



Madison Parks Division

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February 27, 2023

To: Board of Park Commissioners

From: Eric Knepp, Parks Superintendent *EMK*

Re: East-West Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project Impact on Park Land

The City of Madison is undertaking a major transportation project to bring a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system to better serve the community's transportation needs. The project will connect the east and west sides of Madison, running through the isthmus, downtown, and the University of Wisconsin campus. This project will provide a high frequency and fast bus transit option for people to use moving across the City from East-West. The project also incorporates significant pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements. This multi-modal transportation improvement project will have significant impact for the community. It will also provide additional transportation access options for numerous park sites, such as Breese Stevens and Garner Park.

During initial planning for the BRT project, the Parks Division was involved with City of Madison Transportation Department staff and consultants in assessing impacts to parkland along the corridor as part of the Public Parkland and Recreation Areas Technical Report. The creation of this report is a requirement for a federal transportation funded project such as this one to move forward. The regulations in place covering this process are based in Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 and corresponding regulation in 23 CFR Part 774. This type of review and assessment of impacts is routinely done by City staff on a variety of transportation projects.

For this project specifically, the Parks Division worked to review impacts to five Park Division owned land assets along the corridor. This review was based upon 30 percent engineering plan set for the project. For Breese Stevens, Yahara River Parkway and Burr Jones Field, and Reindahl Park there has never been a planned or anticipated impact to the properties. For Nautilus Point Park there has been and remains a temporary impact to the park land with no Section 4(f) impacts given the temporary and minor impacts of construction of a new shared-use path in the Right-of-Way along the Park. For Garner Park, the original anticipated impact was that there would be a de minimis Section 4(f) impact to the park land due to the conversion of the existing sidewalk that extends on to park land becoming a shared-use path. The sidewalk exists where it is today to preserve trees and address accessibility considerations due to slope.

As the project has progressed from 30 percent drawings to a final engineering documents for bidding the project, changes were made in a manner that will reduce the impact to the park land to effectively none. This was done as a part of final design work to preserve as many trees as possible with construction. There will likely be tree impacts and some removals in the ROW, but the current plans should make it a very low likelihood of negative tree impacts of park trees. This is due to the decision to keep the shared-use path in the right-of-way by pulling it back towards the current roadway as it descends eastward from Rosa Rd. to Whitney Way. The attached graphic shows the current plan and highlights that once completed there will be no impact to park land. The end result will be a shared-use path connecting more people to Garner Park safely and efficiently.