Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment

An Outdoor Recreation Needs Assessment is an analysis used to identify and prioritize future planning efforts and identify capital expenditures for natural areas and outdoor recreational resources. The assessment combines information obtained during public engagement processes, and examines past, present and projected future needs in order to create informed recommendations. as well as data obtained from facility reservations, permit sales from existing as well as reservations made through RecTrac (formerly GymDandy/Spotz). Results of the athletic organization surveys are also included along with information provided from Destination Madison and user feedback regarding athletic field use and preferences.

Engagement Outcomes

This section describes information received during public engagement sessions including the kick-off events/open houses and pop-up events focused on engaging BIPOC communities held by All Together, as well as comments received in wish boxes placed by All Together at public library locations and responses received via the survey conducted and analyzed by UW Survey Center. Appendix X includes the Community Engagement Activities and Outcomes summary which further describes the engagement activities.

Open House Events

Throughout the spring and early summer of 2024, Madison Parks and MSA Professional Services, Inc. held a total of four Public Input Meetings (PIMs) around Madison to kick-off the POSP and begin gathering input for the update of the plan. These meetings were open-house sessions, with a short presentation given early on during the meeting time and stations placed throughout the room with activities designed to engage attendees on their priorities for, and opinions about, the park system. During the event, QR codes placed on flyers located at the activity stations collected voluntary demographic information about the attendees. As is often the case for open invitation public meetings in Madison, attendees at the open houses were generally older (36% fell within the 41-55 age range, 21% were 56-70 and 34% were 70 or older), and 84% identified as “White” in Race/Ethnicity, with 8% Hispanic/LatinX, and 2% Asian/AA. Attendees also overwhelmingly reported regular park usage: 32% described daily usage and 52% selected weekly usage.

The “Balance the Budget” activity at the open houses asked participants to prioritize spending by choosing to allocate funds (via colored pom-poms placed in a jar) amongst five major categories: development of new parks, additional programming for existing parks, maintenance/repairs/replacements for existing parks, new amenities for existing

parks and ecological management for existing parks. The categories "maintenance/repairs/replacements for existing parks" and "ecological management for existing parks" received the largest spending allocations during each of the sessions and received the largest number of pom-pom votes overall, suggesting that attendees preference investment into existing facilities and land over the development of new parks.

The "issue paper" boards activity received many comments regarding facility use and needs, particularly those focused on golf, recreation biking and activating parks. Common interests for park activation included skateboarding, pickleball, and dog parks. Additionally, there was community interest for cultural events, and ensuring that Madison Parks are a hub for cultural celebrations for the diverse residents, and education for the public. Participants showed interest in an interconnected system of bike paths throughout Madison and extending connections to surrounding municipalities but emphasized the importance of being environmentally sensitive to natural habitats. Comments around golf included concerns about ecological health, limited use and costs vs benefits of the sport while also expressing excitement over the returned interest in the activity.

BIPOC Focus Events

Madison Parks, MSA Professional Services, Inc., and All Together held a total of three focus groups - two virtual and one in-person - during the summer of 2024 to collect feedback from community members that often are left out of community planning processes. The in-person events took the form of "pop up" engagement during Parks Alive events held primarily at park locations within Neighborhood Resource Team (NRT) areas and included activities designed to engage participants in describing both what they liked best and items they felt were missing from City of Madison Parks. The virtual events were conducted via Zoom with area service providers working with youth of color and members of the Hmong community. Facilities described as missing from the park system included:

- More shelters with clean restrooms and additional seating. Current facilities are often insufficient for larger gatherings.
- More sports courts, including basketball, volleyball, and a wish for larger playgrounds to reduce crowding.
- Suggestions also included more swimming pools, better walking trails, and additional amenities like swings, water fountains, hand-washing stations and additional shaded seating areas.

Within the focus group sessions, regular participation or visitation to parks was common among participants, although barriers to park usage were cited including:

- Concerns were raised about the cleanliness and availability of water fountains and the accessibility of restrooms, especially for families with young children.
- Some participants noted that crowding in popular areas can be a deterrent.
- The cost of rental bikes and lack of clear information on reserving shelters were also mentioned as potential barriers.

UW Survey Center

In the fall of 2023, the Madison Parks Division hired the UW Survey Center to assist in the development and administration of a large-scale survey. The intent of the survey was to gauge satisfaction with the City's park and recreation amenities and learn more about how residents use those facilities. 5,000 Madison addresses were randomly selected and mailed the survey; of those, 898 households completed it (18% response rate). Similar to the comments received during engagement for the 2018-2023 POSP, the top activities respondents reported participating in through the survey were general physical activities such as walking, hiking or running and leisure activities, including attending picnics, celebrations, festivals or events.

47% of respondents to the survey felt that the existing park system met the needs of adults ages 19-64 very well and 28% felt that the existing system met the needs of children ages 5-12 very well, but only 17% felt that adolescents (ages 13-18) needs were met very well.

Regarding facility deficits, answers to the survey question "Do you feel the City of Madison has too few, just the right amount or too many facilities for each of the following types of activities?" included the highest number of respondents identifying "too few" for water recreation such as swimming pools and splash parks and court-based sports such as basketball, tennis or pickleball.

Facility Demands

Athletic Facility Reservations

The City of Madison provides and maintains facilities for year-round athletic use within the park system but does not directly manage recreation league athletic programs. The City partners with Madison School & Community Recreation (MSCR) and other recreation organizations such as Madison Ultimate Frisbee Association (MUFA), Liga Latina y Latinos Soccer Association, Chavitas Soccer Club, Madison Area Youth Soccer Association (MAYSA), and Southside Raiders Youth Football to program the athletic fields.

A review of the City's reservation data from 2023 identifies that the activities with the highest number of reservations included soccer, pickleball, and tennis. Pickleball appears

for the first time in the top 3 for Park Reservations by Sport, which can likely be attributed both to its nationwide popularity and also to the availability of online court reservations made available by applications such as GymDandy/Spotz (2018-2023) and RecTrac (2024-current) which allows players to quickly reserve court space, including for same-day play. Demand for athletic facilities continues to grow for ultimate, lacrosse, and cricket as well, which share facilities with other historically popular sports. [Insert Top Park Reservations by Sport Table – update 1-9-2024]

Sport	Count
Soccer	3385
Pickleball	1856
Tennis	1576
Ultimate Frisbee	1534
Softball	974
Volleyball	247
Kickball	196
Baseball	158
Football (youth)	119
Flag Football (youth	108
Baseball (youth)	75
Lacrosse (youth)	48
Camogie	23
Flag Football	20
Football	4
Lacrosse	2
Basketball	2

NOTE: 2023 data from Kevin Goke / Parks Athletics Scheduler 1-29-24

As was the case for the previous version of the POSP, reservation data continues to indicate that the most frequently reserved parks include multi-field and multi-court complexes. Facilities of this type allow users to host practices, games and tournaments in a single location as opposed to requiring multiple parks for these uses.

As part of this plan update, Madison Parks conducted two surveys, in 2023. The first athletics survey asked park users the questions, “What type of sports do your participants play?”, “What is the average cost per year to each participant?” and “What is the age range of the majority of your participants?”. The second survey was intended to serve as an athletic facility assessment that sought to further understand specific facility needs from organizations that reserve athletic facilities. The athletics survey received 40 responses from the 240 groups asked to participate and the athletic facility assessment received 7 responses from 36 organizations asked to participate. A summary of these surveys can be found in Appendix X.

Respondents to the athletic facility assessment continue to place value on the ability to reserve multiple fields or courts at one park location to accommodate large leagues and host multi-game events and these sentiments were echoed by staff at Destination Madison

familiar with state- and national-level large athletic event requirements. [Insert Top Twenty Reserved Parks for Athletics table]

Park	Sport	Total Number of Reservations
Garner Park	Soccer, Pickleball, Volleyball, Lacrosse (youth), Lacrosse	1603
Quann Park	Soccer, Tennis, Ultimate Frisbee	1269
Reindahl Park	Soccer, Pickleball, Tennis	689
Olbrich Park	Softball, Volleyball, Kickball, Baseball	525
Rennebohm Park	Soccer, Tennis	414
Duane F. Bowman Park	Ultimate Frisbee, Softball, Kickball, Baseball	370
Demetral Park	Ultimate Frisbee, Softball, Volleyball, Kickball, Baseball	311
Goodman Park	Soccer, Softball, Baseball (youth)	296
North Star Park	Ultimate Frisbee	270
Door Creek Park	Soccer, Pickleball, Tennis, Football	260
Odana Hills Park	Soccer	206
Elver Park	Soccer, Softball, Baseball (youth), Basketball	257
Country Grove Park	Soccer	244
Warner Park	Soccer, Ultimate Frisbee, Softball,Football (youth), Camo	242
Wingra Park	Soccer	206
Wexford Park	Soccer, Tennis	204
Manchester Park	Ultimate Frisbee	201
Midtown Commons Park	Ultimate Frisbee	195
Olin Park	Ultimate Frisbee, Kickball	183
Kennedy Park	Soccer, Pickleball	179

Several of the respondents to the 2023 athletic facility assessment (ultimate, adult women's softball and soccer) indicated that they had had to turn away registrants from their respective leagues due to a lack of available space to schedule practices and games. The need for more full-size courts (specifically tennis, basketball and volleyball) was also described by participants during the plan outreach efforts led by All Together. The Hmong community Focus Group sessions and comments placed in the Wish Box at Alicia Ashman Library mentioned support for more cricket and soccer fields as well as basketball courts. The value that Madison residents give to open field spaces for athletic use was also supported by the UW-developed survey sent in fall of 2023 to randomly selected addresses within the City of Madison: 37% of respondents answered "Very" to the question, "How valuable do you find open fields for games such as such as Ultimate Frisbee, soccer and softball?"

The Parks-conducted athletic facility assessment and discussions with local leagues and event planning staff indicate that there is also demand for more lighted fields and facilities capable of hosting large scale events with restroom and concession buildings. There is also high demand for athletic field and sport court lighting for sports such as pickleball, soccer, ultimate, flag football, and volleyball. Madison Parks currently has facility lighting at a number of locations, including two dual-striped pickleball/tennis courts , two basketball courts, twenty softball diamonds, two baseball diamonds, one premium soccer field, one

football field, one futsal mini pitch and one sand volleyball court. Users currently take advantage of off-season softball outfields as lit spaces for ultimate and flag football. Players have been observed at the system's only dedicated pickleball facility at Garner Park stringing small LED lamps on the court fence to extend play into the darker spring and fall evenings.

[insert map "Park Reservations – Athletics"]

Shelter Reservations

Madison Parks currently has 89 reservable shelters consisting of 34 shelters with restrooms, one combined concession/restroom building and 55 open-sided "picnic" shelters without restrooms. Shelters with restrooms are available mid-April through mid-October. Picnic shelters are available year-round. Shelters are reserved for wedding celebrations, family reunions, association/ business picnics, and community events. Shelters are typically booked for weekday evenings and weekends. Madison Parks has more than 2,000 shelter reservations each year. The most reserved shelters in the park system are the shelter at Garner Park, the shelter at Highland Manor Park, and the shelter at Brittingham Park. Highland Manor, Gates of Heaven, and John Wall Pavilion at Tenney Park are available for indoor rental space year-round.

[Insert Top 20 Reserved Shelters by park table]

Park	Large Shelter Reservations	Sun Shelter Reservations
Garner Park	331	
Highland Manor Park	174	
Brittingham Park	160	
Vilas Park	144	
Westmorland Park	125	
Warner Park (Large)	121	
Marshall Park	117	
Tenney Park	115	
Hoyt Park (Large)	106	
Burrows Park	105	
Rennebohm Park	102	
Elver Park (New)	99	
Olin Park	93	
Gates of Heaven Synagogue	92	

Orton Park			87
Elver Park (Old)	73		
Hoyt Park (Roys)			65
James Madison Park	55		
Marlborough Park			54
Demetral Park	53		

[insert map “Park Reservations – Shelters"]

Park and Street Use Event Reservations

The Parks Division is responsible for permitting events that happen both within parks and on the street. Street Use and Park Event permits allow for event organizers to host many of the events that that make Madison so unique. These events draw not only residents, but also visitors from around the region and country to visit Madison. Street Use permits are required for closing or rerouting traffic from any portion of a street or sidewalk to hold an event or activity. Park Event permits are required for events taking place in parks that anticipate large numbers of participants and require extensive set-up, include vending, or charge admission.

In 2023, there were 924 non-athletic events in Madison parks. This number includes the total number of event days. Some events, such as such as farmer's markets, festivals and concerts are more than one-day or are part of a series. The largest number of reserved park days for events were for State Street/Mall Concourse, Warner Park, and Olin Park. Out of the 924 event days, 82 were produced by Madison Parks. Parks-produced events included Movies in Parks, Learn-To Events, Ride the Drive, Parks Alive, Earth Day Challenge, and Dog Park Clean-Up Day.

[insert table “Top Twenty Reserved Parks Events”]

Park	# of Event Days	Most Recurring Event (# of days)
Mall Concourse	132	Dane County Farmers Market Wednesdays (31)
Warner Park	61	ewbridge Concert Series (7); Bird & Nature Outings (1
Olin Park	69	Fantasy In Lights (43)
Hoyt Park	67	utside We Learn Camp (18), Barre 3 fitness classes (22
Brittingham Park	67	United Cerebral Palsey Camp (32)
Meadowood Park	52	MSCR Meadowood Day Camp
Orton Park	47	Big Oak Childcare (52)
Quann Park	47	AEC Events (41), Crossfit (5)
McPike Park	43	astside Farmers Market (26), Sessions at McPike Park (7
Marlborough Park	39	MSCR Marlborough Day Camp (45)
Olbrich Park	29	(individual events)
Aldo Leopold Park	28	Fitchburg Library (8), River Food Pantry (17)
Elver Park	25	(individual events)
Garner Park	21	Capitol City Band (14)
Rennebohm Park	20	(individual events)
Wingra Park	20	Lakeside Yoga (10)
Vilas Park	18	(individual events)
Westmorland Park	17	(individual events)
The Glen	15	Sina Davis Movie Nights (6), Live at The Glen (4)
Penn Park	12	(individual events)

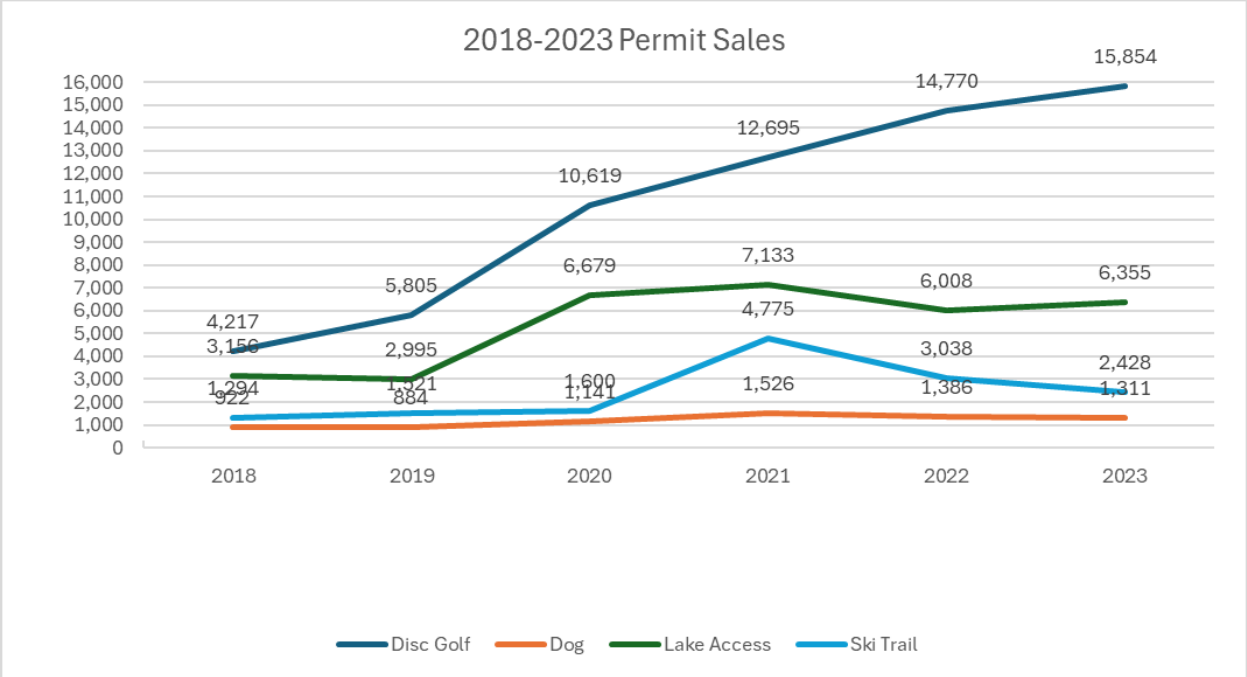
Park Permit Sales

The City of Madison requires an annual permit for cross-country skiing, disc golf, dog parks, and lake access. Cross-country ski and lake access permits are joint permits for use on any designated site within the City of Madison, City of Monona, and Dane County. Disc golf permits are required for each of the City of Madison courses: Elver, Hiestand and at Yahara Hills Golf Course. The dog park permit can be used at any City of Madison on-leash or off-leash dog park, Dane County Parks, the City of Middleton, and the City of Sun Prairie pet exercise areas.

The City of Madison Parks Division continues to directly collect permits and track them in the resource management software program Accela. Table X.X identifies annual and daily permit sales from 2018-2023. As was the case for the time period covered during the last POSP, Park permit sales generally remained steady, with the major exception of the years 2020-2021, when permit sales across all four areas experienced major increases. The COVID-19 pandemic undoubtedly contributed to this phenomenon, with ski trail, lake access and disc golf annual permit sales increasing by as much as 245% during that timeframe.

[Insert Table X.X]

	2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Annual Permits	Daily Permits	Annual Permits	Daily Permits	Annual Permits	Daily Permits	Annual Permits	Daily Permits	Annual Permits	Daily Permits	Annual Permits	Daily Permits
Disc Golf	4,107	110	5,613	192	7,476	3,143	9,858	2,837	12,030	2,740	14,149	1,705
Dog	908	14	836	48	1,017	124	1,262	264	1,175	211	1,082	229
Lake Access	3,156	0	2,995	0	4,665	2,014	4,985	2,148	3,504	2,504	3,159	3,196
Ski Trail	1,277	17	1,474	47	1,508	92	3,626	1,149	2,619	419	1,953	475



Additional Facility Demands

Warner Park Community Recreation Center (WPCRC)

The Warner Park Community Recreation Center (WPCRC) works to build community, foster fellowship, and create a safe place for youth to gather. The center is one of the most important assets of the Madison Parks Division. Located on the northeast side of Madison,

the center is a multi-purpose facility for community activities, including recreational, educational, and cultural programs and events. The facility includes a gymnasium, exercise room, game room, art room, meeting rooms, and a community room. In 2023, the center welcomed over 261,000 visitors. The "out of school time" program titled Kids Need Opportunities at Warner (KNOW) program, which provides meaningful opportunities for Northside teens to engage in a variety of structured and unstructured recreational programs at the WPCRC; was developed out of a partnership with the Madison Parks Foundation. We estimate that of the 261,000 visitors to the center every year, we are directly serving 100-150 youth (duplicated) per week.

Golf and Golf Park Events

Recreational demand for golf shifted significantly during the pandemic and continues to grow: The Golf Program consists of four unique courses, offers a total of 72 holes with a plan to reduce to 54 holes by 2026 and involves all aspects of golf course operations and programming in addition to providing space for events programmed by Parks and others. The Golf Program ended the 2023 season with the fourth consecutive year of record-breaking revenue and course utilization, with an average of approximately $4 million in annual revenue and between 135,000-140,000 rounds played. In 2023, 152,884 rounds of golf were played, and the program generated $5,082,329 in revenue. In addition, 25 unique golf park programming events ranging from family fun movie nights, live music fitness classes, and volunteer activities were held at The Glen Golf Park with over 1,400 participants for the year. The Glen Golf Park is the reimagined former Glenway golf course which underwent an extensive redesign process and opened in 2022 in its current multi-purpose format.

Date	Event
Saturday, April 20, 2024	Volunteer at The Glen
Saturday, May 18, 2024	Volenteer at The Glen
Sunday, May 19, 2024	Movie at The Glen- Abominable
Friday, May 31, 2024	Live at The Glen- Noah Hittner
Saturday, June 22, 2024	Volunteer at The Glen
Sunday, June 23, 2024	Movie at The Glen- Super Mario Bros. Movie
Friday, June 28, 2024	Live at The Glen- Vince Sweeney
Wednesday, July 10, 2024	Play on the Move
Friday, July 12, 2024	Live at The Glen- Grand Aul Day
Tuesday, July 16, 2024	Barre3 Workout
Saturday, July 20, 2024	Volunteer at The Glen
Sunday, July 21, 2024	Movie at The Glen- Trolls Band Together and Madison Parks Foundation 130 Year Celebration
Friday, July 26, 2024	Live at The Glen- DJ Pain 1
Saturday, August 17, 2024	Volunteer at The Glen
Sunday, August 18, 2024	Movie at The Glen- Ruby Gillman: Teenage Kraken
Tuesday, August 20, 2024	Barre3 Workout
Friday, August 23, 2024	Live at The Glen- Spare Time Bluegrass/ They Talk Too Much
Friday, September 6, 2024	Live at The Glen- Vince Sweeney
Friday, September 13, 2024	Live at The Glen- Panchromatic Steel
Saturday September 21, 2024	Volunteer at The Glen
Sunday, September 22, 2024	Movie at The Glen- Elemental
Friday, September 27, 2024	Live at The Glen- Tom Martinelli
Wednesday, October 2, 2024	Cyclocross
Sunday, October 13, 2024	Movie at The Glen- Hocus Pocus
Saturday, October 19, 2024	Volunteer at The Glen