

Central Park moving forward

JEFF GLAZE | Wisconsin State Journal | jglaze@madison.com | 608-252-6138 | [@JeffGlaze](#) | Posted: Wednesday, February 1, 2012 7:40 am

After years of planning, ground could be broken later this year on the proposed Madison Central Park, according to a consultant working with the city.

Ken Saiki, president and founder of Ken Saiki Design, presented phase one of the Central Park master plan to a group of about 50 people Tuesday night at the Wil-Mar Center.

Phase one will begin its journey through the city review process Wednesday night at the Urban Design Commission meeting.

The Near East Side park envisioned in the master plan would stretch between South Brearly and South Baldwin streets, along East Wilson Street and a bike path. The estimated \$3 million first phase of the project would include construction of the restrooms, regrading the park's lawns, and installation of many of the paths and some of the park's electrical infrastructure, Saiki said.

"Our hope is that we can get through city review and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation review in time to get shovels in the ground this year, beginning in September," he said.

Though Saiki hopes to have the park started this year, the master plan still faces obstacles. The city hasn't come to an agreement with Wisconsin & Southern Railroad Co. for pedestrian crossing of the tracks that bisect the land contained in the master plan. The amount of money available for the project also will affect how quickly the roughly \$14 million plan is completed, Saiki said.

"This project — because of its funding — is very complex. Right now we are only looking at one phase," he said. "There are subsequential phases required to complete the master plan, but we're unsure how many that is at this point."

Ald. Marsha Rummel, 6th district, represents the area of the proposed park and sits on the Urban Design Commission. She said she's pleased the plan is finally becoming reality.

"It's exciting to get this far," she said. "I've been working on this as a neighbor and then an alder for almost 10 years. Thinking that we're coming to a point where we're actually starting construction almost seems unreal."

Seattle-based artist Lorna Jordan will be in town for Wednesday night's Urban Design Commission meeting, where she will present her design for the restrooms.

Saiki said her design is inspired by the surrounding railroads and the region's geological history.

