



Image provided by Madison Parks

Base map of overall plan (revised to include large cottonwood tree, green dot on map)

Photo by B. Sluys

Northside News
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Grounds
improvements

Warner Park — out with the old, in with the new

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In 2019, I wrote a story about the re-designing of the bathhouse at Warner Park Beach. Since then, lots of proposed, planned and implemented things have happened at the park and the beach.

In 2014, the Northside Planning Council hosted a community bathhouse art project that was completed through a collaboration of the Northside Art and Design Planning Group and students from Kennedy Heights Community Center, according to Karen Hickel, co-chair of the Friends of Warner Beach.

Prior to the bathhouse demolition, the Friends of Warner Beach requested that the community artwork on the structure be saved for future use. The 1960s bathhouse gave way to a new bathhouse that is well used and provides a gathering space for the community.

In late May, community members and city parks staff gathered to review the artwork and determine the layout for the installation. The artwork designs include flowers and birds, and now are re-installed on the wooden enclosure near the bathhouse. Welcome back!

On June 12, Madison Parks representative Adam Kaniewski introduced the members of the Board of Park Commissioners to the Warner Park Southeast Recreation Development project. This area is currently comprised of old softball fields overgrown with grass due to the lack of use and lighting that is almost 50 years old.

The proposed plan for this area includes five multi-use rectangular fields, new LED lighting, two cricket pitches, eight pickleball courts, bleachers, a 400-meter running loop, a basketball court, and a mountain bike (singletrack)

trail that is planned to run through a proposed managed meadow area and the eastern edge of the woods. New benches will be installed throughout the area, and a sun shelter will be added near the pickleball courts. In addition, the paved path network will be expanded from near Trailway (near the All-Wheel Spot) to the existing trail system in the park. The tennis courts will be removed, and the area will be part of the new meadow area.

Wild Warner provided written feedback that includes saving the large old cottonwood tree in the proposed meadow area and near the edge of one of the new fields. I visited this noble tree, and it appears to be sound and resilient. Concern was also expressed about the mountain bike trail impacting the woods and proposed meadow area. Is there some other place to include a mountain bike trail? How do we keep bikers on the trail and not in areas where mountain biking is not allowed? I often visit the sledding hill area of the park and see lots of bike tracks and have seen bikers riding on the mowed foot trail there. A valid concern.

Madison Parks has submitted a grant proposal to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Land and Water Conservation Fund to help fund the first phase of the project. If awarded in September, the funding will allow for the removal of old softball field structures, the existing lighting system, and the tennis courts. Field grading will also occur to improve drainage and allow for the new field orientations. The cricket pitches and goal posts will be installed and most of the new trail connections will be installed.

For more information and to view the plan, visit the project website at cityofmadison.com/parks/projects/warner-park-southeast-recreation-area-development.