

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT FEBRUARY 2025 COMMUNICATIONS TO BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Park Superintendent's Monthly Report Summary

January weather was mostly normal except for almost no snow and a record-breaking spike towards the end of the month. This led to a reasonably good skating month and overall this year's skating season looks to be on the better than average side of the curve over the last ten years. Despite this result, staff are continuing to evaluate how to best prepare for the future, where it seems more likely than not that skating challenges will be consistent. The lack of snow certainly this year certainly calls into question the future of snow based recreation as well, but it is important to note that those offerings, despite having some up front investment, are not the same in resource intensity as the battle to create and make ice available.

As February starts, staff are focused on the many steps to prepare for the spring/summer season. Hiring processes are underway, supply orders are in, and capital projects are being bid. As is noted below, we continue to focus on hiring staff to fill all of our authorized positions. I'm excited about our recent progress, but we still have multiple vacancies to fill on the permanent level. This is in addition to the need to do the work in hiring, reinstating, etc. of the more than 200 seasonal staff we will add in the coming months.

Future Commission Items

- Pay to Park in Parks Pilot – The Council rescinded the pilot program for 2025. They included a requirement of a report regarding parking assets in parks to be submitted by April 2026. Parks staff are working with other agencies to create a staff team who will craft this report in a comprehensive manner. The current plan would be to check in with the Commission in the Summer of 2025 regarding approach and process.
- 2025 Division Workplan – The Management Team is finalizing our primary work plan items for the year and corresponding milestones. It is our hope to provide an update to the Commission in March.
- Marshall Houses – Parks staff continues to work with Real Estate and the City Attorney's Office to engage with the property owners of the historic homes in Marshall Park. The goal is to bring an update and potential options for moving forward to the Commission in the next couple of months.
- POSP Update – Parks staff is planning to provide an update on the POSP progress to the full BPC in February or March. The LRP subcommittee has been working diligently on this over the past six months. Staff have been working with the LRP to ensure the first draft is well organized and covers all of the material that ought to be included.
- Olin Houses – Staff are working on a management plan for the Olin Houses as we acquire them. We own three of the houses at this point and would like to have a management strategy in place moving forward. The current plan on the three is working towards demolition on one home, extending the lease on a second, and evaluating options with Real Estate on the third. We do anticipate buying more of these and it would be good to begin developing the plan for holding strategy.

Personnel Updates

Promotions/Hires:

- Joe Anderson, was promoted from hourly laborer to Parks Maintenance Worker position at Mall Concourse. Joe began the new position January 5, 2025
- Joel Ringgenberg was promoted to Parks Facility Supervisor from his position as Carpenter within the Facilities Maintenance team. Joel's new position started on January 19, 2025.
- Adam Kaniewski was promoted to Planning and Development Manager from his position as Landscape Architect 3 within the Planning & Development team. Adam's new position began on January 19, 2025.
- Ethan Reisman was promoted from hourly Conservation Ranger to shared full-time position of Traffic Engineering/Parks Traffic Control Maintenance Worker within Central Parks. Ethan will begin February 3, 2025.
- William Goss, a Parks Worker, transferred from Central Parks to Mall Concourse as part of the Parks Worker training program.

Acknowledgements:

- Spencer Werner returned to his previous role as East Parks Supervisor effective January 19, 2025. Spencer served as the provisionally appointed Facilities Maintenance Supervisor for the past six months. Madison Parks appreciates Spencer's time, leadership and dedication to support the team during this transition.
- Jay Schotzko returned to his previous role as East Parks Operations Leadworker effective January 19, 2025. Jay served as the provisionally appointed East Parks Supervisor for the past six months. Madison Parks appreciates Jay's leadership and willingness to support the Operations team during this transition.

Section reports

Parks Operations

Conservation

- Invasive brush removal at Cherokee Marsh North Unit and Turville Point.
- Reduced and hauled excess woody debris from the oak woodland restoration at Prairie Ridge.
- Operation Fresh Start crew worked on invasive shrub and debris removal at Cherokee Marsh Mendota Unit, Stricker's Pond, and Turville Point.
- Volunteers continued to remove invasive shrubs from Cherokee Marsh Mendota Unit.

Central

- Performed ice maintenance at Vilas and Goodman Parks.
- Inspected and repaired picnic tables for upcoming season.
- Pruned trees at numerous Central Parks.

Central- Ecology Team

- Cut and treated brush at Demetral, Zook, and Kingswood Parks.
- LMW's finished all Central and west pruning.
- Contract maps and letters finished and sent to contractors for bidding.

Construction

- Staff hauled fill from Elver to Yahara golf course in support of the project work on site.
- Stump grubbing piles that have broken down to compost were added to our topsoil piles.
- Playground wood mulch has been hauled to Wheeler Heights, Lucia Crest, Segoe, Zook, and Bordner to be spread by general parks staff.

East

- Performed ice maintenance at Tenney, Olbrich, and Warner Parks.
- Performed snow removal operations on several occasions.
- Repaired and serviced equipment.

Facilities

- The four new bathrooms at Rennebohm shelter were repainted for the renovation of the building.
- Hoover Boathouse's renovation at James Madison began.
- Staff rebuilt one of the bridges inside the Olbrich Gardens Conservancy.
- Staff built a snow globe feature to take photographs on during the Winter Prom event at Monona Terrace.

Mall

- Performed limited, but effective snow removal.
- Removed holiday decor from service area.
- Refurbished several wood benches from the Capital Square.

West Parks

- Spread wood mulch at several playgrounds.
- Performed ice maintenance at Elver and Westmorland Parks.
- Cleared brush at Everglade, Elver, Capital City Street End, Bordner, and Spring Harbor Parks.

P&D

- Work on the POSP continues. In January the Long Range Planning Committee reviewed the draft strategies and operational resources sections.
- The Door Creek Shelter is nearing substantial completion, with occupancy expected by February 14. Landscape installation will follow in the spring.
- P&D staff continue to work with neighborhood residents on the design of 2025 playground replacement projects at Kennedy, Sandburg, Skyview, Ontario, and Portland Parks.
- Bids were received and a contract awarded for the installation of a new pump station and irrigation modifications at Yahara Hills Golf Course in order to accommodate the 18 hole reduction and re-design.
- The Rennebohm Park Sprayground was let for bidding, with bids due on February 13.
- The contract for construction of new Sun Shelters at Sycamore, North Star, and Kestrel Parks was let for bidding, with bids due on February 13.
- Planning is underway for numerous paving projects scheduled for 2025, including the Marshall Park Boat Launch, Hoyt Park Parking Lot, Garner Park Parking Lot, and a new path at Manchester Park.
- Planning is underway for numerous court construction projects scheduled for 2025, including the Manchester Park Basketball Court, Rennebohm East Tennis Courts, and a new Futsal court at Worthington Park.