

Midtown Commons Park Master Plan

1310 Waldorf Blvd, Madison, WI

City of Madison Parks Division
Madison, WI



**MADISON
PARKS**

Board of Park Commissioners
December 10, 2025

Prepared by the City of Madison Parks Division

Lisa Laschinger, Interim Parks Superintendent

Master Plan Staff Team

Mike Sturm, Landscape Architect

Izzy Wilde, Parks Planner

Adam Kaniewski, Park Planning and Development Manager

City of Madison Board of Park Commissioners

Chandra M. Miller Fienen

Derek Field

Carmella Glenn

Moira Harrington

Catie McDonald

Michelle R.S. Probst

Ben D. Williams

Table of Contents

Introduction..... p. 1

History.....p. 1

Existing Planning Documents..... p. 2

Current Uses and Maintenance Practices.....p. 2

Master Plan Process and Public Input.....p. 3

Master Plan Proposed Graphic..... p. 4

Master Plan Proposed Improvements..... p. 4

Appendices.....p. 6

 Appendix 1: Public Input Meetings Presentations

 Appendix 2: Community Survey Results

 Appendix 3: Midtown Commons Park Master Plan

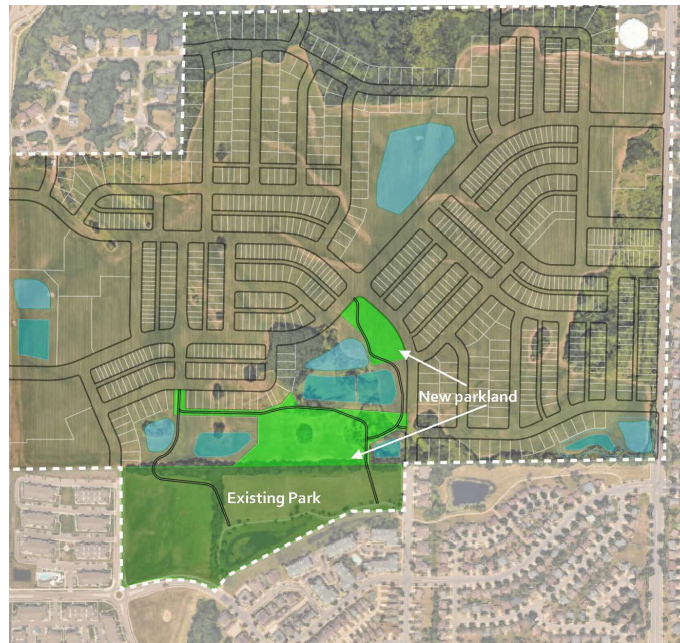
INTRODUCTION

Midtown Commons Park is an 26.2-acre park located on the west side of Madison at 1310 Waldorf Blvd. Classified as a community park, it aims to meet local recreation needs while preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.

The planning process was initiated due to the Hill Valley private development situated north of the park. This City-approved residential development is expected to add approximately 1,500 housing units to the area. As part of this development, Midtown Commons Park expanded by an additional 8.2 acres through parkland dedication. The increase in housing density will create greater demands on the park, and the objective of the planning process is to outline the future development of the expanded park. With additional green space, the park's classification was updated to a community-level park.

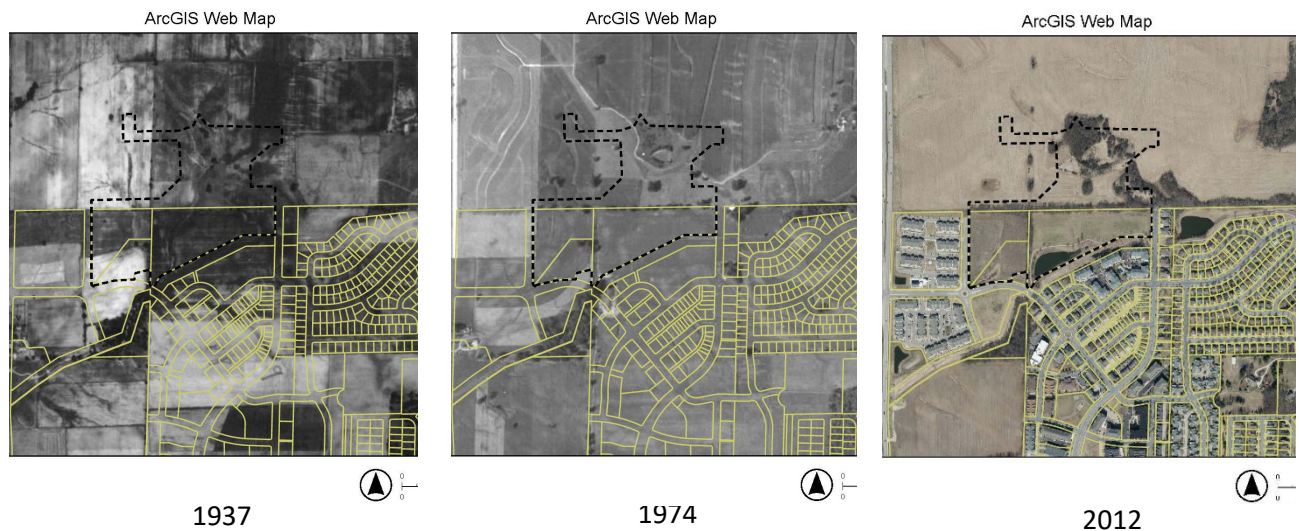
In addition to the park expansion, the private development is also dedicating land for stormwater management purposes. The stormwater features will be located adjacent to the new park parcels and will be managed by City Engineering to help mitigate flooding issues in west Madison.

MIDTOWN COMMONS EXPANSION AREA



HISTORY

The land which Midtown Commons Park is on has a long history of agricultural use. The first land acquisition for the park occurred in 2001 as part of the Midtown Commons residential development. In 2020, Madison Parks acquired an additional 7.8 acres as part of the land dedication for the Springs at Pleasant View development, expanding the park's western boundary to Mica Road. This section of the park features relatively steep slopes and has largely remained undeveloped, awaiting the outcomes of the community engagement and planning process.



Photos: Historical Aerial Photography from Dane County DCi Map

EXISTING PLANNING DOCUMENTS

There is no known adopted master plan for Midtown Commons Park on file.

CURRENT USES AND MAINTENANCE PRACTICES

Ultimate/Open Play Field

There are three Ultimate fields located in the park, which are preferred locations for the Madison Ultimate Frisbee Associations (MUFA). Due to the heavy use, the fields are shifted within the open turf area throughout the year to maintain good turf conditions. When the fields are not reserved, they are available for open play of soccer or other activities. The fields are situated in an East/West orientation, which is not a preferred orientation.

Paved Path

An existing paved path runs along the south edge of the park, connecting Waldorf Blvd and Mansion Hill Ave. This path is essential for the surrounding neighborhood, as alternate routes through streets and sidewalks significantly increase the distance for pedestrians and bikers traveling from east to west. North to south path connections are limited due to the lack of residential development to the north and the presence of the stormwater pond to the south.

Stormwater Management Pond

To the south of the paved path, there is an existing stormwater management pond and drainageway. The one-acre pond features a natural slope, while the drainageway holds seasonal water. Both facilities are within the park property boundary and are primarily maintained by City Engineering.

Maintenance Practices

Current maintenance practices include turf mowing, tree trimming/removals as necessary. This property will be maintained in accordance with the [City of Madison Adopted Land Management Plan](#).

MASTER PLAN PROCESS AND PUBLIC INPUT

This process consisted of two public input meetings and a public survey. The timeline for this process was as follows:

- July 29, 2025 – Public Input Meeting #1
- July 29 -Aug 15, 2025 – Online Community Survey#1
- Oct 22, 2025 – Public Input Meeting #2
- Oct 22 – Nov 7, 2025 – Online Community Survey#2
- Nov 5, 2025 – Board of Park Commissioners informational review
- Dec 10, 2025 – Board of Park Commissioners action on the master plan

Public Input Meeting #1

Public Input Meeting #1 was held virtually via Zoom. Parks presented background information about the park and three draft master plan concepts. Parks staff reviewed each concept option, answered attendee questions, and listened to community feedback. Presentation Materials can be found in Appendix 1.

Online Community Survey #1

After the first public meeting, Parks held an online survey to receive additional community input. A link to the project website and survey was included on postcard notifications. In total, Parks received 48 responses to the survey. The ranking and comments supported the findings of the first engagement session: area residents and park users liked a mix of amenities, including a new off-leash dog park, the opportunity for community gardens, and the inclusion of single track. There was also support for improved athletic fields and a sledding hill. One concern raised was the proposed removal of an existing fencerow of trees. Parks staff indicated that preservation opportunities would be investigated in preparation for the second public meeting. A summary of feedback can be found in Appendix 2.

Public Input Meeting #2

The second community meeting was also conducted virtually. Parks staff presented a single draft master plan developed from the community feedback gathered during the first public input meeting and the online survey.

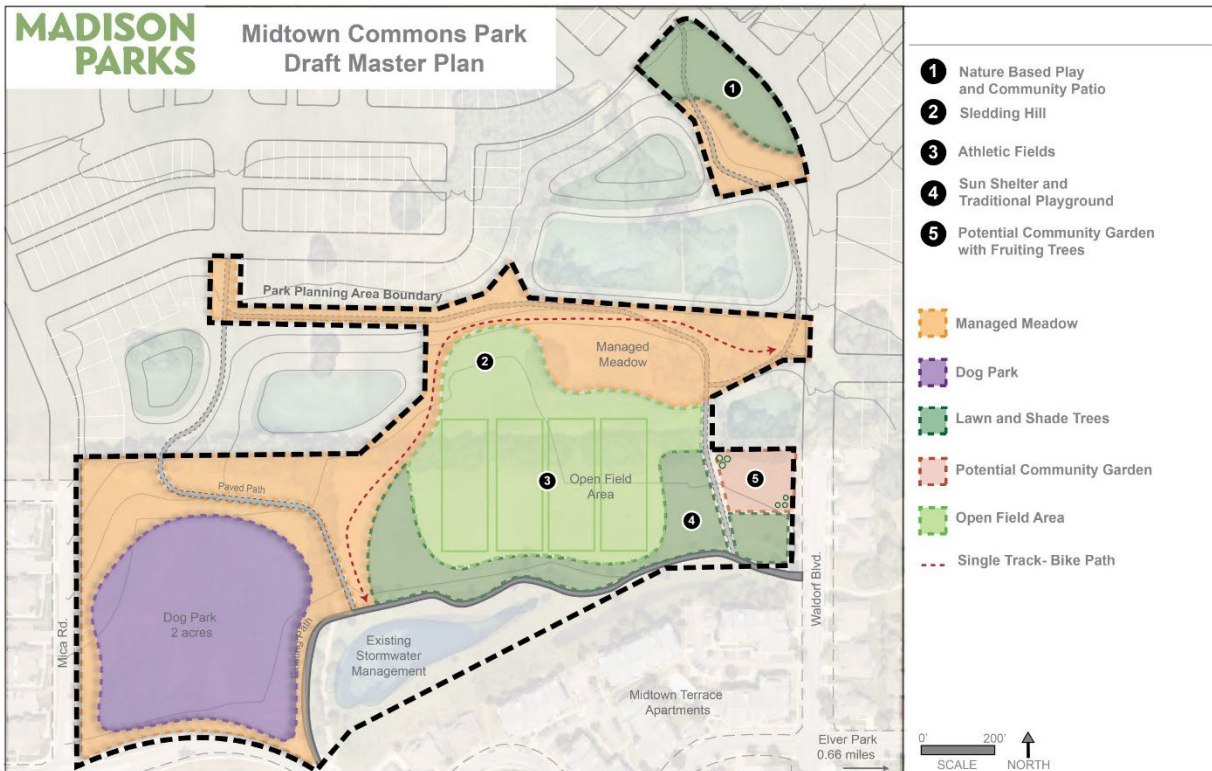
During the discussion, Parks staff explained the site grading challenges created by the substantial elevation change between the existing park and the expansion area to the north. Significant earthwork is required to create accessible path connections through the park to the future residential development. The path system is necessary to integrate and connect the public green space to the broader neighborhood. In addition, keeping the fencerow trees will limit potential field improvements, including correcting the current east–west field orientation and improving field drainage.

Given these considerations, the majority of meeting attendees agreed with the removal of the tree fencerow. Overall, there was positive public support for the revised draft master plan. Presentation materials are included in Appendix 1.

Online Community Survey #2

After the second public input meeting, Parks held a second online survey to receive additional community input. In total, the survey had 49 responses. All responses can be viewed in Appendix 2.

MIDTOWN COMMONS PROPOSED MASTER PLAN



MASTER PLAN PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The master plan was developed by incorporating feedback received during the public engagement process with the expertise of parks staff. The goal was to balance community wants and needs with the present and future resources of the Parks Division. Specific proposed improvements correspond to numbers shown on the master plan graphic. The color-coded areas indicate proposed land uses. Existing amenities not identified for changes are expected to remain in place under typical maintenance and replacement schedules.

#1 – Nature Based Plan and Community Patio

A community patio is proposed in the northeast area of the park. The patio will include a sun shelter structure and a selection of permanent outdoor yard games. Potential options include cornhole, a ping pong table, ladder toss, and similar activities. The final selection will be determined with neighborhood input during the construction phase. The area will also include nature-based play features, focused on features for young children.

#2 – Sledding Hill

Community members expressed interest in providing a sledding hill within the plan. The proposed location makes use of the higher elevation of the north side of the park. The slope will be maintained as lawn, enabling sledding during winter and providing informal spectator seating for the athletic fields during the summer.

#3 – Athletic Fields

The master plan includes space for four ultimate fields, with the option to overlay two soccer fields. The fields can be oriented north/south for optimal play, and grading improvements will support field drainage and recovery.

#4 – Sun Shelter and Traditional Playground

A sun shelter is proposed for the southeast portion of the park in response to community requests for increased shade. The shelter is conveniently located near the athletic fields and the potential community garden. The master plan also includes a traditional playground featuring premanufactured play equipment, providing a complementary play option to the nature-based features proposed in the northeast area of the park.

#5 – Potential Community Gardens with Fruiting Trees

Public engagement revealed interest in establishing community garden space. The master plan designates an area along Waldorf Blvd for this purpose, adjacent to City water service. To establish and manage garden plots, the area residents will need to work with Rooted, the Parks Division's nonprofit collaborator for public garden plot management.

Land Uses

Managed Meadow

Community engagement indicated support for additional natural areas and walking paths. The proposed managed meadow will feature native grasses and forbs, complemented by walking paths and benches for nature viewing. Pathways will consist of either mowed turf or asphalt surface.

Dog Park

There was enthusiastic support for an off-leash dog park during community outreach. According to Parks policy, new dog parks require a minimum of 2 acres. The proposed dog park meets this requirement and will include open lawn areas and mown paths integrated throughout the managed meadow.

Lawn and Shade Trees

Areas of open lawn and shade trees will provide flexible space for informal play, relaxation, and community gatherings while contributing to comfort and biodiversity throughout the park.

Single track Bike Path

In 2020, the Parks Division completed the Madison Bike Adventure Trail Plan, which identified opportunities for new single-track trails. These trails typically vary in width—from slightly wider than shoulder-width to narrow tracks suitable for two-bike passing. Many are one-way, weaving through terrain to create an engaging riding experience, with some routes featuring optional challenge elements.

The single-track trails proposed for Midtown Commons Park will be located within or adjacent to the managed meadow areas and will connect to the trail system to the east and southwest.

End of Report

Attachments:

Appendix 1: Public Input Meetings Presentations

Appendix 2: Community Survey Results

Appendix 3: Midtown Commons Park Master Plan