

## Biz Beat: Central Park facilities in the works

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Madison's long-awaited Central Park is in line for its first permanent structure: an artist-inspired public restroom.

The city is moving forward on the \$600,000 facility, which would be constructed of a quartzite stone mosaic and includes a "green roof" to capture storm water runoff. Construction could start by fall, park planners say.

The 1,000-square-foot building also includes storage space and electric equipment to service park events. The facility is planned along Ingersoll Street -- which bisects the [current park layout](#) -- and would be accessible from the nearby bike path.



The [building](#) received final approval from the Urban Design Commission this week. It features a curving roofline designed to reflect the glacially sculpted landscape of the Madison isthmus.

"The idea is to create an environment that is sustainable, aesthetic and that provides a gathering place for the community," says a city report on the project.

The restrooms are part of the \$14 million project, which includes construction, design and land acquisition. Phase 1, estimated at \$3 million, is now under way.

A new 5,000-square-foot [Tenney Park shelter](#), which includes seating, a kitchenette and restrooms, carried a \$1 million price tag, with \$250,000 of that coming from a private donation from the John Wall family.

The Central Park restrooms would be open seasonally during regular park hours, closing at 10 p.m. A park ranger would be in charge of opening and closing the facility, as with other city park bathrooms.

The restrooms were conceived according to an "[Art Approach](#)" developed by Lorna Jordan, a public artist who is part of the design team working with the city. Jordan's work is funded, in part, by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

"The building is conceived as an extension of the Art Approach, and as such, is more than a simple block building within the park setting," explains local landscape architect Ken Saiki.

MSA Engineering is heading the design team for the city. SAA Design Group, Smithgroup JJR, Ken Saiki Design and KJWW Engineering Consultants are also involved in the project.

Phase I is being covered in part by a federal grant aimed at bicycle and pedestrian improvements. As such, initial work is focusing on trails and walkways, railroad safety enhancements and the public restroom/storage building.

The city's financial share of the new building is about 20 percent, says parks planning manager Kay Rutledge.

A separate effort is under way to raise money for a skate park, which is also part of the Phase 1 concept.

A grand, leafy expanse stretching from the Yahara River to Blair Street has been talked about for years. The project got a boost in 2011 when the city spent \$1.6 million — [nearly three times the assessed tax value](#) — for a vacant industrial property owned by Research Products Corp. The site has since been cleared, leaving space for the restrooms and other amenities.