WATER UTILITY HIGHLIGHTS

SEPTEMBER 2024

Lakefront Porch at Madison Water Utility's Well 17 is Officially Open!

An official ribbon-cutting ceremony for Madison's newest outdoor public gathering space – the Lakefront Porch – was held on Thursday, September 19th. The Lakefront Porch, atop Madison Water Utility's Well 17, located at the intersection of East Wilson Street and John Nolen Drive, adjacent to the Monona Terrace and directly across from Lake Monona includes seating, lake viewing areas, and community gardens. The previously underutilized space has been transformed into an artistic, comfortable, and engaging space for all community members to enjoy one of the only outdoor public gathering spaces in downtown Madison.

This unique project culminates nearly 15 years of collaboration with the City of Madison Parks department (and other City agencies), as well as the community, volunteer committee, and design consultant, Saiki Design. Madison Water Utility assisted with funding and design of a new ADA accessible ramp, including negotiation of a long-term agreement with Parks for the maintenance responsibility of the porch space. MWU also ensured day-to-day operations at the well are unaffected. These efforts helped transform an underused concrete surface on the roof of Madison Water Utility's Well 17 into an appealing, comfortable public space with a view of Lake Monona.

"This is another excellent example of how partnerships and volunteers make a significant impact on Madison Parks and our public spaces. The Lakefront Porch is now a reality, providing a unique space for relaxation and social connections," *shared CJ Ryan, Madison Parks Assistant Superintendent*.

The First Settlement neighborhood first proposed a public space at the site in its 1995 master plan. In 2010, with money from the Water Utility, some seating was installed and in 2014, raised planting beds were added. In the spring of 2020, Capitol Neighborhoods Inc. received a City Neighborhood Grant that kick-started a 4-year effort to make the space more inviting and usable. A group of volunteers raised over $460,000 to add a platform, tables, shade structures, new railings, and garden beds, and improve accessibility to the site.

Huge shout-out to MWU Engineering Section staff, particularly Adam Wiederhoeft, for navigating the challenges outlined above and keeping stakeholders happy through numerous calls, meetings, emails, and site concept designs.

“The Lakefront Porch is a vibrant, colorful, welcoming gathering place for Madison residents and visitors,” said District 4 Alder Mike Verveer. “With its view of Lake Monona and its location as a gateway to downtown, the space is now an important, appealing public space.”