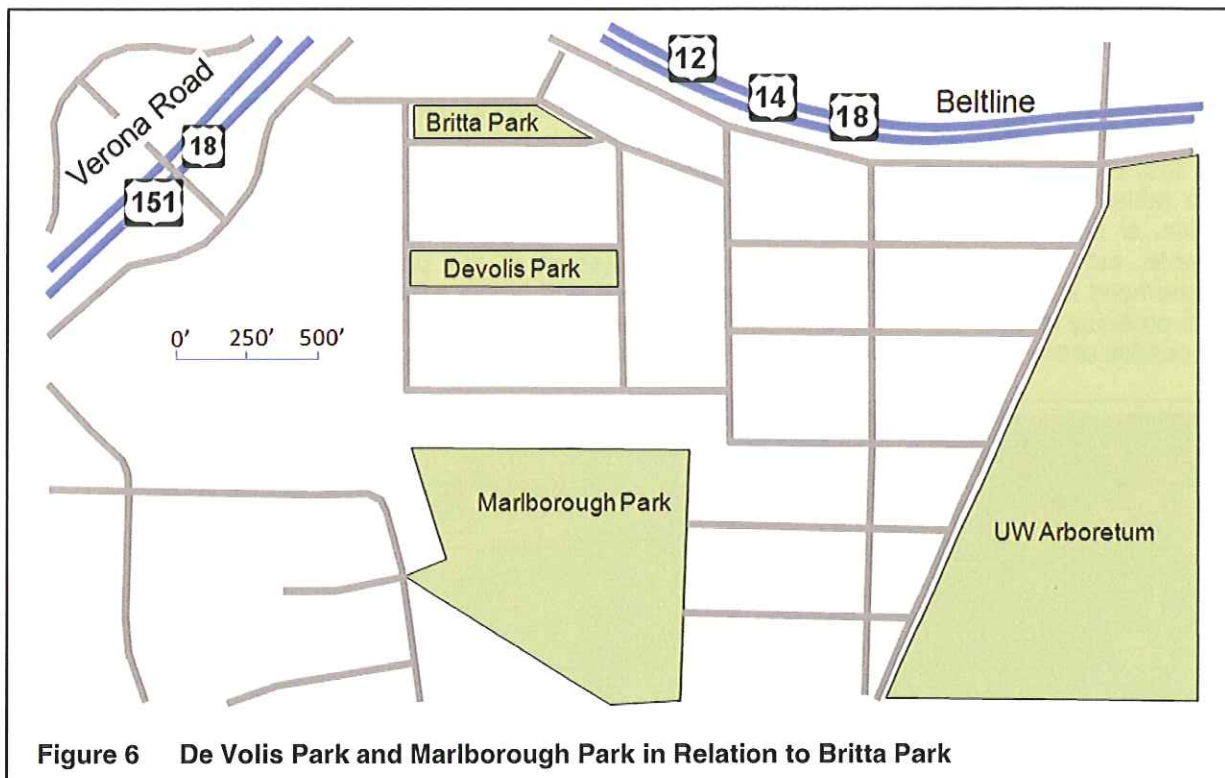
Discussions with the City of Madison Parks Planning indicate Britta Park serves as a small neighborhood open space with limited facilities and activities. Britta Park is a flat, landscaped open space with mowed turf, large trees, and no formal park facilities. The parcel is bounded by a mature canopy of deciduous trees that provide some visual and noise separation from the existing highway. The park has several picnic tables distributed at different locations in the park. The park is mostly used for spontaneous, passive, or active recreation by residents and nearby employees. The exact number of users is not available, but the approximately 60 households adjacent to the park are all potential users. This neighborhood includes households with lower incomes and higher minority populations, so many users would probably fall into the environmental justice category. This greenspace is unlikely to attract users from outside of the immediate area. Figure 5 shows an aerial photograph of Britta Park.



Figure 5 Aerial Photograph of Britta Park

### Relationship to Other Similarly Used Lands

The City of Madison Parks Department has indicated that Britta Park has importance in being a neighborhood greenspace and gathering space but less importance for recreation. It is close to De Volis Park, which is 0.25 miles south of Britta Park. Marlborough Park, a larger greenspace and park, is located approximately 0.35 miles south of Britta Park. Figure 6 shows the location of these parks in relation to each other. Neighborhood residents can access Britta Park by foot and parking is available on adjacent streets.



**Figure 6 De Volis Park and Marlborough Park in Relation to Britta Park**

#### **Ownership, Title and Unusual Characteristics**

Britta Park is currently owned by the City of Madison. According to the City of Madison, there are no known clauses affecting the title. There are no unusual characteristics of Britta park regarding Section 4(f) land.

#### **Probable Increase or Decrease in Environmental Impacts**

The acquisition of more than half of this relatively small park would substantially reduce its use as a neighborhood green space or gathering area. But the remaining park area would still hold value as a screening element for adjacent homes to the south. These homes currently have existing Britta Park and two rows of structures north of the park separating them from the frontage road and the Beltline. The frontage road, which will carry up to 5,000 vehicles per day (vpd), will be relocated along the north side of the remainder of the park. The US 151 free flow ramps to and from the Beltline will be located just beyond the frontage road. Mounding and replacement of lost vegetation could improve the screening function of the remaining portion of Britta Park, thereby reducing the overall environmental impact because of reducing the size of the Britta Park and moving highway facilities closer to existing residence.

#### **Description of Reasonable and Practicable Alternatives that Avoid Impacts on the Section 4(f) property.**

Within the SDEIS alternatives, there are three alternatives that would fully avoid Section 4(f) impacts to Britta Park. They are described briefly below.

##### **1. No Build**

This alternative would not affect Britta Park, but it does not fulfill any of the purpose and need objectives. It does not provide a connection that is consistent with US 151's designation as a backbone in the State Highway Plan. It does not address capacity or safety needs on Verona Road. It would not improve neighborhood connectivity for transit and non-motorized travel. For these reasons the No Build Alternative is not a reasonable and practicable measure to avoid impacts to Britta Park.

2. Build Stage 1 Improvements Only

This alternative would only build the improvements associated with Stage 1 of the Preferred Alternative, which consist of a single-point interchange at the Beltline/Verona Road interchange and a jug-handle at Summit Road. This alternative fulfills some components of the project purpose and need yet does not fully satisfy them. It does not provide a connection consistent with US 151's designation as a backbone in the State Highway Plan. And, while Stage 1 does address capacity and safety issues on Verona Road, portions of the corridor still fall below acceptable service levels in the 2030 design year. Greater and more substantial improvements are needed to address these future traffic needs.

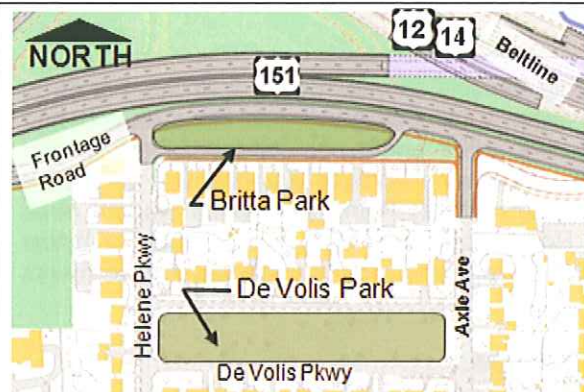
3. Build the Preferred Alternative without Impacting Britta Park.

The primary impacts to Britta Park are associated with the frontage road in Stage 3. There are several options that were explored that have different and sometimes smaller affects to Britta Park. These options include:

- a. Routing Frontage Road north of Britta Park (current Preferred Alternative).
- b. Routing Frontage Road south of Britta Park.
- c. Discontinuing Frontage Road.
- d. Routing US 151 to a New Location.

Table 1 summarizes these options and their feasibility and prudence.

**Alternative**

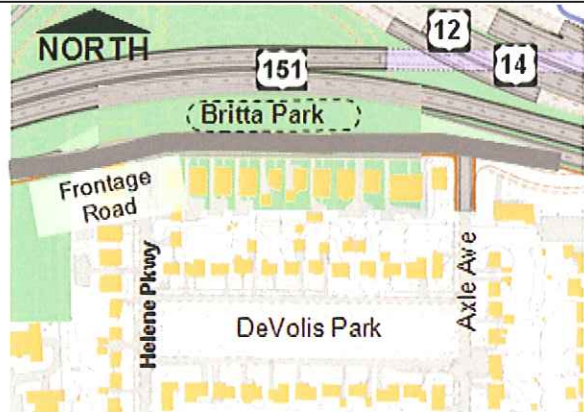


**Routing Frontage Road north of Britta Park**  
(Current Preferred Alternative)

**Effects**

- Section 4(f) property impacts – requires 20,400 square feet of Park.
- Britta Park character change – limited use as a neighborhood gathering place.
- Remaining greenspace would help screen neighborhood homes from frontage road.
- Recreational facilities would be added at DeVolis Park to offset Britta Park impacts.
- Frontage Road connectivity consistent with City neighborhood Physical Plan recommendations.

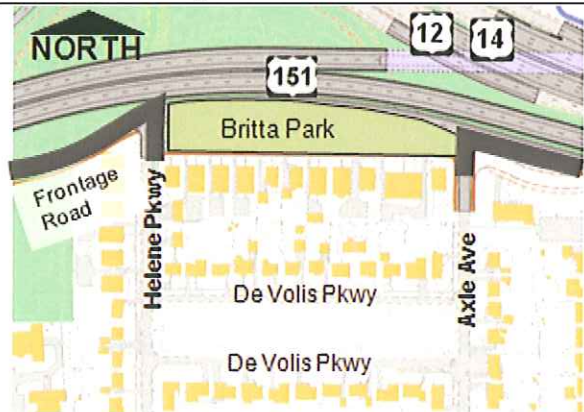
**Feasible and Prudent**



**Route Frontage Road South of Britta Park**

- No 4(f) property impacts.
- Britta Park and local road character change—high volume road in front of neighborhood homes—considerable community disruption.
- Separates parkland from users with high volume frontage road—creates safety concerns.
- Not consistent with City's Physical Plan recommendations.

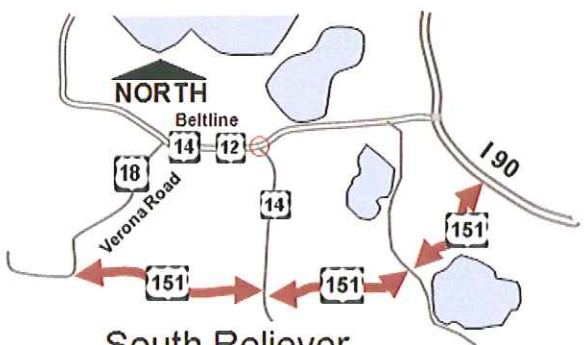
**Feasible but not Prudent**



**Discontinue Frontage Road**

- No 4(f) property impacts.
- Access to adjacent properties difficult. No vehicle access at all.
- Separates west side of neighborhood from east side of neighborhood.
- Increases traffic on DeVolis Parkway substantially.

**Feasible but not Prudent**



**South Reliever**  
**Alternatives on New Location**

- No 4(f) property impacts.
- Considerable impacts outside of corridor.
- Does not satisfy several components of the project purpose and need, including relieving congestion and improving neighborhood connectivity.

**Feasible but not Prudent**

**Table 1 Section 4(f) Feasible and Prudent Evaluation**



Routing the frontage road south of Britta Park was the original proposal considered for this area. Currently a one-way street with very low traffic volumes runs between Britta Park and the nearby housing to the south. The Allied-Dunn's Marsh Physical Improvement Plan states that with this option, residents would sense a large effect if the little-used one-way street were replaced with a high-volume two-way frontage road. This alternative would also separate the parkland from the users it is intended to serve. For these reasons, the Allied-Dunn's Marsh Physical Improvement Plan recommends realigning the frontage road on the north side of Britta Park. Since the drafting of the Physical Improvement Plan and the release of the DEIS, design refinements focusing on providing sufficient sight distance and avoiding impacts to the SPUI constructed in Stage 1 have required the shifting of the frontage road farther to the south, creating a much larger impact than what was originally anticipated.

Discussions with City of Madison Park and Planning staff in the summer of 2009 indicate that even with the reduced park size, they do not feel routing the frontage road south of Britta Park is a reasonable option. They continue to support the recommendations of the Physical Improvement Plan. Additionally, they indicated that fully discontinuing the frontage road was not a feasible option.

#### **Measure to Minimize Impacts on the Section 4(f) Property**

There have been numerous discussions with City of Madison Park staff. Several measures will be applied to the park to offset and minimize impacts to residences adjacent to the park. Mitigation elements being explored include:

- a. Maintaining the Britta Park greenspace and landscaping it to provide a screening element for adjacent homes. These homes were previously screened from both the frontage road and freeway by a row of commercial buildings being relocated in Stage 3.
- b. Providing a screening wall that separates the relocated frontage road from the US 151 freeflow ramps as well as the Beltline. This screening wall will also function as a noise mitigation barrier. The noise barriers will reduce noise levels in the area. Britta Parkway will remain as a one-way with new sidewalk and mounding to maintain existing tree canopy and understory.
- c. Paying the fair market value for the land needed.
- d. Enhancing recreational equipment in nearby DeVolis Park (discussed later in Preliminary Coordination).

Figure 7 illustrates the measures that will be employed at Britta Park to minimize impacts on the property and to adjacent residents. Figure 8 illustrates the typical cross section through the park, frontage road, US 151, and Beltline. Figure 9 provides an aerial photograph of DeVolis Park, which is located 0.25 miles south of Britta Park.

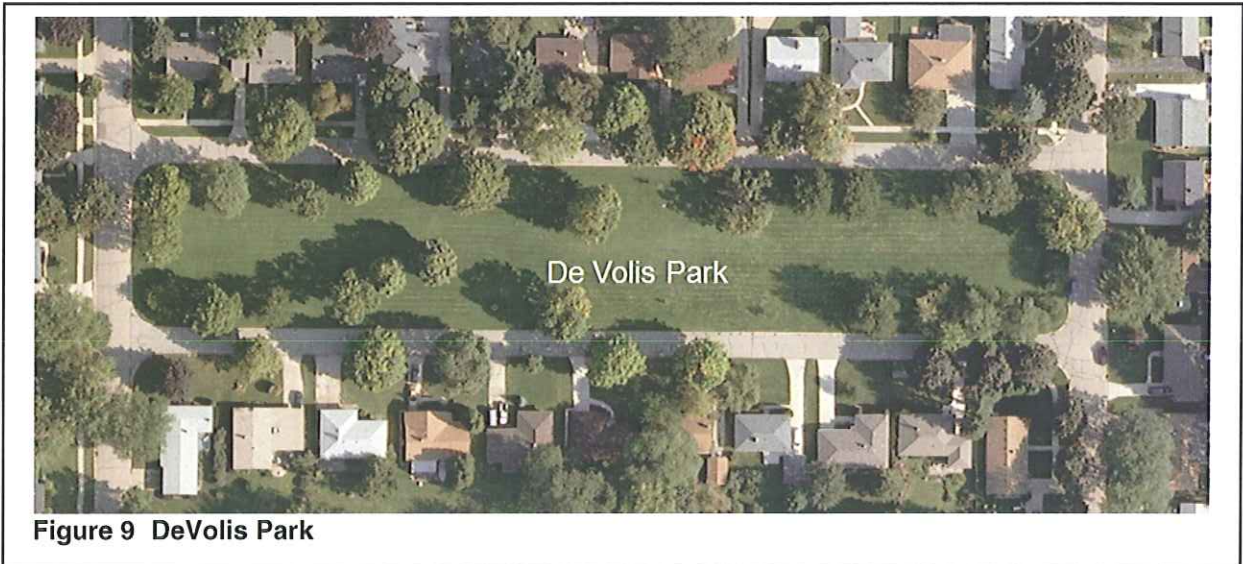
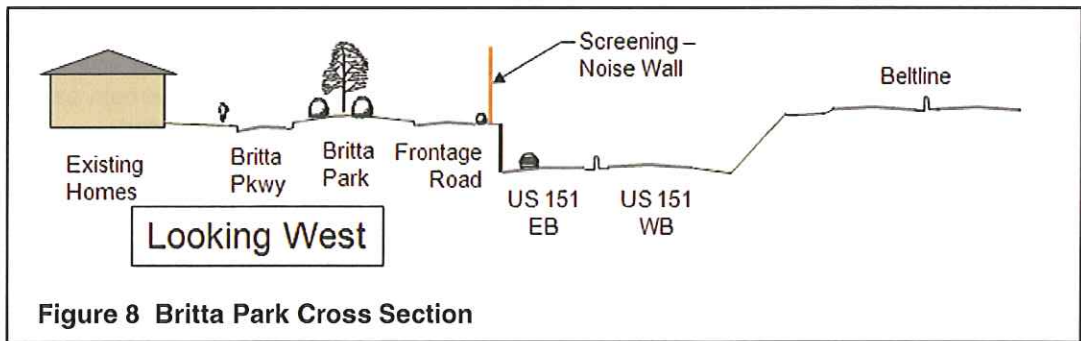
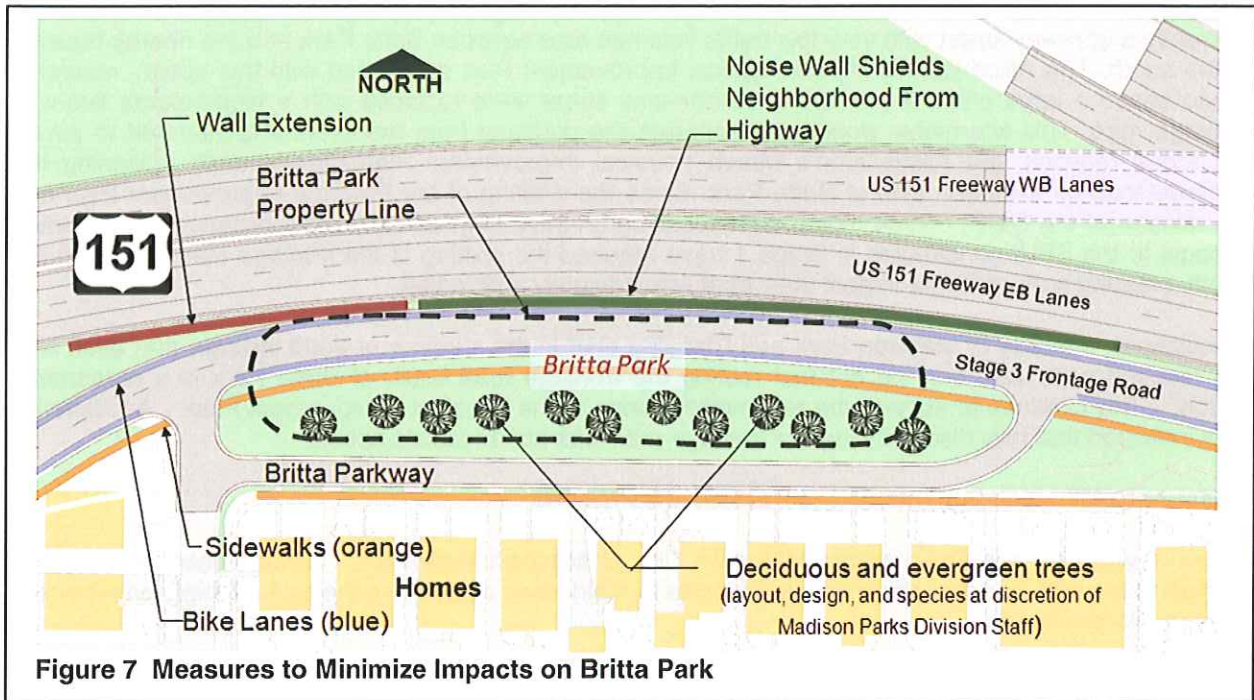


Table 2 summarizes the Preferred Alternative's Section 4(f) measures to minimize/offset impacts.

<b>Stage 3-Preferred Alternative</b>	<b>Britta Park</b>
Replacement of lands used with lands of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location and of at least comparable value.	Possibly
Replacement of facilities impacted by the project including sidewalks, paths, lights, trees, and other facilities.	Yes
Restoration and landscaping of disturbed areas.	Yes
Incorporation of design features and habitat features where necessary to reduce or minimize impacts to the Section 4(f) property.	Yes
Payment of the fair market value of the land and improvement taken or improvements to the remaining 4(f) site equal to the fair market value of the land and improvements taken.	Yes
Such additional or alternative mitigation measures as may be determined necessary based on consultation with officials having jurisdiction over the 4(f) property - explain:	Providing recreational facilities at DeVolis Park
Property is a historic property or an archeological site. The conditions or mitigation stipulations are listed or summarized below.	Not Applicable
Other - Describe: Separate from the 4(f) issues but affecting Britta Park, noise barriers area feasible and reasonable and will be installed adjacent to the frontage road in Stage 3.	

**Table 2 Summary of Possible 4(f) Land Mitigation in Stage 3**

**Results of Preliminary Coordination with the Public Officials having jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) property.**

On October 30, 2009, the City of Madison Parks Division sent a letter to WisDOT that describes the park, its uses, and suggested measures for offsetting impacts to the park. Key items in the letter include the following:

- a. Britta Park provides for spontaneous, passive or active recreation by residents and nearby employees.
- b. Routing the frontage road south of the park is not a preferred option because it affects the ability to access the park.
- c. Discontinuing the frontage road is not desirable because of the increased residential traffic.
- d. The current preferred option appears to be most prudent, despite the impacts to Britta Park.
- e. A screening wall may be an acceptable option. The wall could be planted with vertical species to soften its appearance, with a surface that is not conducive to graffiti. The wall could present a "canvas" for public art and this opportunity should be explored further.
- f. There are several measures and requirements to offset impacts to the park. These include:
  - Compensation for the fair market value of the land. Opportunities to provide a one-to-one replacement are preferred if possible.
  - Adding some neighborhood park amenities to nearby DeVolis Park, such as a three-quarter basketball court, a volleyball court, and playground equipment.
  - Adding quality deciduous and evergreen trees to the existing Britta Park understory to supplement the canopy that will be lost to construction. This addition should occur early in the process to ensure a maximum canopy upon project completion.
- g. Approval of all mitigation measures for Britta Park is contingent on the approval of the Parks Commission and well as the City Council.

Figure 10 illustrates measures requested by the City of Madison Parks staff, while Figures 11a and 11b show the letter from the City of Madison Parks Division. WisDOT is currently coordinating with the City of Madison Parks Commission regarding mitigation measures for Britta Park.

1. Approval of mitigation contingent upon approval by Parks Commission and City Council

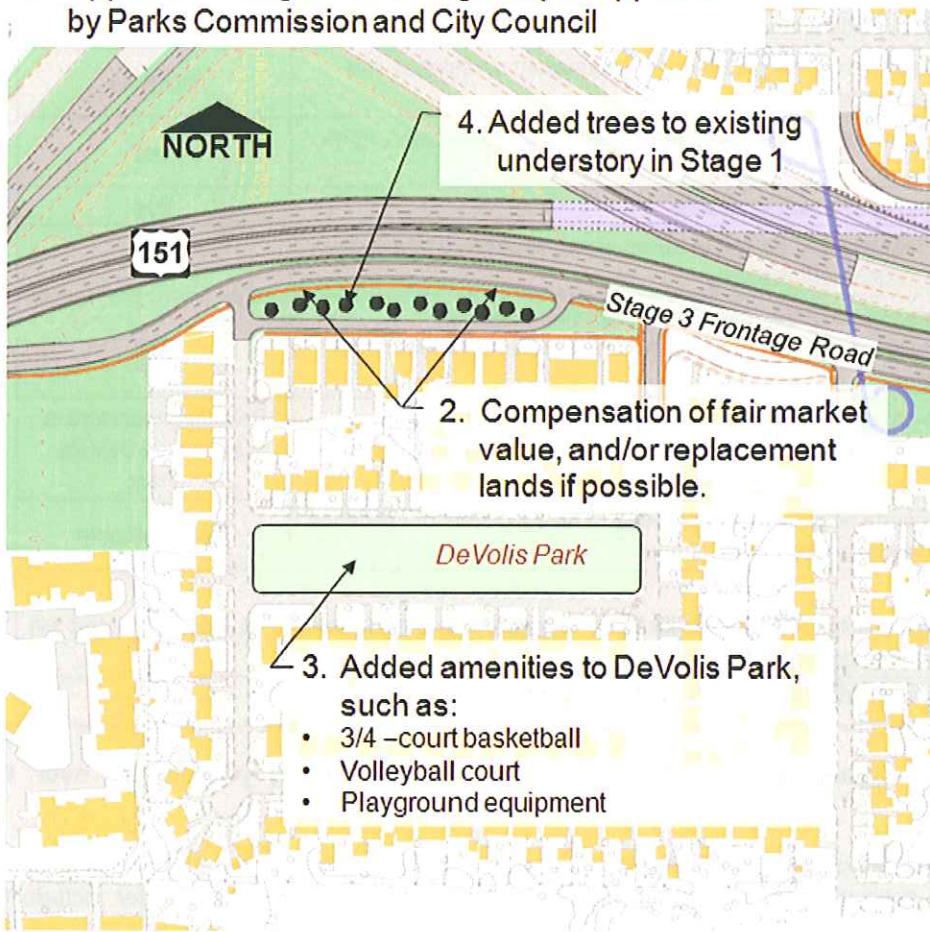


Figure 10 Requested Measures from City of Madison Parks Staff



## Parks Division

Kevin Briski, Parks Superintendent

Room 104  
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard  
Madison, Wisconsin 53703-3345  
PH 608 266 4711  
FAX 608 267 1162  
TTY/Textnet 866 704 2315  
[www.cityofmadison.com/parks](http://www.cityofmadison.com/parks)

October 30, 2009

Mr. Larry J. Barta  
WisDOT – System Development  
Southwest Region  
2101 Wright Street  
Madison, WI 53704-2583

Re: US 18 / 151 (Verona Road)  
Project ID 1206-07-03  
Britta Park Impacts

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to review impacts to parkland under the current proposed design for the Verona Road corridor. As part of the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement that WisDOT is preparing for this project, the project is proposed to be constructed in three stages. Stage 1 improvements, which do not impact parkland, are to be constructed in 2013 through 2015. Stage 2 improvements are scheduled for 2017, and Stage 3 in 2030 or so, depending on the nature and extent of worsening safety and congestion issues. The long-term improvements (Stage 3), will address congestion and safety problems for 20 or more years by converting the corridor to a freeway. It is likely that the Stage 3 improvements will be mapped when the Stage 1 improvements are constructed. Stage 3 will require R/W from Britta Parkway.

Currently Britta Parkway serves as open space to the Dunn's Marsh neighborhood which is comprised of multi-family and modest single-family homes with minimal commercial development on the periphery. The Britta Parkway area provides for spontaneous, passive or active recreation by residents and nearby employees. The parcel area is bounded by a mature canopy of deciduous trees which provide some visual and noise separation from the existing highway.

Shifting the frontage road south of Britta Parkway as noted in the information you sent would adversely affect the ability for park users, especially children, to access the open space for park purposes. This option was not preferred, as it would segregate the park from its potential users. As in the second option to "eliminate the frontage road continuity", this would increase traffic on an existing residential street as it would become a heavily used cut through route, thereby cutting off park access from its users once again. This would also decrease connectivity between the neighborhood to the east and the neighborhood to the west. Therefore, your preferred option does appear to be the most prudent, despite the impacts to Britta Parkway.

The frontage road relocation leaves little remaining land area for a functional park or to create the necessary surface berm and planting area to provide a sufficient noise/visual barrier for the remaining neighborhood. A screening wall separating the relocated frontage road may be an acceptable option; this wall could be planted with vertical species, such as columnar trees/shrubs, vines, etc. to soften its appearance, and the surface face of the wall should be specified as a coarse surface, not conducive to graffiti. The proposed wall could also present a 'canvas' for public art; the Madison Arts Commission has long been searching for such a project as this. It is suggested that an opportunity be provided for the neighborhood and city staff to commission an art project that could provide a signature 'wall' and supporting design elements for this trafficway.

Figure 11a City of Madison Parks Division Letter

Larry J. Barta  
October 30, 2009  
Page 2

Following are a list of requirements and options to provide some form of mitigation for the impacts from this project to Britta Parkway:

- Approval of the mitigation required for the impacts to Britta Parkway is contingent on the approval of the Parks Commission as well as the City Council. A presentation regarding this project should be scheduled with the Parks Commission as soon as possible to further refine the mitigation required.
- Compensation for the fair market value of the land taken will be negotiated at the appropriate time. Any opportunities for a one-to-one replacement of land that will help to maintain our inventory of parkland are preferred; potential exchange properties will be reviewed by the Madison Parks Division staff with final approval contingent on concurrence by the Parks Commission and City Council.
- With the Dunn's Marsh neighborhood deficient in 'Neighborhood' park facilities (Marlborough Park is an Area Park located a ¼ mile away and Belmar Park is a City of Fitchburg Park located more than a ½ mile away), some neighborhood park amenities such as ¾-court basketball, volleyball, and playground equipment could be included as mitigation for these impacts and sited in De Volis Parkway, located a block to the south of Britta Parkway. Layout, design, and equipment selection should be at the discretion of the Madison Parks Division staff with purchase and installation as per City of Madison Standard Specifications.
- Add quality deciduous and evergreen trees to the existing understory to supplement the canopy lost to construction and potential Emerald Ash Borer infestation. Layout, design, and species selection should be at the discretion of the Madison Parks Division staff and installed as per City of Madison Standard Specifications. Phased planting should occur early in the project to ensure a maximum canopy by completion of the project.

These are some potential ideas for mitigation of the impacts to Britta Parkway. During your presentation regarding this project to the Parks Commission, mitigation requirements may be further refined. Please contact me at 703-266-4714 or [krutledge@cityofmadison.com](mailto:krutledge@cityofmadison.com) to schedule a time to discuss this project with the Parks Commission.

Sincerely,



Kay H. Rutledge, P.E.  
Parks Planning and Development Manager

cc: Kevin Briski, Parks Superintendent  
Bill Bauer, Project Manager

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Figure 11b City of Madison Parks Division Letter