

Madison Parks & Recreation Board Meeting

March 10th, @ 12:00

Location: Community Center Meeting Room

Call to Order

- I. Roll Call
- II.
- III. Approve the March 2026 meeting agenda
  
- IV. Approve the January 2026 meeting minutes
- V. Old Business:
  - A) Recreation Trail Update:
- VI. New Business:
  - A) Discuss Armory Special Event Fees
  - B) Discuss and Review Parks Comprehensive Plan
  - C) Discuss Future Recreation Trail Grant funding options
  
- VII. Other Business:
- VIII. Public Comment:
  
- IX. Staff Reports
  - A. Aquatics Coordinator (Aly Black)
  - B. Parks Superintendent (Mike McGillivray)
  - C. Recreation Coordinator (Caden Hunsley)
  - D. Community Center (Jamal Branco)
  
- X. Adjourn

Madison Parks & Recreation Board Meeting

January 11th, 12:00

Location: Community Center Meeting Room

Call to Order **12:01**

- I. Roll Call: **Mike Miller, Nick Bird, Dale Droge, Matt Burpee, Lisa Martin**
- II.
- III. Approve the January 2026 meeting agenda **Droge made a motion to approve, Bird 2<sup>nd</sup>, Motion Passed Unanimously**
- IV. Approve the December 2025 meeting minutes **Bird made a motion to approve, Burpee 2<sup>nd</sup>, Motion Passed Unanimously**
- V. Old Business:
  - A) Recreation Trail Update: **McGillivray updated board on Rec Trail.**
  - B) Flynn Field Lighting Status: **McGillivray updated board on plans for installation of lights.**
- VI. New Business:
  - A) Cara Raethz Library Wedding Approval **Raethz asked to use Library Park for wedding on 7/18/2026 at 4:00. Bird made motion to approve, Droge 2<sup>nd</sup>, Motion passed Unanimously**
  - B) Discuss 2026 Garden Plot Fees: **Burpee made motion to approve \$50 garden plot fee, Martin 2<sup>nd</sup>, Motion passed unanimously**
- VII. Other Business: **Board discussed Armory Floor care and no action was taken.**
- VIII. Public Comment:
- IX. Staff Reports
  - A. Aquatics Coordinator (Aly Black) **Black updated board on MAC and staffing needs.**
  - B. Parks Superintendent (Mike McGillivray) **McGillivray updated board on Park duties being completed.**
  - C. Recreation Coordinator (Caden Hunsley) **Hunsley updated board on Winter Rec Programs and leagues.**
  - D. Community Center (Jamal Branco)
- X. Adjourn **Burpee made a motion to adjourn, Bird 2<sup>nd</sup>, Motion passed Unanimously**

**Next Meeting will be 2/10/2026 at Community Center at 12:00.**

# City of Madison Parks Master Plan

## Table of Contents

[insert when ready]

## Acknowledgements

This Parks Master Plan reflects the valuable input and engagement of residents across the City of Madison. Community feedback helped shape priorities, identify needs, and guide the overall vision for our park system.

The City of Madison recognizes the dedication and hard work of the Parks Master Plan Committee. Committee members devoted significant time to discussion, review, and collaboration throughout the process, helping refine recommendations and move the plan forward.

### Committee Members

- Jameson Berreth
- Dale Droge
- Jennifer Hastleton
- Eric Hortness
- Mike Miller
- Matt Mette
- Mike McGillivray
- Savannah Olinger
- Bud Postma

## Parks & Recreation Vision and Guiding Goals

[INSERT Vision for City of Madison Parks & Recreation and 4-6 guiding GOALS like equity, access, sustainability, etc.]

## Executive Summary

In 2025, the City of Madison conducted a community-wide parks survey to better understand how residents use local parks, what amenities matter most to them, and where improvements may be needed. The feedback received, combined with system evaluation and staff analysis, serves as the foundation for this Parks Master Plan.

Overall, residents expressed appreciation for Madison’s parks and the role they play in daily life. Walking, playground use, open green space, and informal recreation continue to be important to families and individuals across the community. Community parks serve as key gathering destinations, while neighborhood parks provide convenient, close-to-home access that supports everyday activity.

Several consistent themes emerged through survey responses and engagement efforts:

- Continued reinvestment in existing parks and aging amenities
- Improvements to dog-related facilities, including Woolfland Dog Park and additional dog waste stations
- Interest in expanding community garden plots in underserved areas
- Support for pollinator plots and enhanced natural features
- Clear and consistent branding and signage to improve park awareness
- Ongoing recreation trail expansion to improve connectivity

Residents expressed interest in new amenities, including a potential splash pad, while also emphasizing the importance of maintaining what already exists. The feedback reinforces the need for a balanced approach that supports both thoughtful growth and responsible stewardship.

This Master Plan reflects that balance. It prioritizes asset preservation, equitable access, sustainability, and alignment with community growth patterns. Implementation will be guided by a transparent framework that considers safety, lifecycle timing, geographic equity, community demand, readiness, and long-term maintenance capacity.

Together, these recommendations provide a practical and forward-looking roadmap for Madison’s park system, ensuring it remains safe, accessible, and responsive to the needs of the community.

## Objectives

The City of Madison Parks Master Plan establishes a long-term, community-informed framework to guide investment, maintenance, and improvements across the City’s parks system. The plan is grounded in resident feedback gathered through a citywide parks survey and community engagement efforts. The community’s input helped identify park usage, which amenities matter most, and where improvements would have the greatest impact. This plan prioritizes preservation and reinvestment in existing assets before expansion of the park system and is intended to:

- Assess current park use and community perception

- Address accessibility, safety, and maintenance considerations
- Identify resident priorities and needs
- Guide short-, mid-, and long-term investments with consideration to available resources

## Progress and Success Measurement

Progress tracking document which includes the project name, priority level, cost estimate, funding source, target year to begin, and status. This document will be updated by City personnel and reviewed annually by the Parks board.

[Add more here? Take it out?]

## Community & Parks System Information

The City of Madison is home to 6,191 residents, according to the 2020 U.S. Census. Of those residents, 1,180, or 19.1%, are under the age of 18. Madison includes 2,573 households, with an average household size of 2.17 persons.

Between the 2010 and 2020 U.S. Censuses, Madison's population changed from 6,474 residents to 6,191 residents. This represents a decrease of 283 people, or about 4.3% over the ten-year period. While that reflects a slight decline rather than growth, it also shows that Madison has remained relatively stable in size. The number of households has remained steady as well, with 2,573 households recorded in 2020.

In 2020, 19.1% of Madison's residents were under the age of 18, and the median age was 34.5 years. Age trends are especially important when planning for parks. Census data tells us we are still a community with a strong youth presence, alongside working adults, college students, and older residents.

Even without rapid population growth, the mix of ages in our community continues to shape demand for playgrounds, trails, dog-friendly spaces, gathering areas, and accessible amenities. Stability in population does not reduce the need for investment. Instead, it reinforces the importance of maintaining and improving the parks system we already have so it continues to enhance the quality of life in Madison.

## Community Parks vs. Neighborhood Parks

Madison maintains a diverse network of neighborhood and community parks that provide recreation and gathering spaces for residents across all areas of town. The system includes

more than a dozen park locations and recreational facilities, organized into two primary classifications: community parks and neighborhood parks.

Each type of park plays a different role in serving the community. Community parks are designed to serve the entire city and often include larger amenities and gathering spaces. Neighborhood parks focus on providing convenient, close-to-home access for nearby residents. Clearly defining the role of each park helps guide where larger investments make sense and where smaller, neighborhood-focused improvements are more appropriate. Balancing investment between community-level destinations and neighborhood-level access ensures residents have both citywide recreation opportunities and everyday neighborhood convenience.

## Community Parks

Community parks serve the entire city and are designed to accommodate larger gatherings and a wider range of activities. They are often considered destination parks, drawing residents from across Madison and surrounding areas due to their size, amenities, and ability to host events, athletic competitions, and community celebrations. Because of their scale and the amenities they provide, community parks typically require higher capital investment and ongoing maintenance, but they also deliver broad community impact and serve as key gathering destinations for residents throughout Madison. In the City of Madison, the following parks are considered Community Parks:

- Madison Aquatic Center
  - [Assessment Summary & photo for reference]
- Gerry Maloney Nature Area
  - [Assessment Summary & photo for reference]
- Library Park
  - [Assessment Summary & photo for reference]
- Flynn Field / Thue Park
  - [Assessment Summary & photo for reference]
- Baughman Belatti
  - [Assessment Summary & photo for reference]
- Memorial Park
  - [Assessment Summary & photo for reference]
- Woolfland Dog Park
  - [Assessment Summary & photo for reference]

## Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks primarily serve nearby residents and focus on providing small playgrounds, open green space, informal gathering areas, and limited amenities. These parks emphasize accessibility and walkability, offering convenient, close-to-home recreation opportunities. Investment strategies for neighborhood parks often prioritize equitable geographic distribution and basic amenities rather than large-scale facilities, ensuring that residents across all areas of Madison have access to everyday outdoor spaces. In the City of Madison, the following parks are considered Neighborhood Parks:

- Totland Park
  - [Assessment Summary & photo for reference]
- Northwest Park
  - [Assessment Summary & photo for reference]
- Field of Dreams
  - [Assessment Summary & photo for reference]
- Westside Park
  - [Assessment Summary & photo for reference]

## [Budget Info]

[Insert info]

## Plan Development

The City recognizes that meaningful planning requires meaningful engagement with residents. To shape the Parks Master Plan, we took intentional steps and performed diligent research to ensure the information reflected our community, including resident voices and their desired priorities.

## Internal Working Group

The Parks Master Plan project began by forming an internal working group and gathering existing information, including a full inventory and assessment of current park facilities. From there, the City moved into a strong public engagement phase.

## Survey Overview

Community input for the Parks Master Plan was gathered through a public survey, which was provided in multiple ways at several different engagement opportunities. The survey included both closed-ended questions and open-ended comment opportunities to capture a wide range of perspectives.

The Parks Master Plan Committee developed a comprehensive community survey that collected both quantitative and qualitative feedback. Closed-ended questions helped identify usage trends and preference patterns, while open-ended responses gave us deeper insight into resident experiences, expectations, and ideas for the future.

## Public Engagement

The survey was designed to be widely accessible and encourage broad participation across the community. To reach residents in multiple ways, the City:

To make participation as accessible as possible, the City used multiple outreach methods to reach residents across generations, language backgrounds, and preferred communication channels.

### Language Accessibility

- Provided the survey in both English and Spanish to expand access for non-English-speaking residents.

### Format Accessibility

- Offered printed copies alongside the electronic survey so residents could participate in the format most convenient to them.
- Offered verbal questions and responses during in-person events like the pop-up at Downtown MadTown and Town Hall

### Diversified Engagement

- Issued a press release to the local newspaper and radio station to reach residents who rely on traditional media sources.
- Invited residents of all ages to participate, including high school students who toured City Hall while the survey was live.
- Invited parents and guardians of children enrolled in the Madison Central School District through a ListServ distribution.
- Displayed the QR code which linked to the survey at all parks

### Convenience

- Shared the survey through the City's website and social media channels.
- Sent two mass text alerts with direct links to the survey.
- Made the survey available at in-person events, including a Downtown MadTown pop-up and a Town Hall.
- Shared QR codes in resident utility bills and posted them throughout the community at parks, the Madison Public Library, the Community Center, and other high-traffic locations.

[Do we want to make it more of a timeline/story, include dates, or any other information?]

## Community Findings

Community response showed strong appreciation for Madison's parks, while also identifying opportunities to improve accessibility, amenities, maintenance, and overall variety within the parks system.

### System Strengths

Residents generally rate Madison's parks favorably. High-use parks such as Memorial Park, Baughman Belatti Park, and the Outdoor Pool serve as strong community anchors. The system is actively used and valued.

### Reinvestment & Maintenance Priority

Maintenance and upkeep emerged as one of the most consistent themes throughout the survey. Residents emphasized the importance of maintaining and reinvesting in existing parks before expanding the system.

Specific concerns included aging equipment, weed control, ground insects, and general park upkeep. Totland Park and Baughman Belatti Park were mentioned multiple times. Overall, the community's message was clear: protect and strengthen what already exists.

### Targeted Reinvestment Areas

Survey responses indicate that Northwest Park and Woodland Dog Park warrant reinvestment and renewed focus. Satisfaction levels in these parks suggest improvements may increase usage, enhance perception, and strengthen overall system balance.

### Dog-Friendly Amenities

Dog amenities represent both an opportunity for improvement and an area requiring thoughtful management. Comments related to dogs were frequent and detailed. Residents expressed strong interest in reinvesting in Woodland Dog Park, along with potential long-term consideration of an additional dog-focused area. Many also noted the need for dog waste stations across all parks and emphasized the importance of setting and reinforcing clear expectations for pet owner cleanup.

### Community Garden Expansion

A relatively high number of residents indicated interest in community garden plots if located closer to their homes. Accessibility and geographic distribution appear to influence participation. Evaluating additional small-scale garden locations across multiple areas of the City may improve equitable access and engagement.

## Nature Integration & Environmental Enhancement

Residents strongly support incorporating additional trees, flowers, pollinator plots, and natural features into parks wherever feasible. Enhancing nature within parks improves aesthetics, provides shade, supports environmental health, and strengthens the overall user experience.

## Branding, Identity & Awareness

Survey response patterns suggest that some parks are under-recognized or less familiar to residents. High “Not Applicable” responses indicate opportunities to strengthen awareness. Clear and consistent branding, signage, and wayfinding may improve park visibility, identity, and usage.

## Development of Strategic Priorities

Based on resident survey data, engagement feedback, and system analysis, the following strategic priorities will guide implementation of this Parks Master Plan. These priorities not only reflect what the community values, but also serve as the framework for evaluating and advancing future projects.

### Asset Preservation

Maintaining and reinvesting in existing parks and facilities is a primary responsibility. Aging playgrounds, trails, shelters, and infrastructure will be evaluated for lifecycle replacement and proactive upgrades to avoid more costly repairs in the future.

### Equity & Access

Investment should be distributed across the community to ensure all residents have reasonable access to quality parks and recreation amenities. Geographic balance, neighborhood distribution, and walkability will be considered when advancing projects.

### Sustainability

Projects will consider long-term operational impact, environmental stewardship, and maintenance capacity. Enhancements such as pollinator plots, tree planting, and durable materials will support ecological health and long-term cost efficiency.

## Identity & Awareness

Clear and consistent park branding, signage, and wayfinding will strengthen system visibility and encourage greater community use. Enhancing awareness ensures residents understand what amenities are available and where they are located.

## Growth Alignment

As Madison grows, park investment should align with new residential development patterns and community expansion to ensure future residents have appropriate access to recreation space.

## Implementation Framework

To ensure resources are directed where they create the greatest community impact, individual projects will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- **Safety:** Projects that address immediate safety concerns will receive the highest priority. This includes ADA accessibility upgrades, playground replacements that do not meet current standards, lighting improvements, and trail or traffic-related safety concerns.
- **Equity and Geographic Balance:** Projects will be reviewed to ensure fair distribution of amenities and reinvestment across neighborhoods, particularly in underserved areas.
- **Lifecycle and Asset Condition:** Assets nearing the end of their useful life may be prioritized to prevent service disruptions and escalating repair costs.
- **Community Demand:** Resident feedback will continue to guide timing and feasibility, especially for amenities that demonstrated strong interest such as garden plots, dog facilities, and nature-based enhancements.
- **Readiness and Feasibility:** Projects with secured funding, available land, and minimal permitting barriers may advance more quickly than those requiring additional coordination or regulatory steps.

## Funding and Resources

Implementation of the Parks Master Plan will require a combination of capital investment, operational funding, and partnership support.

### Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

The Capital Improvement Plan will serve as the primary funding mechanism for major park investments. Projects identified in this Master Plan should be formally

integrated into the City's multi-year CIP to align timing, bonding capacity, and infrastructure coordination.

## Grants

Grant funding can accelerate implementation but often requires matching funds and administrative capacity. State and federal grants may support:

- Trail expansions
- ADA accessibility improvements
- Outdoor recreation enhancements
- Environmental restoration
- Tree planting initiatives

## Sponsorships

Sponsorships should follow a consistent policy to ensure fairness and transparency. Local businesses and community organizations may support:

- Playground equipment
- Park shelters or benches
- Scoreboards or athletic amenities
- Naming opportunities where appropriate

## Partnerships

Partnerships can reduce financial and maintenance burden, expand programming, and strengthen community ownership of parks. Strategic partnerships may include:

- Madison Central School District
- Dakota State University
- Nonprofit recreation organizations
- Youth sports associations
- Service clubs and volunteer groups

## Maintenance Considerations and Operational Impact

Maintenance capacity is a critical factor in implementing the Parks Master Plan. Every new amenity carries long-term operational responsibilities that must be evaluated before project approval to ensure sustainable staffing levels and budget capacity.

Ongoing maintenance obligations may include turf care and irrigation, snow removal on trails, playground inspections and surfacing upkeep, restroom cleaning and utility costs, tree care and landscaping, trash collection, and vandalism repair. In addition to these

routine activities, new projects may require additional equipment, seasonal staffing adjustments, and increased operating budgets.

As amenities are added, the Parks Department must assess staffing levels, equipment needs, seasonal workload fluctuations, and overall budget implications. If operational capacity becomes constrained, project timelines may be adjusted to prevent service degradation. In some cases, reinvestment in existing parks may take precedence over expansion to ensure current assets remain safe, functional, and well maintained.

## Responsibility

Clear assignment of responsibility ensures accountability and coordination across the organization. Successful implementation of this plan will require collaboration across City departments as well as ongoing policy direction and support from elected officials.

Responsibility for implementation may include:

- Parks Board (planning, approval)
- Parks and Public Works (construction, maintenance)
- Engineering (design, infrastructure integration)
- Finance (budgeting, grants administration)
- City Commission (policy direction and funding approval)
- Partner organizations (programming, sponsorship, volunteer support)

## Recommendations & Timeline

### Recommended Capital Improvement Projects

The following capital improvement projects reflect the priorities identified through resident engagement, system analysis, and evaluation of existing park conditions. These recommendations focus on reinvestment in aging assets, equitable distribution of amenities across neighborhoods, and strategic enhancements that support recreation, community gathering, and long-term system sustainability. While each project will be evaluated through the City's prioritization and funding framework, together they represent a balanced approach to maintaining what we have, improving what needs attention, and thoughtfully expanding Madison's park system to meet future needs.

- Improvements to Woofland Dog Park
- New Park Asset in Cyber Estates & Equipment Replacement in NW Park
- Install Dog Waste Stations in Every Park
- Clear and Consistent Park Branding and Signage

- Install Additional Community Garden Plots
- Create Pollinator Plots
- New Splash Pad Park
- Rec Trail Expansion
- Amenity Improvements at Community Parks

## Other Recommendations

[Items like increased maintenance, resources we already have to improve, etc.]

## Actionable Timeline

### Short-term (1-3 years)

- 1. Clear and Consistent Park Branding and Signage**  
 Priority: High  
 Locations: All  
 Responsible Department: Communications  
 Resources and Funding:
- 2. Promote City Pond as a Community Asset**  
 Priority: Medium  
 Locations: City Pond  
 Responsible Department: Communications  
 Resources and Funding:
- 3. Install Dog Waste Stations in Every Park**  
 Priority: High  
 Locations: All  
 Responsible Department: Parks  
 Resources and Funding:
- 4. Improvements to Woofland Dog Park**  
 Priority: High  
 Locations: Woofland Dog Park  
 Responsible Department: Parks  
 Resources and Funding:
- 5. Assess Accessibility of all Parks & Develop Plan**  
 Priority: Medium  
 Locations: All  
 Responsible Department: Parks  
 Resources and Funding:
- 6. Assess Impact of Increased City-Wide Maintenance**  
 Priority: Medium  
 Locations: All  
 Responsible Department: Parks & Administration  
 Resources and Funding:

## Mid-term (3-7 years)

- 1. New Park Asset in Cyber Estates**  
Priority: High  
Locations: Cyber Estates  
Responsible Department: Parks  
Resources and Funding:
- 2. Equipment Replacement in NW Park**  
Priority: High  
Locations: NW Park  
Responsible Department: Parks  
Resources and Funding:
- 3. Install Additional Garden Plots**  
Priority: Low  
Locations: TBD  
Responsible Department: Parks  
Resources and Funding:

## Long-term (8-15 years)

- 1. New Park Asset in Trojan Village**  
Priority:  
Locations:  
Responsible Department:  
Resources and Funding:
- 2. Create Pollinator Plots**  
Priority:  
Locations:  
Responsible Department:  
Resources and Funding:
- 3. New Splash Pad Park**  
Priority:  
Locations:  
Responsible Department:  
Resources and Funding:
- 4. Rec Trail Expansion**  
Priority:  
Locations:  
Responsible Department:  
Resources and Funding:
- 5. Increase amenities at more community parks (bathrooms, drinking fountains)**  
Priority:  
Locations:  
Responsible Department:

Resources and Funding:

## Appendices

Appendix A - Full survey results

Appendix B - Meeting notes or summaries

Appendix C - Park inventory (includes photos)

Appendix D - Maps (existing and proposed amenities)

Appendix E - Community outreach materials

Appendix F - Progress Tracking document (to be updated annually)

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