

James Madison Park Master Plan and Shelter Design

Public Meeting #2 - PARKitecture Workshop Notes

1:00 – 4:00 PM, February 10, 2018

The BUBBLER at Madison Central Library, 201 W. Mifflin Street

Total participants: 31 signed in / 42 counted

Key Takeaways

- Improve the safety of the park by slowing traffic on Gorham, defining a park boundary, and removing or improving the sea wall.
- Improve access to the lake by enlarging the beach, cleaning up the sand and water, and maintaining views.
- Create a focal point in the park such as a commissioned piece of public art.
- Enlarge the playground and create additional recreation activities.
- Add concessions and/or grills.
- Improve access by increasing the number of paths and assuring ADA compliance throughout the park.
- Maintain eastern side of the park as a quieter space for passive recreation, possibly including a space for off-leash dogs.

Precedent Image Voting

Participants reviewed and provided input using dots and sticky notes on precedent imagery boards (using the same images shared at previous meetings). See Attachment A for dot voting results.

Sticky-note Comments (★ = number of additional mentions)

Park Shelter

- Community garden rooftop
- Maintain rooftop garden
- Historic building
- Park shelter with walls that open/close to the outside
- Amphitheater
- Museum

Play Spaces

- More greenspace ★★
- Art + play space



- Natured focus area
- Community gardens
- Space for natural planting areas
- Wooden playground
- Ice Rink

Rentals/Concessions

- Look at Minneapolis restaurants in public parks as a model

Beach and shoreline

- Natural Shoreline ★★
- Expand beach ★
- Better access to shoreline
- Shaded beach
- Add break waters
- Long piers for sailboats & pedestrians

Parking Lot

- Underground parking

Transportation

- Crossing lights ★★
- Pedestrian overpass

Other

- Rain gardens ★★
- Fruit trees ★
- Wall/fence to keep kids out of the street
- Make connection to northeast side obvious
- Wetlands
- Wind breaks
- Water fountain in the lake
- Musical Instruments



Park Opportunities and Constraints Review

Working in groups, participants reviewed Opportunities and Constraints documents provided by the consultant team, asked questions, and identified additional opportunities and constraints to be considered during their hands-on design exercise.

Worksheet Responses (arranged into categories)

Participants worked individually and in table groups to respond to high level questions about James Madison Park. (★ = number of additional mentions)

Question 1 The master plan for James Madison Park should focus on...

Waterfront

- Beach improvement ★★★

- Improving the shoreline ★★★★★
- Access to water

Shelter

- Improving shelter- clean, safe, restrooms/showers
- Historic design (for the shelter building)

Accessibility

- Handicap accessibility and parking ★★★
- Handicap accessible picnic tables
- Biking friendly
- Bus access
- Usability by students and families
- Protected bike lane (with bollards) on Gorham instead of park wall to protect from traffic

General

- Beauty- make it beautiful
- Multitude of uses/spaces/environments

Focal Point/ Attraction

- Placemaking

Safety

- Safety ★★★★★

Dog Usage

- No dog park
- Dog trash/general trash facility

Environmental

- Plants/ Trees ★★
- Sustainability
- Community garden (including maintaining something like the garden currently on top of the shelter)

Question 2 The best thing(s) about James Madison Park is/are...

Open Space

- The open space ★★★★★
- Please keep the fields and build as little as possible within existing greenspaces!
- Its seems like a huge blank canvas, just waiting for innovative suggestions

Views

- Lake views ★★★
- View of the Wisconsin State Capitol Building

Location

- Close to the Wisconsin State Capitol Building
- Near downtown

Lake | Beach

- Access to the lake ★★★
- One of the very few places in city with public access to Lake Mendota

Community Garden

- The community garden ★★

Amenities

- Variety of uses
- Great space for public events

Question 3 The worst thing(s) about James Madison Park is/are...

Playground

- There isn't a big enough playground

Safety

- Lack of traffic calming at Gorham ★★★
 - The other, successful city parks feel more integrated into their neighborhoods. Gorham feels like a barrier.
 - Parents want "safety net" fence...perhaps open wooden fence, with gaps to show boundaries, but not take away from view of lake. A short stone wall may help.
- Safety concerns at park shelter ★★
- Needles
- No sea wall
- Homeless and drugs
- Geese and goose poop!
- Pathway off Butler St. (dangerous in winter)

Park Configuration & Aesthetics

- Too long and is the same from one end to the other ★★
- Lack of coordination between all areas of the park
- First impression- long, fairly flat, unimaginative, lots of grass, unplanned looking, seems uncared for
- Overall aesthetic and rental properties surrounding the park
- The parking is far from where you want to end up. Very small lot on east end

Synagogue

- The synagogue building does not face east.

Shelter

- The shelter building, no safe toilets

Lack of amenities

- Lack of drinking fountains and bike racks
- Abundance of trash
- Not enough benches

Lake/ Beach

- Stinky lake and algae all summer
- The beach is small and often dirty
- Access to the lake- some of the rocky areas could have stairs to access the lake in more places
- Bad water quality

Paths | Walkways

- Not many paths

Question 4 If I could change one thing about James Madison Park it would be...

Lake/ Beach

- Improve (pedestrian) access to water
- Vertical seawall, address safety concerns, replace with natural shoreline
- A bigger, better beach [] [] [] []
- Dock(s) should be re-built in collaboration with Mendota Rowing Club

Safety and Traffic Concerns

- Traffic calming measures to slow traffic on Gorham, especially from Blount to Butler Streets [] []
- City should add blinking stop lights to cross streets leading to the park
- Boathouse needs improved lighting for safety

Amenities

- Improved playground materials
- Benches
- Water bottle fill station/water fountain
- Bike parking and bike service stations
- The flow of the park- it needs more things throughout i.e. different types of entertainment to keep kids attention
- Dog waste stations
- Some of the steep hills could be terraced gardens or learning spaces to teach people about nature (erosion control, native plants etc.)
- Grills as an option would be great.

Entertainment

- It seems food/music would be grand here! Food means we stay longer.

Paths/ Walkways

- Path to boathouse from Conner House
- Path down to lake from east parking lot
- Add more paths and garden boxes
- Access from Blount St. parking lot to park
- Lantern type lighting, soft glow, along walkways as in Paunak Park along the bike trail around Lake Monona. Feels warm and safe
- Sidewalk from parking lot behind Gates of Heaven to the street (instead of expecting people to walk on driveway to parking lot or walk around)

Continuity

- Break up the space with different landscaping so it feels smaller in scale/more diverse
- Spaces in the park should be connected.

Maintenance

- Upkeep must be part of the budget

Focal Point/ Attraction

- Add a focal point- something big that draws people to interact and move on “hey let’s go see the...and take a picnic...spend the day!” ★
 - Something to set it apart (ala Millennium Park “Bean”)
- I would love to see a permanent graffiti wall at one entrance...the one nobody knows about (metal graffiti wall at east parking concrete path, “feature artists”)

Dog Use

- Allow dogs off leash during certain times of day (on eastern field behind Lincoln School Apartments)

Accessibility

- Add winter accessibility

Shelter

- Eliminate towers on shelter
- Replace shelter building

Question 5 I would spend more time at James Madison Park if it was/there was...

Structures

- Beach house★
- A community building
- A café nearby
- A museum
- Music amphitheater
- Community event, enclosed space (shelter) for year round use
- A fun snack bar, like at Wingra concessions

Lake/ Beach

- Clean beach ★★★★★
- Enlarged beach ★★★
- Connection to Lakeshore Path
- Increased access to shoreline ★

Park Shelter

- A more welcoming shelter

Gardens

- A community garden with benches ★★
- Water fountain in garden or rock garden with succulents
- Huge rock garden with rakes, stones, and sand

Maintenance

- The landscaping didn’t make it feel overwhelming to be there

Access/Walkways/ Paths

- More walkways (especially for winter use) and benches
- More visible crosswalk from all the apartments on Blair, Hancock etc.
- Access to parking and entry from Gorham
- A new entrance to the park (maybe with plants or a gate)

Sports

- New basketball courts ★★
- Canoe/kayak launch
- Adult play (more than volleyball)
- Tennis courts with lights
- An ice rink

Amenities

- Better public toilets
- A bigger playground
- A playground without plastic or rubber
- More “climbing” playground
- Bright colored playground
- Fenced in dog park
- Little playgrounds around the park and maybe one big playground in the middle.
- A bike service station
- More garbage facilities
- Some lawn chairs or sitting area

Focal Point/ Destination/ Public Art

- Have a local artist or a group in the community make art around the park
- One big wall or some sort of attraction/piece of art
- Artwork



Parkitecture Charrette and Presentation

Using 36x60” aerial images of James Madison Park, participants worked in table groups to create a design scheme that responded to the park opportunities and constraints discussion. A spokesperson from each group presented the final design to all participants and consultant team members who were present.

See Attachment B for corresponding park designs and notes.

General Discussion Notes and Additional Comments:

- Need better utilization of entrance and parking lot on Blount St.
- Improve pedestrian/traffic safety issues crossing the street.
- Put signage near the Eastern entrance.
- Park is not handicap friendly.
- Building a barrier wall would improve safety, especially with children.
- Lincoln School should be used as a community center.
- What is the timeframe of this project and how will it be paid for?
- Do not want to see a large formal entrance near the intersection of Gilman St. and Butler St.
- Want to maintain many access points to the park.
- Add flashing pedestrian crossings to major intersection that do not have traffic lights.
- Dublin’s “Merrion Square playground” was suggested as an inspiration