

**2012-2017 Park and Open Space Plan Comments Received from Members of the Board of
Public Works and Plan Commission
and Proposed Revisions to Address Comments**

Board of Public Works – April 18, 2012

Received only questions, no revisions were suggested.

Plan Commission – April 23, 2012

Comments at Plan Commission Meeting:

1. Incorporate recommendation to work with the Department of Transportation for more vehicular and bike and pedestrian crossings into Yahara Hills Park.

p. 87, 4th paragraph, 2nd sentence on revised to read, "This plan recommends to continue to develop facilities and increase vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, where appropriate, to eliminate neighborhood park and community park deficiencies. This includes developing the Northeast Park and Yahara Hills Park as community parks and investigating opportunities to improve access to these parks as part of transportation improvements to the area; developing a downtown neighborhood park as identified in the Downtown Plan; and improving park connections to address community park deficiencies in the City's Allied Drive, Arbor Hills/Leopold and Yahara Hills Park area where acquiring land for development of a mini, neighborhood or community park is not feasible."

2. Incorporate explanation of process for how improvements get prioritized and how funds are allocated for park improvements.

p. 80, add a paragraph between the 3rd and 4th paragraphs, "The Parks Division has developed and updates its 5-year Capital Improvement Program each year based on a review of existing infrastructure needs, planned development, and citizen and Aldermanic input. Depending on funding availability and priorities, projects are identified each year to move forward for review and approval as part of the Capital Budget process."

3. Incorporate language regarding a strengthened outreach to neighborhood associations for volunteer efforts.

p. 75, 2nd and subsequent paragraphs revised to read, "The City has many individuals or groups of volunteers who dedicate countless hours of volunteer work in City of Madison parks. These volunteers donate either on a one-time basis or as an ongoing commitment for an event, a specific project, a specific park or a volunteer day. The City frequently has groups, individuals, youth groups and corporate volunteers who participate on large scale volunteer days such as Earth Day and Dog Park Clean Up Day."

These volunteers usually assist with weeding, invasive species removal, pruning or trimming or trash pick-up.

Additionally, we have hundreds of volunteers that support program and events coordinated by Madison Parks such as Ride the Drive.

On-going volunteers usually are involved in a City's volunteer program such as Flower Gardeners, Adopt-A-Park (many adopted by Friends groups), Adopt Ice or Parks Watch or Flower Gardeners. These programs utilize volunteers throughout the year to meet a specific objective in a park such as ice maintenance, watching and caring for our parks, or removing invasive species. Madison Parks has over 10,000 hours of time donated annually for maintenance projects year round.

Madison Parks strives to involve additional individuals and organized groups such as neighborhood associations, corporations, Friends groups and other affiliated organizations to commit on an ongoing basis to a specific park, project, or issue. These programs encourage collaboration with Madison Parks' staff and volunteers to address large scale improvements, safety issues in our parks, recurring maintenance projects, and other initiatives. Madison Parks understands the value of engaging more of our stakeholders, residents, and neighborhood associations in the long term investment and advocacy for our parks. Madison Parks strives to provide mechanisms for volunteers to donate resources, such as funding, to help facilitate park development. Madison Parks staff also works together with neighborhood associations and other groups to approve a project and identify private fund-raising goals. The City Parks Division has the ability to leverage these funds with existing City resources to move forward with projects more quickly. Projects funded through these means vary, but some examples are additional playground-equipment, landscaping and shelters.

4. Take a look at how other jurisdictions handle impact fees, changes regarding dwelling units may be warranted.

p. 87, 1st paragraph, 1st sentence revised to read, "... this plan recommends further review of the existing park dedication ordinance and development fees, including researching similar jurisdictions' development fee structures, in order to ..."

5. Include language regarding the City's urban forest and Emerald Ash Borer.

p. 82, 2nd paragraph, added to last sentence, "Plans and recommendations regarding urban forestry and specific concerns regarding Emerald Ash Borer are not addressed in this plan as they are being addressed separately through the City's EAB Task Force process."

6. Incorporate recommendations about being proactive regarding invasive species.

Already addressed in two recommendations on p. 88, **Identify areas in our parks with significant natural resources for preservation and protection and develop land management goals for these areas.** and **Improve and preserve the unique habitats and ecosystems within conservation parks.**

7. Incorporate recommendations regarding programming to get youth involved in stewardship of parks.

p. 93, 3rd paragraph, 1st sentence, revised to read, "Coordinate with educational agencies to expand programming and opportunities for outdoor education and to encourage youth to engage in stewardship of parks."

8. Add water fountains and picnic areas to the list of potential amenities in mini parks on p. 12.

Table 3-2, revised to add picnic areas to the list of potential amenities for mini parks (drinking fountains would typically be located in larger parks).

9. Incorporate language regarding opportunities for gifting and donations with the baby boomers. Recommend developing a website for gifting and donations.

p. 89, 3rd paragraph, add to end of paragraph, "Lastly, this plan recommends increasing opportunities for gifting and donations, including developing a website to facilitate this process."

10. Include language that would allow the city the potential to sell or trade surplus parkland when it no longer serves a need and doesn't meet park deficiencies.

Not addressed in the plan as this opportunity already exists through the City's Disposal of Surplus City Real Property process (MGO 8.075).

11. There is nothing in the plan that talks about the amount of money spent on tree planting in parks. Take a look at maintenance and general planting in parks and develop a systematic approach.

A systematic approach currently exists for tree planting in our parks. Funding is budgeted through our Capital Budget process, and planting in parks is part of the Master Plan for the park and based on community requests.

12. Reference a recommendation regarding lighting conforming to the City ordinances such as shielding lighting for sports fields.

p. 90, 1st paragraph, after last bullet add the following sentence, “As field and facility lighting is replaced, it will conform to the City ordinance regarding shielding lighting and be energy efficient to the extent possible.”

13. Include a recommendation to integrate parks into the city bike system.

p. 88, 3rd paragraph, 1st sentence revised sentence to read, “This plan proposes to continue development of trail facilities and to continue efforts towards development of a comprehensive city-wide trail plan that includes providing connections to parks as part of the city bike system.”

14. Discuss how access to the lake and canoe launches will be constructed in the City.

p. 91, 3rd paragraph, the recommendation **“Continue to improve water access and quality to promote water recreation”** appears to address this comment.

E-mailed comments from Chair of Plan Commission:

15. Page 5, Consider including a phrase in the last paragraph of the Mission Statement that expands the realm of cultural interaction to include “supporting community gardens” which are, in most cases, truly wonderful (and daily) opportunities for such interaction among people from many backgrounds.

The Long Range Planning Sub-Committee of the Park Commission has expressed interest in reviewing the Mission and Vision for the Parks Division. Rather than revising the Mission at this time, we will use that process, along with involving staff in the discussion, to identify any changes that may be warranted.

16. Page 12, Add community gardens and edible landscaping as potential facilities in the appropriate category of Table 3-2. Community gardens are included in the list of possible facilities on the previous page along with dog parks and trails; perhaps an asterisk could be used to note “depending on the size and classification of the park.”

Revised to add the following text under categories Neighborhood and Community: **“Community gardens (as appropriate based on space availability).”**

17. Pages 38-41, It’s clear that there was significant public input on both community gardens and edible landscaping as you developed this plan, and it would be helpful to reflect this throughout this section; the Parks Division considers them similar and is currently developing procedures to handle both. Figure 5-1 refers only to edible landscaping; neither term is mentioned in the listing of categories generated by the comments on pages 40-41; Figure 5-2 lists them together. Since “gardening” ranks 2nd in the Most Popular Outdoor Recreation Activities shown in Figure 5-2, it would be helpful to track it consistently throughout the plan.

Figure 5-1 revised to “Edible Landscape/Community Gardens” to match Figure 5-2.

18. Page 91, The recommendation to pursue development of community gardens and edible landscapes is much appreciated, but the terms and structure/process could be clarified somewhat to educate the general reader. Consider the following revision: “Edible landscaping and community gardens have been noted through the public input process as important assets to the community. Edible landscapes designed for education and food production, available to the community at large and located within City parks, have been managed typically through agreements with local 501(C)3 organizations. Community gardens that have individual plots have been developed in collaboration with, and administered by, the Community Action Coalition of South Central Wisconsin. This plan recommends that City staff continue to work with partnering organizations to find additional locations for edible landscapes and community gardens as appropriate in existing parks and in new parks.”

Revised to the following, “Edible landscaping and community gardens have been noted through the public input process as important assets to the community. Edible landscapes include landscaping and orchards designed for education and food production, available to the community at large and located within City parks, and managed through agreements with local 501(C)3 organizations. Community gardens that have individual plots have been developed in collaboration with, and administered by, the Community Action Coalition of South Central Wisconsin. Within the past 5 years, 5 additional parks have been approved for either community gardens or edible landscaping installations. This plan recommends that City staff continue to work with partnering organizations to find additional locations for edible landscapes and community gardens as appropriate in existing parks and in new parks.”