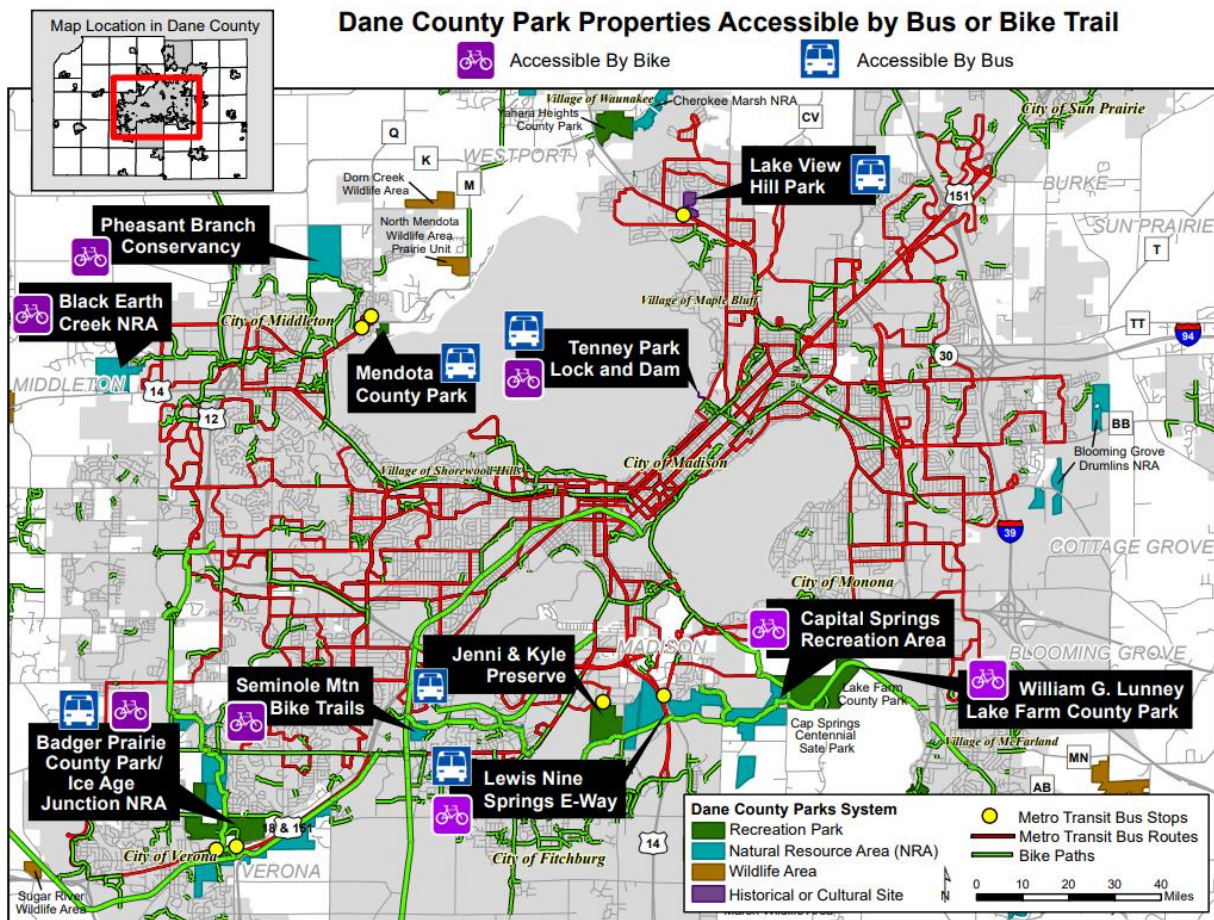


Dane County Parks Transportation & Park Access Summary



Currently, the Dane County Park System has six properties that are accessible by bus. Additional properties that are near a bus line but not fully connected are listed below along with the walk time from the closest bus stop:

Capital Springs Recreation Area (28 minute walk):

2,500 acres of land that includes the popular Lower Yahara River Trail, Capital City Trail, Lussier Family Heritage Center and W.G. Lunney Lake Farm County Park. Recreation opportunities include wildlife viewing, cross country skiing, hiking, biking, disc golf, snowshoeing, canoeing, kayaking, hunting, fishing and camping.

Pheasant Branch Conservancy (26 minute walk):

700 acres of land (owned and managed by various entities, including Dane County Parks) used by the community for biking, hiking, and birdwatching. There are also several natural springs, interpretive signage, and other recreational opportunities.

Yahara Heights County Park and Cherokee Marsh Natural Resource Area (17 minute walk):

Over 380 acres used for hiking, snowshoeing, canoeing, kayaking, hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing.

Health Benefits of Parks

There is a growing body of research that shows that spending time in a natural outdoor environment can be associated with lower levels of stress, depression, anxiety, high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, stroke and heart disease. It can also help lower your heart rate, HDL cholesterol and cortisol levels. At the same time, it improves mood, self-esteem, working memory and overall feelings of well-being ([NPRA](#)).

County Parks vs. City Parks

While both city and county parks offer green space and opportunities for recreation, the types of recreation, size and setting of the parks are all very different.

City parks are often times located within a neighborhood and tend to offer more opportunities for active recreation, such as sports complexes, playgrounds, picnic areas, etc. While County Parks also offer many of these amenities, they tend to offer more opportunities for passive and nature based recreation, such as hiking, camping and cross-country skiing, as well as an opportunity to immerse in nature away from busy city streets. For visitors and for local residents, county parks offer the closest camping opportunities at Mendota County Park, William G Lunney Lake Farm Campground as well as other parks.

The size of the parks is also quite different. The average City of Madison park is around 20 acres and most neighborhood parks are much smaller than that and are designed to service neighbors within a quarter mile radius. The average Dane County Park is around 208 acres and is designed to service a much larger population. A larger park impacts the types of activities you can do, the quality of your nature-based experience, and the health benefits you receive.



	City of Madison Parks+	Dane County Parks*
Size Range (acres)	0.09 - 947	2.9 - 775
Average Size (acres)	20.3	208

+ Types included: Mini, Neighborhood, Conservation, and Community

* Types included: Recreation Parks, NRAs and Forests

It should be noted that the largest City of Madison Park - Cherokee Marsh North Unit (946 acres) – is also not accessible by bus. The closest bus stop is a 36 minute walk to the park.

Opportunities to Connect our Parks

While it is not practical for Madison Metro to connect outlying park properties to its main line, there are several parks that are not too far from existing bus lines. One huge opportunity would be to connect the community to the Capital Springs Recreation Area corridor, especially the William G. Lunney Lake Farm County Park and Lussier Heritage Center. These are both located within the nearly 2,500 acre Capital Springs Recreation Area - the largest area of contiguous public land and greenspace in Dane County. Recreation opportunities include wildlife viewing, cross country skiing, hiking, snowshoeing, canoeing, biking, disc golf, kayaking, hunting, fishing and camping.

The Heritage Center has transitioned from what was primarily an event venue into the county’s main hub for environmental education, visitor services, programming and events. It offers outdoor and environmental education experiences for persons of all ages and ability levels. In 2021, the center is offering more than 126 public activities and events, including:

- Movies in the Park
- Presentations in the Park
- Art in the Park
- Outdoor Yoga
- Volunteer Opportunities and Internships
- Harvest Moon Festival
- Youth Story Time
- Vaccines in the Park - public vaccination event
- Youth Adventure Programs - including fishing, biking and snowshoeing
- Junior Naturalis Program
- DIY Story Walks and Scavenger Hunts
- Volunteer Capacity Building Training Series

Currently, the center is a **20-30 minute walk** from the closest bus stop making it very challenging for those without private transportation to access these opportunities.



Transportation Testimonial

My name is Nastarria Bailey and I have been an avid bus rider since I was a baby. Ever since my third year of high school I've been using the bus to go to my internship at Lussier Family Heritage Center. For a person who lives on the west side trying to get all the way south side to Rim Rock road it is a hustle. I have to take 3 buses which is an hour and 15 minutes to get to Moorland Manor bus stop. Since the center is on Lake Farm Road there is an additional 20 minute journey to the Heritage Center which I've walked and biked before and it is not a treat especially in hot weather. Then when my day is over at the center have to walk or bike that 20 minutes back to the bus stop then take those 3 buses all the way back home.



I've seen a good amount of people trying to make their way to that park many times on my way to work. So, having a direct bus line to the park can make my life and other people's lives 3 times better. Especially with the big changes and programs the center is now offering for kids. As a black person who had not heard of the center before my junior year in high school it would be a life saver for kids who were like me.