



Badger Prairie Park

Master Plan Report

December 2009



**Prepared by the Dane County Land &
Water Resources Department—
Parks Division**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Badger Prairie Park is situated between the cities of Madison and Verona and along with the Ice Age National Scenic Trail corridor represents the last remaining open space between the two communities. The park is approximately 350 acres in size within the Town of Verona and was created in the mid 1970's in conjunction with the closure of a landfill site that was located immediately east of the Badger Prairie Health Care Center. The Madison Area Youth Soccer Association (MAYSA) has a 35-year exclusive lease on 60 acres of the park for operation of the Reddan Soccer Complex. The park is situated within the Ice Age Junction Area boundary, a County Natural Resource Area that includes over 1,900 acres of which approximately 630 are currently under public ownership. The Ice Age Junction Area project boundary was adopted through a planning partnership between the cities of Verona and Madison, Town of Verona, Dane County Board and Dane County Park Commission in 1993 to establish a common vision for greenspace and trails in a rapidly urbanizing area.

In order to capture a comprehensive approach, the project planning area boundary was expanded beyond the park boundary to include the Ice Age Junction bicycle-pedestrian trail corridor and Reddan Soccer Complex north of the Cross Country Road. Additional lands south of the park and the Military Ridge State Trail that are within the Ice Age National Scenic Trail corridor were also included.

The vision for Badger Prairie Park and this project area is to maximize and maintain open grassland habitat areas. Badger Prairie County Park will provide gateway access to multiple regional trails including the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, Military Ridge State Trail and Ice Age Junction Bicycle Pedestrian Trail. Primary recreation uses will continue to be aeromodelling, off leash dog exercise areas and cyclo-cross. A detailed vision statement for the park is included in the plan.

The planning process included several public information meetings that were held at the Verona Public Library from June of 2007 through December of 2009. The Madison Area Youth Soccer Association was conducting their own master planning process for the Reddan Soccer Complex during the same time as the County master planning process. Primary issues of discussion were related to alignment of the future Ice Age Junction Bicycle Pedestrian Trail, traffic concerns within the park and on adjacent roadways, and improvements being proposed to the Reddan Soccer Complex. A more detailed summary of the public input process is provided.

A site inventory and analysis for the project area includes planning considerations such as soils, topography, viewsheds, existing recreation uses, transportation, hydrology and vegetation. Of note, lands within this project planning area are designated as a Thermally Sensitive Area by the Dane County Land Conservation Division. These are watershed areas that drain to water bodies that are classified as cold-water communities by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Badger Mill Creek is classified as a cold-water community.

Plan recommendations are primarily related to expansion and enhancement of trail systems throughout the project area, including the Ice Age National Scenic Trail that will improve non-motorized access to the park from the surrounding area. Improvements and modifications to

existing park roadways and parking areas are proposed to address traffic concerns heard throughout the planning process. The City of Verona will continue to work with MAYSA on roadway and pedestrian crossing improvements on Cross Country Road at the Reddan Soccer Complex. A new park entrance off Cross Country Road is proposed that will provide access to a proposed shelter/playground area. A small dog exercise area and pavilion/playground is proposed immediately north of the Badger Prairie Health Care Center that will provide staff and visitors outdoor opportunities. A number of improvements are included for the model airplane field. An approximate 5-acre community garden area is proposed south of the Military Ridge Park and Ride lot. A detailed action plan with associated costs for major proposed park improvement projects is included.

The plan recommends two areas for future acquisition. Northwest of the Reddan Soccer Complex, the City of Verona and Dane County may consider partnering on approximately 100 acres that would serve for both active recreation and Ice Age National Scenic Trail corridor property. Acquisition of approximately 31 acres is proposed southeast of the model airplane field that would provide trail opportunities and connectivity to City of Madison open space.

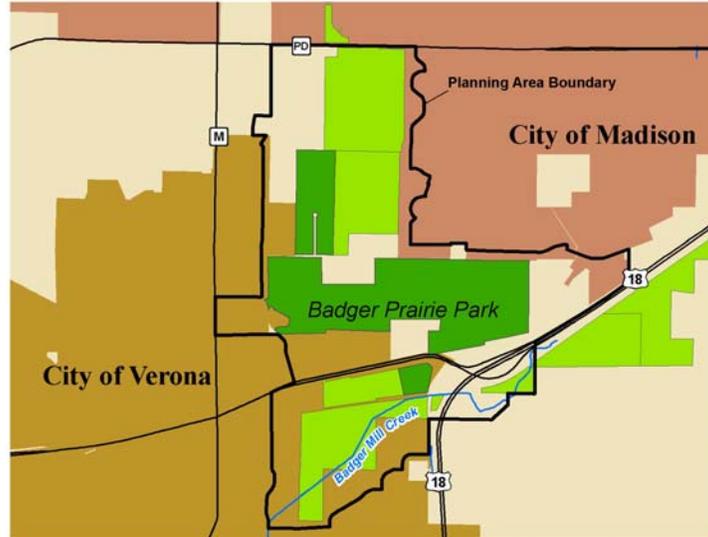
Introduction

Badger Prairie County Park lies within a margin of undeveloped land separating the cities of Madison and Verona. The 350-acre park is just east of the City of Verona at the intersection of County Highway PB and U.S. Highway 18 and 151, and situated at the center of the Ice Age Junction Natural Resource Area.



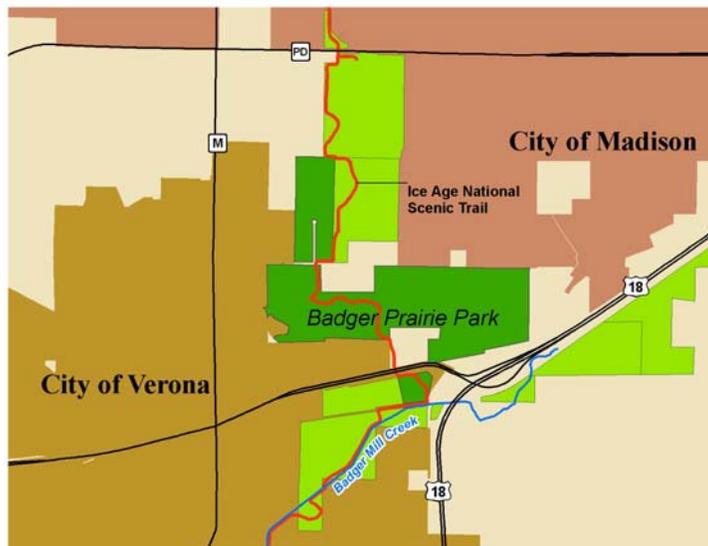
The first master plan for the park was completed in 1976 and some of the original recommendations that were implemented are still in the park today. Since completion of the original master plan, there has been considerable urban growth surrounding the park from both Madison and Verona. In addition, Dane County is currently working on an expansion project of the Badger Prairie Health Care Center that will have effects on the parks and its usage. The existing park has a shelter facility and playground, mountain bike trails, dog exercise area, extensive prairie restorations and a very popular aeromodeling field. The park also provides bike-friendly access to Military Ridge State Trail and includes a segment of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. In addition, Dane County leases about 60 acres of land within the park to the Madison Area Youth Soccer Association.

The project planning area boundary is approximately 1,350 acres and extends both north and south beyond Badger Prairie Park limits. These additional lands outside of the park were included due to their extensive trail associations with the park and for the natural resource component of Badger Mill Creek.



Park Vision

Badger Prairie County Park is situated immediately between the cities of Verona and Madison. One of the greatest attributes of the park and this region is the Ice Age National Scenic Trail corridor. The trail corridor marks the extent of the last glacial retreat some 15,000 years ago and helps tell the story of the last ice age by highlighting Wisconsin's unique glacial features.



The Ice Age National Scenic Trail traverses through the middle of Badger Prairie Park. There are also several hundred acres of prairie grassland restoration throughout the park and immediately north that can ecologically serve as grassland bird habitat. The park and adjoining

natural resource area lands to the north and south truly are the only remaining greenway separation between Madison and Verona and one of the largest contiguous grassland bird habitats in the urban area of Dane County. Badger Prairie County Park and the Ice Age Junction Natural Resource Area are within lands classified as a Thermally Sensitive Area by the Dane County Land Conservation Division. These are watershed areas that drain to water bodies that are classified as cold-water communities by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Badger Mill Creek is classified as a cold-water community.

Vision Statement

Although surrounded by a very urban environment, Badger Prairie County Park should strive to remain a relatively open landscape with grassland environments maintained and maximized to continue promotion of ground water infiltration and nesting bird habitat. Development of additional park infrastructure should have minimal visual impact to the open landscapes and primarily be limited to trail development and improving access to the park. In addition, Dane County Parks should continue working with the Badger Prairie Health Care Center to create a seamless transition between the park and building grounds that will encourage both employees and family members visiting patients to utilize the park. Badger Prairie County Park will provide gateway access to multiple regional trails including the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, Military Ridge State Trail and Ice Age Junction Bicycle Pedestrian Trail. Primary recreation uses will continue to be aeromodeling, off leash dog exercise areas and cyclo-cross.

PROPERTY HISTORY

Badger Prairie Health Care Center

Although not within the park boundary, the history of this facility is significant and worthy of interpretation throughout the park. The health care center is the oldest, continually running health care facility in Dane County. Formerly called the Poor Farm in 1850, the center functioned as a place for Civil War widows and their children, as well as immigrants to live in exchange for working on the farm. In 1880, a separate facility called the County Asylum for the Chronic Insane was built to house mentally ill people who could not function with other medically confined patients. After several additions it became part of the County hospital system and was renamed the Dane County Hospital. Through the mid 1960's, the State Medicaid system allowed admission of patients from surrounding communities and the emphasis shifted from separation and confinement to treatment and potential release. The facility was renamed to Badger Prairie Health Care Center in 1985 and health care services provided have broadened. The facility is currently undergoing an extensive expansion project that will even further improve patient care and atmosphere.

Badger Prairie Park

The catalyst for Badger Prairie Park was a landfill that was created on the eastern portion of the property in the mid 1970's and remained active until 1987. In 1974 much of the land surrounding the Dane County Hospital and Home was transferred by resolution to the Dane County Park Commission. Due to ongoing methane gas recapture operations, the landfill site has never been transferred to the Park Commission as originally outlined in the resolution

authorizing the transfer. In 1974, Dane County formed a Verona Landfill Advisory Committee to determine future uses of the Hospital and Home lands and landfill site. Dane County passed a resolution in 1976 stating the County would work jointly with the Village (now City) and Town of Verona to convert the majority of the lands surrounding the health care center and landfill to park lands. The name of the park was chosen from several that were submitted through a Verona school contest to the Park Commission. The original master plan for the Badger Prairie County Park was completed in 1976. Implementation of the plan began in the northwest corner of the park and progressed to the east with the eventual closure of the landfill. Tipping fees from the landfill were used to fund the park development; and this was the beginning of the Dane County Park Improvement Account.

Military Ridge State Park Trail

The Military Ridge State Park Trail is constructed on the bed of the former Chicago-Northwestern Transportation Company rail line. The rail line was constructed in the 1870's along the base of Old Military Road, a corridor built to open the southwestern portion of the state to settlement in the early 1830's. The rail line was built to serve area agriculture industry, lumber business from the north and to link communities together with passenger service. In 1979, the railroad company abandoned the corridor and in 1981 the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources established a 23.5-mile long Military Ridge State Park Trail between Madison and Mount Horeb. In 1983, it was extended from Mount Horeb to Madison, passing through the southern portion of Badger Prairie Park. In 1984, the Dane County Parks partnered with the Department of Natural Resources to investigate development of the Military Ridge State Bicycle Trailhead near the intersections of CTH PB and US 18-151. The approximate 4-acre site was originally proposed to include amenities such as a campground for bicyclists, a concession/toilet/storage building and parking for 50 cars. Because most of these amenities are available at Blue Mound State Park, the State has not pursued further development of this facility.

RELATED PLANNING PROJECTS

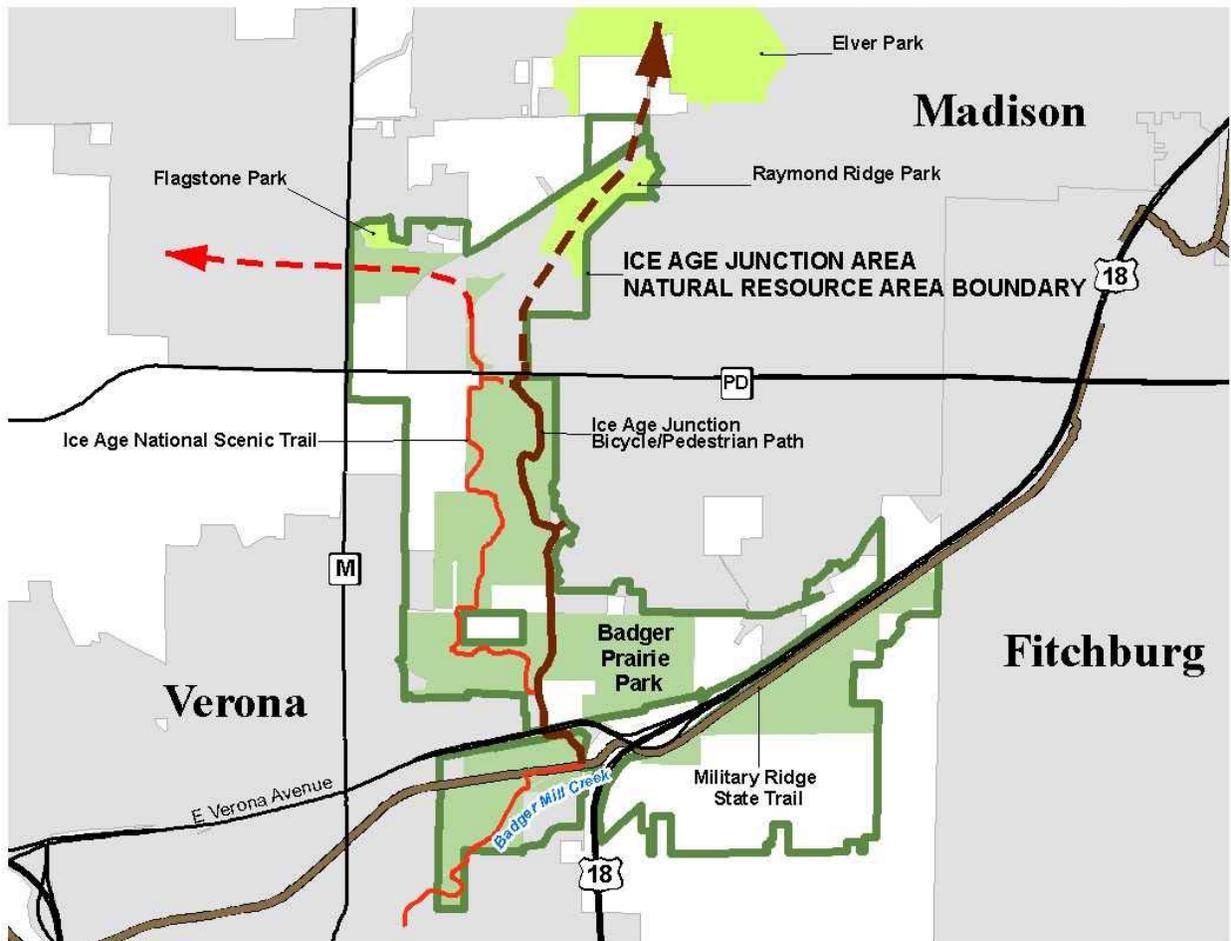
Hospital and Home Lands Study Committee

During the mid 1980's, there was growing interest by multiple entities and agencies to utilize Badger Prairie Park lands for a variety of uses. The City of Verona had strong interest in buying and leasing park land south of USH18-151 for active park recreation purposes. The County would lease 99 acres for what is now Hometown Park. The University of Wisconsin was interested in leasing lands for installation of radio towers, however this would never materialize. Approximately 37 acres of land on the western edge of the park would be sold as surplus lands and later developed into a mixed commercial/office use. The Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation requested a segment of trail be routed through Badger Prairie Park. In response, a Hospital and Home Lands Study Committee was formed in 1985 to complete a comprehensive plan for the property that integrated all interests. Dane County Parks planning staff and the Dane County Regional Planning Commission largely led the plan. Major recommendations of this plan included identification of lands needed for future hospital and home operations, future access

considerations into the park, operation and maintenance of Dane County Highway structures on the property, and identification of surplus lands.

Ice Age Junction Area Project Plan

In 1992, the Dane County Parks Commission established an intergovernmental advisory committee that worked through a public process to prepare the Ice Age Junction Area Project Plan. The Committee was made up of members from the Dane County Board, Town of Verona, City of Verona, City of Madison and Dane County Park Commission. This plan identified key resources and scenic features as well as recreation trail links between Madison's Elver Park and the County's Badger Prairie Park including proposed alignment of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail within the corridor. The Ice Age Junction Natural Resource Area boundary was adopted in 1993 and includes over 1,900 acres, of which about 630 are currently in public ownership.



PLANNING PROCESS & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

The Badger Prairie master planning process included three distinct project areas: Badger Prairie County Park, the Ice Age Junction Bicycle Pedestrian Trail, and the Madison Area Youth Soccer Association (MAYSA) Reddan Soccer Complex. The first public informational meeting for the planning process was held on June 11, 2007. At this meeting nearly all of the public participants and comments centered on the future alignment of the Ice Age Junction Bicycle Pedestrian Trail. For this reason, all planning efforts were focused on future alignment of the trail and working through issues with neighboring landowners. Public information meetings were held in July, November and December of 2007.

Concerns/comments regarding development of the Ice Age Junction Bicycle Pedestrian Trail primarily were related to:

- Proximity of trail to neighboring landowners.
- Proximity of trail to Ice Age National Scenic Trail.
- User conflict between bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Safety of at grade crossing at Cross Country Road.

During 2008, there were several meetings with stakeholder groups and site inventory and analysis was completed for the Badger Prairie County Park component of the plan. Concurrently, MAYSA was in the process of developing a master plan for the Reddan Soccer Complex. Although separate from the Dane County planning process, it was decided to coordinate public meetings for both the park and the Reddan Soccer Complex to provide the public with a comprehensive vision for the entire park region. A public information meeting for both plans was held on April 13th, 2009.

Concerns/comments regarding the Badger Prairie County Park master plan primarily were related to:

- Amount and speed of traffic in the park.
- Use of park as a vehicle shortcut between Verona residential areas and US 18-151 interchange.
- Concerns of maintenance (mowing, vandalism, plowing) at aeromodeling field.
- Mountain bike users—adding a jump element for experienced riders.
- Enhancing cyclo-cross trails and seasonal availability.

Concerns/comments regarding the Reddan Soccer Complex master plan primarily were related to:

- Impact of proposed lighting on neighbor adjacent to the park
- Traffic issues generated by large tournament events.

The Madison Area Youth Soccer Association held their own public information on August 24th, 2009 at the Verona Public Library. The meeting was well attended by neighborhood residents who had concerns primarily related to parking, traffic and proposed outdoor lighting. Dane County Parks staff met with both the City of Verona and a neighboring landowner to facilitate further discussion between MAYSA and the neighborhood.

On December 3rd, 2009 a public information meeting was held in the Common Council Chambers of the Verona City Hall to present the preferred alternative master plan. Neighborhood residents continued to emphasize importance of safety and traffic speed issues on Cross Country Road at the proposed new park entrance and Ice Age Junction bike pedestrian trail crossing. Neighbors northwest of Reddan Soccer Complex expressed concern over potential future expansion of soccer facilities adjacent to their property.

PARK INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

Although much of the lands within Badger Prairie County Park have been disturbed or manipulated by a variety of human activities, the park region has evolved into an exceptional grassland bird habitat that has resulted from large-scale prairie restorations. Badger Mill Creek flows through the southern portion of the park and lower stretches are classified as a cold-water community by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Recreation within the park has historically been passive trail uses, aeromodeling and off-leash dog exercise area. The grounds and facilities of the Badger Prairie Health Care Center are located on the oldest Dane County owned property and present opportunities for education and interpretation of the site. The following is an inventory and analysis of natural, cultural and historical, recreational and aesthetic resources of the project area.

Slope and Viewsheds

Badger Prairie Park and surrounding County owned lands are largely comprised of restored prairie and fallow grasslands. A series of hills and high points allow for several long both within and outside of the park boundaries. The most notable vista is located within the restored prairie area north of the MAYSA soccer fields and prairie. This nearly 5 mile long south facing view ends at the terminal moraine along the Ice Age National Scenic Trail corridor. The terminal moraine marks the extent of the last glacial advance some 10,000 years ago. Portions of this same view can be seen from the water tower site within the park. A second notable view is from just north of Cross Country Road looking northwest into the restored prairie area. The open landscape defines the separation between Madison and Verona. The topography of the project area consists mostly of gentle slopes of 6% or less. (12% slopes and greater are often classified as steep.)

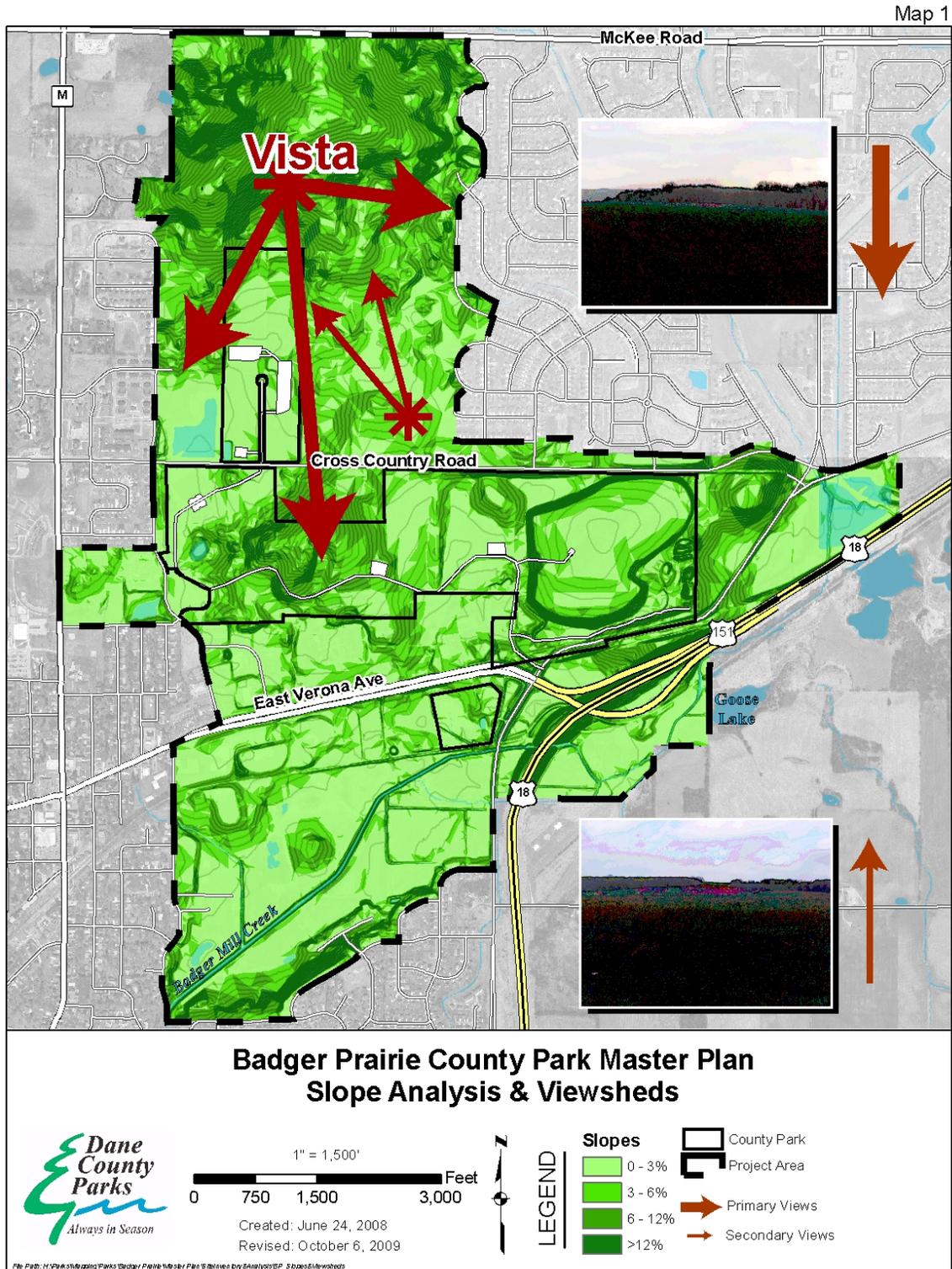
Opportunities

- Provide natural surface trails to overlook areas at vista locations.

Constraints

- Slopes greater than 5% are not desirable for multi-use trail development.
- Construction of man-made features, trails, etc on visually prominent locations can detract from natural settings.

Map 1 presents a slope and viewshed analysis for the project area.



Hydrology and Drainage

Badger Prairie Park is located in the Sugar River watershed. The park includes three subwatersheds, which drain into Badger Mill Creek. The creek runs in a northeast direction lying just south of East Verona Ave. Stormwater runoff from the park feeds into the Badger Mill Creek primarily by a channel that runs along the west side of the Badger Prairie Health Clinic property. A detention pond removes sediment from runoff prior to it being discharged through a culvert under East Verona Ave. North of Cross Country Road a detention pond collects runoff from the MAYSA soccer field facilities. Both of these stormwater treatment facilities and extensive prairie restoration throughout the park help to improve water quality of runoff leaving the park and ultimately into Badger Mill Creek and the Sugar River. There has been considerable residential development north and west of the park in the far upper reaches of the Badger Mill Creek watershed. Dane County has been working with the City of Madison on possible improvements to these drainageways that are intended to reduce runoff velocities and remove sediment. Efforts should continue to be made as future developments occur to provide adequate grassland buffers throughout this upper watershed area. As mentioned earlier, the watersheds of this project area are classified as thermally sensitive and western stretches of Badger Mill Creek are classified as a cold-water community by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. These water bodies are significant because of their capability of supporting cold-water species such as trout. There is also an existing warm water pond just northeast of the library. A spring fed cold water pond is located immediately south of the park and ride lot located on CTH PB.

Opportunities

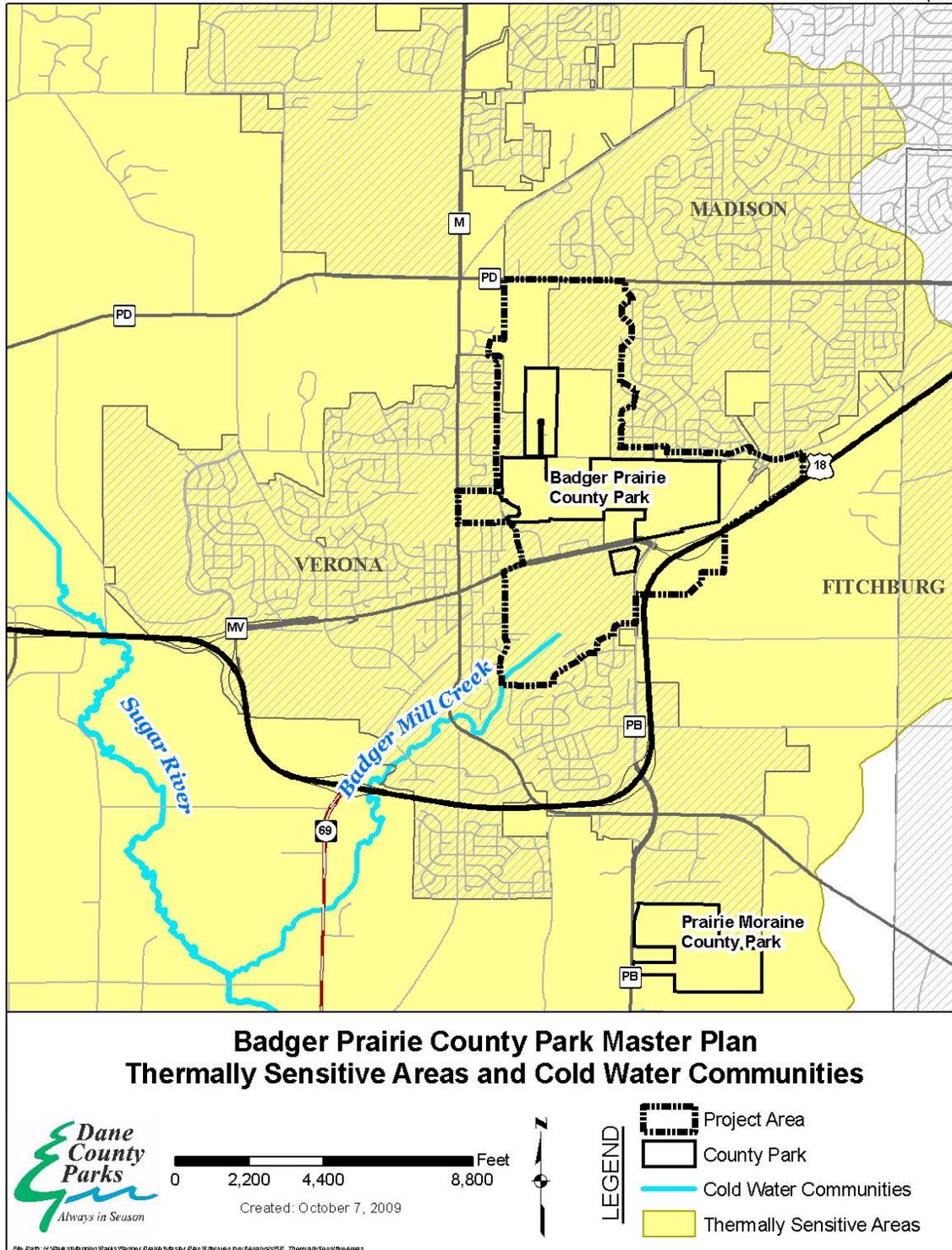
- Remove invasive species and create a terraced, meandering outflow channel between spring fed cold water pond and Badger Mill Creek.
- Remove invasive woody species along Badger Mill Creek to promote herbaceous ground layer and mitigate bank erosion.
- Provide educational information to residential neighborhood associations throughout the upper Badger Mill Creek watershed about proper homeowner stormwater management practices.
- Continue working with City of Madison Engineering on stormwater facility improvements throughout the upper Badger Mill Creek watershed and Ice Age Trail Junction Area.
- Continue working with City of Madison Planning and Development staff through neighborhood planning processes to identify possible future acquisition projects eligible through the Dane County Conservation Fund that would provide stormwater buffers throughout the upper Badger Mill Creek watershed.

Constraints

- Ongoing management will be required to maintain herbaceous ground layer vegetation.
- Reed Canary grass has greatly limited success of wetland restoration efforts south of East Verona Avenue.

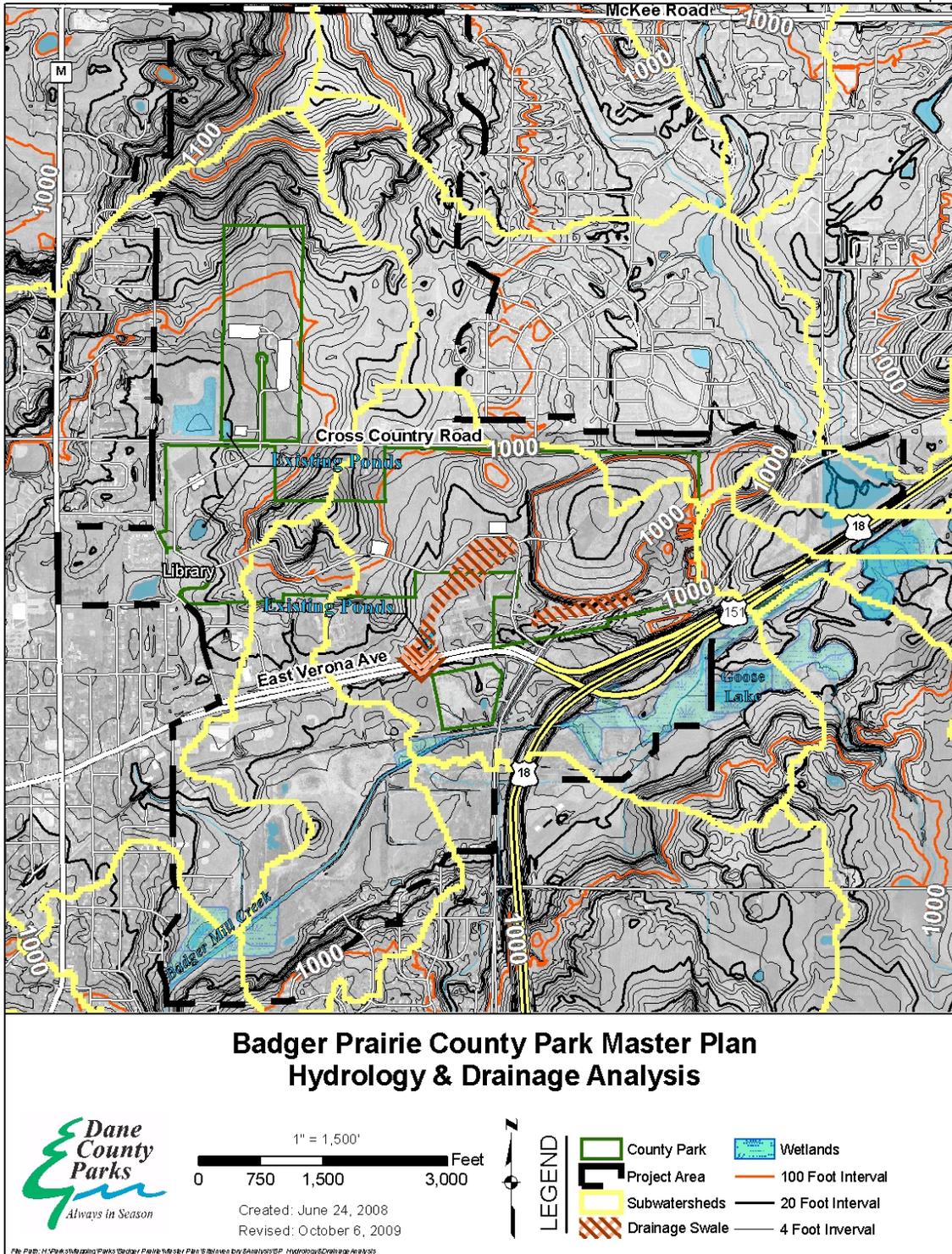
Map 2 presents thermally sensitive areas and cold-water communities.

Map 2



Map 3 presents a hydrology and drainage analysis of the site.

Map 3



Soils

Based on the Dane County Soil Survey, soils on the site are primarily of silt loam characteristics. The majority of the soils are classified as having somewhat limiting characteristics in terms of trail and building construction. This classification would not prohibit park development from occurring within these areas, although additional field investigation would be necessary to confirm suitability of a site for park development. Most of the areas that are very limited for park development are found in the far southern areas of the park due to hydric conditions and northern stretches south of McKee Road due to slope constraints. The capped landfill is also not a suitable area for any type of park development that requires excavation or creation of impervious surfaces.

Opportunities

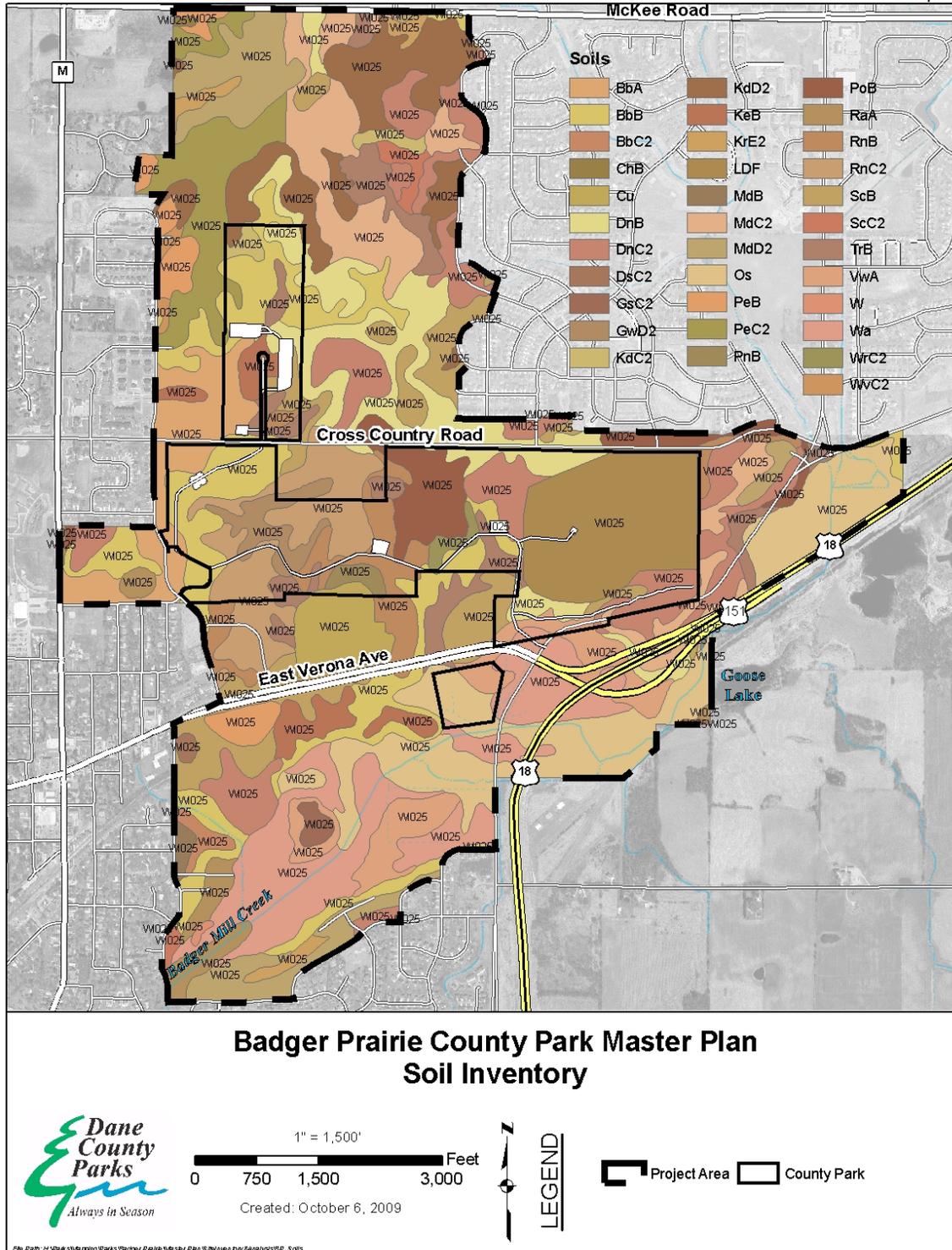
- Majority of the project area being considered for future park development has few limiting soil factors.

Constraints

- Much of Badger Prairie Park soil structure has been substantially altered through past excavation work that may cause unforeseen costs due to unacceptable sub-surface soil conditions.

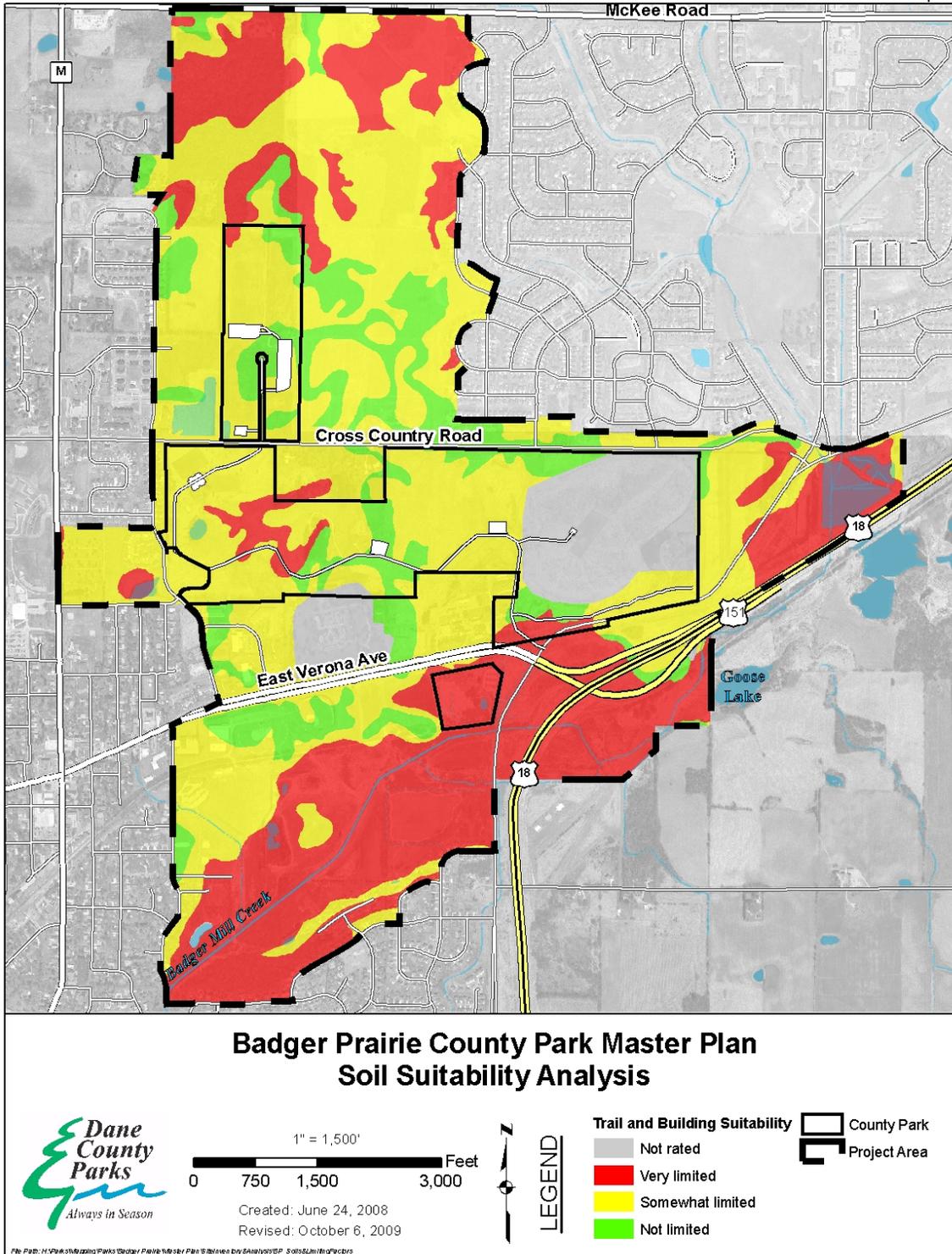
Map 4 presents a detailed inventory of all soil types found on the property.

Map 4



Map 5 presents a soil suitability analysis.

Map 5



Vegetation

The majority of the project area consists of open grassland in a variety of types including fallow open fields, mown turf, and prairie restoration. Prairie restoration efforts have been completed almost entirely by volunteers. There are approximately 365 acres of prairie, of which 270 acres are located east of the MAYSA soccer fields and the remaining 95 acres just south Cross Country Road within Badger Prairie County Park. Fallow open fields are areas that have not been planted with native prairie species yet maintain an open grassland appearance. Some of these areas are periodically mowed or have invasive species removed from them, but for the most part are not actively managed. Perhaps not as high quality as a grassland restoration, these areas still are an important open landscape environment for nesting ground birds.

There are two oak woodlots within the project area boundary located north-northeast of the Reddan complex. The Dane County Naturalist has been actively working to create an oak opening on the hillside near the water tower. Other than these wooded areas, the majority of remaining trees consist of invasive and non-native species that should be considered for removal.

Wetland areas along the southern boundary of the project area consist primarily of dense stands of reed canary grass. There have been some efforts made to complete wetland restoration projects immediately north of Badger Mill Creek, however for the most part they have been outcompeted by reed canary grass.

Opportunities

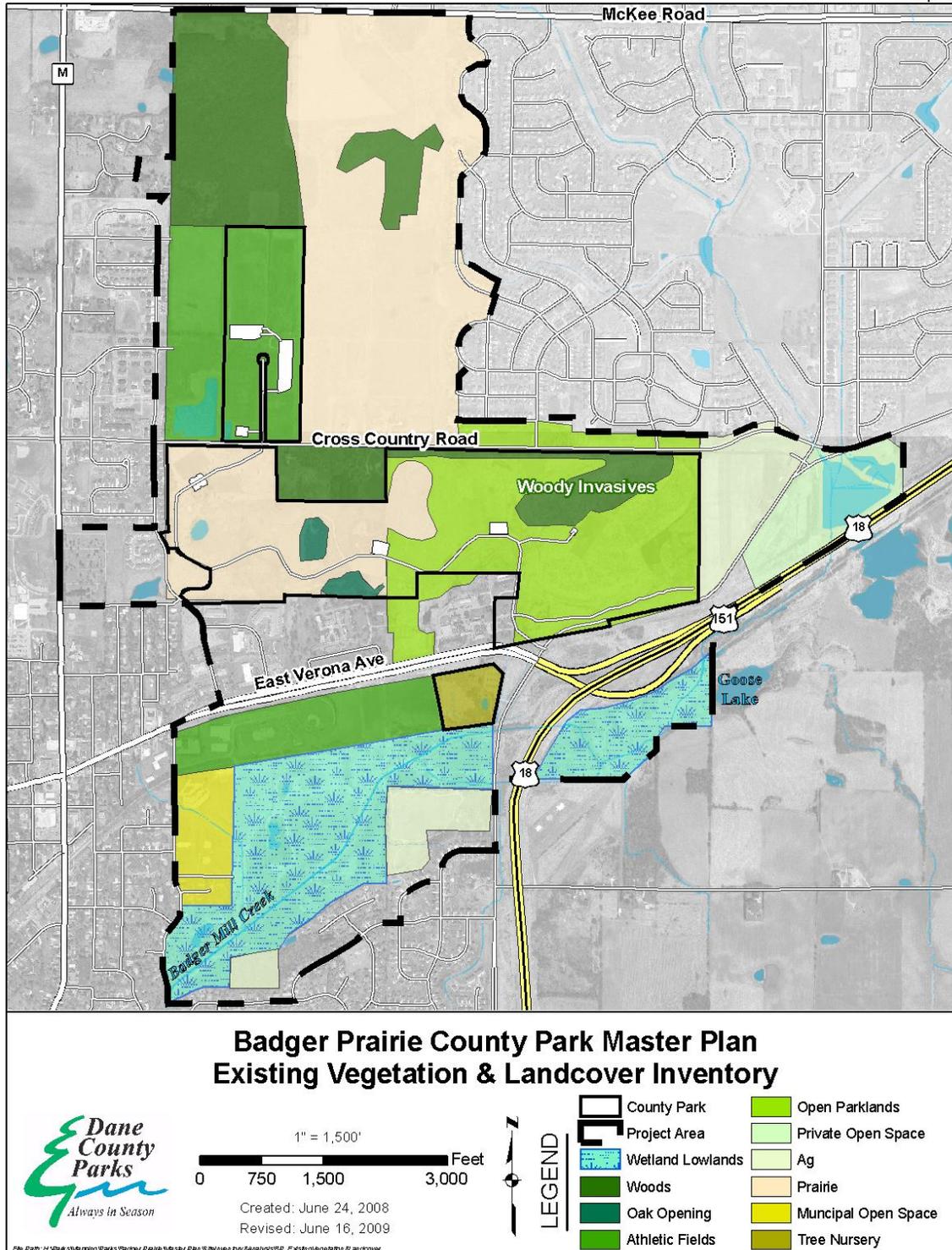
- Continue to maximize and maintain open grassland environments.
- Remove non-native woody vegetation from landfill area.
- Utilize wood from non-native, invasive trees for construction of park benches, bridges, etc.

Constraints

- Ongoing management will be required to maintain open grassland environments.
- Reed canary grass is prohibitive for establishment of wetland restoration efforts.

Map 6 presents existing vegetation and land covers.

Map 6



Cultural, Historic and Archeological

There are no recorded archeological sites within the project area boundary. An archeological survey was completed in 2008 for the Ice Age Junction Bicycle Pedestrian corridor as a Federal funding requirement. The survey identified two potential sites, but further investigation concluded there were no sites eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The majority of Badger Prairie Park has been disturbed and/or farmed intensively for the past 100 years making it very unlikely there would be any remaining evidence of archeological sites.

The Badger Prairie Health Care Center could be considered a part of the cultural landscape of this planning area. Although not listed on the Wisconsin State Historical Society Architecture and History Inventory (AHI), the existing structures are more than a century old and the facility is the longest running health care facility in Dane County. Current expansion plans will result in the demolition of most of the original campus. There is a photo inventory of some of the original buildings at the Wisconsin State Historical Society.

Opportunities

- Interpretive signage regarding the history of the Badger Prairie Health Care Center.
- Provision of park and trail facilities between the health care center and the park for employees and visiting family members.
- New entrance to BPHCC will also help to improve entrance to the park.

Constraints

- None considered.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The Wisconsin Natural Heritage Working List available through the WDNR contains species known or suspected to be rare in the state and natural communities native to Wisconsin. It includes aquatic and terrestrial species legally designated as "Endangered" or "Threatened" as well as species in the advisory "Special Concern". The generalized map that is typically used for master planning purposes indicates the project area is included within the "Township Occurrences" meaning a species of interest occurs or has occurred somewhere within the Town of Verona. Specific type and location information is not provided in order to protect the identified species. It should be noted that nearly half of Dane County is included within this designation and more detailed site specific planning would need to be conducted for any major construction projects on lands that have not already been disturbed. More information on this program is available at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/nhi/>.

Opportunities

- Unknown without further analysis.

Constraints

- Unknown without further analysis.

Existing Land Use and Transportation Systems

Badger Prairie Park is located between the cities of Madison and Verona. There are extensive residential areas surrounding the entire project area and also a large commercial district immediately southwest of the park and north of East Verona Avenue. Some agriculture lands remain southeast of the project area, however long range growth plans indicate future conversion to residential. USH 18-151 flanks Badger Prairie Park to the southeast. Three major arterial roads traverse east-west through the project area from south to north: East Verona Avenue, Cross Country Road and McKee Road. Existing regional trails include the Ice Age National Scenic Trail natural surface hiking trail and the multi-use Military Ridge State Trail that allows for hiking, biking and snowmobiling in the winter.

Opportunities

- Potential to increase park patronage by enhancing motorized and non-motorized neighborhood access.
- Badger Prairie Park can serve as a regional trail hub.
- Badger Prairie Park provides community separation between Madison and Verona.

Constraints

- Traffic count and speed limit concerns on Cross Country Road and Enterprise Drive.
- Ongoing encroachment issues from adjacent property owners.

Existing Recreational Uses & Facilities

Badger Prairie Park hosts a broad range of recreation uses and special events. Perhaps the most frequent daily use of the park is generated from the dog exercise area. Relatively small by comparison to other Dane County facilities, its location is very convenient to several large residential areas.

The park also provides an aeromodeling field that is made possible largely through the efforts of the users themselves. It is the only public model airplane field in Dane County and is used on a very regular basis as weather allows. Area ski clubs routinely use park roadways for roller-skiing on evenings and weekends.

There are approximately 3 miles of designated off-road bike trails, however use appears to be relatively low due to the availability of other more technical courses near the park. The significant use of the off-road bike trails is for cyclo-cross. Cyclo-cross is a form of bicycle racing that primarily takes place in the fall or winter. The course is generally through open fields or woods on designated trails and may also include some on road segments of trail. Obstacles are placed throughout the course that force riders to dismount and carry their bikes. Advocates for the sport state Badger Prairie Park is one of the best facilities in Dane County and they host a large annual event at the park every fall.

The park has also been home to a civil war reenactment event each year that draws hundreds of participants as well as spectators. The wide open rolling topography is ideal for this event. Hiking and biking on the Ice Age National Scenic Trail and Military Ridge State Trail will continue to grow in popularity as the park becomes more accessible and known to the surrounding neighborhoods. Reddan Soccer Park consists of approximately 60 acres of lands leased by the Madison Area Youth Soccer Association (MAYSA) at the northwest corner of the park. The 35-year lease originated in 1997 and provides options for development of a future lighted soccer complex and parking improvements. In 2008, Reddan Soccer Park hosted nearly 1,200 teams from across the Midwest and had nearly 200,000 spectators attend events.

There currently are two open shelters within the park; one near the water tower that includes a playground area and restroom, and the other on lands under the MAYSA lease south of Cross Country Road. The MAYSA shelter is currently being considered for removal due to lack of use and deteriorating condition. There is no interest in replacement.

Opportunities

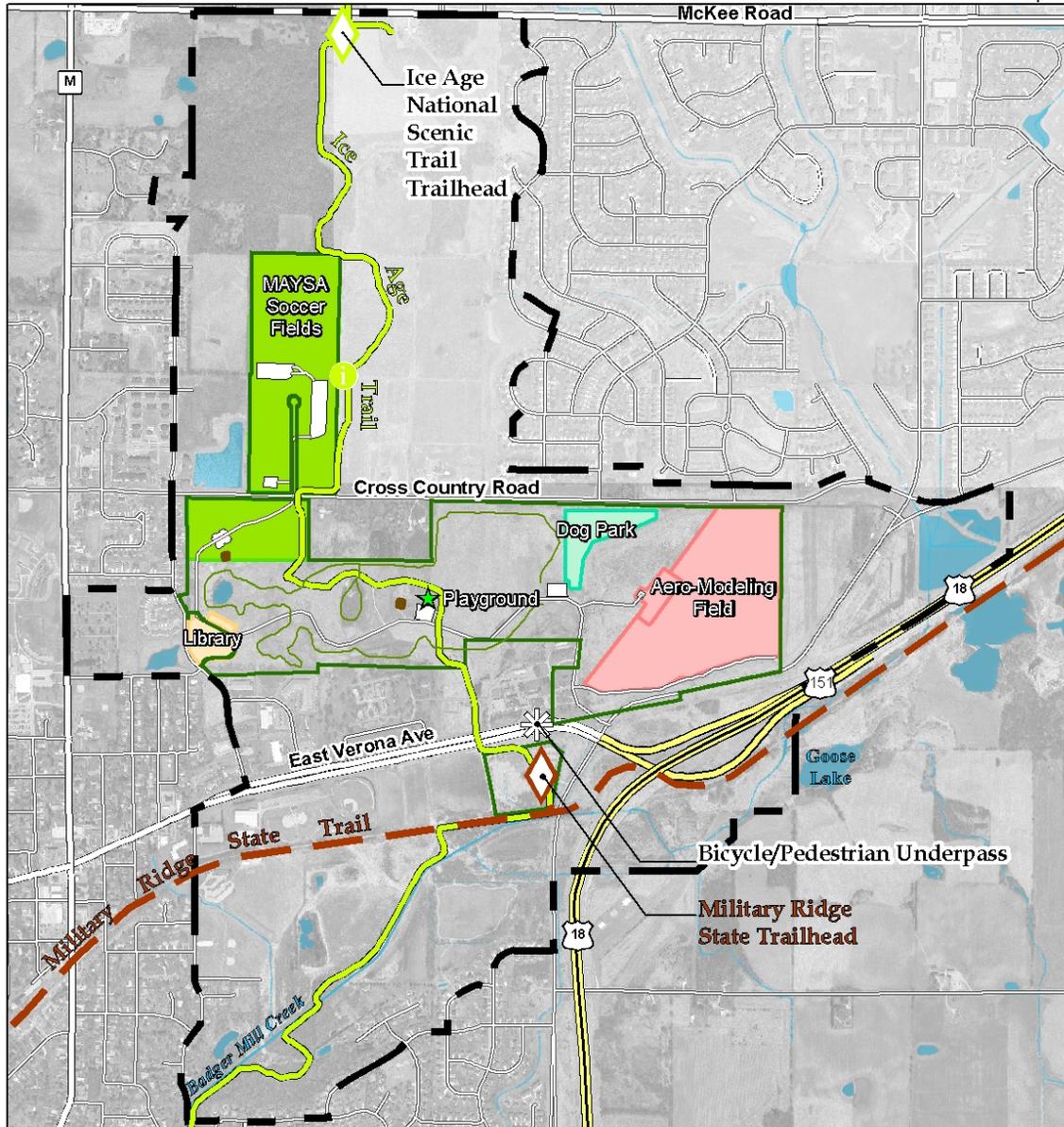
- Provide walking access to dog exercise area.
- Routine day use and large events provides an excellent forum for promotion and awareness of park system and Ice Age National Scenic Trail.
- Provision of primitive camping facilities for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail.
- Development of an additional shelter/picnic area.

Constraints

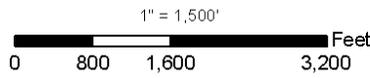
- Traffic concerns raised by large events.

Map 8 presents existing recreation use.

Map 8



Badger Prairie County Park Master Plan Existing Recreation Use



Created: June 24, 2008
Revised: October 16, 2009



LEGEND

-  County Park
-  Project Area
-  Natural Surface Trails
-  Interpretive Display
-  Shelters

File Path: H:\Work\Mapping\Parks\Badger Prairie Master Plan\Reviews by Analysts\BP_ExistingRecreation.mxd

Existing Public Lands

Dane County, the Cities of Verona and Madison, the Town of Verona, National Park Service, the Ice Age Trail Alliance and area developers have invested considerable time and money over the past 30 years planning and implementing the Ice Age Junction Area. Including Badger Prairie Park, there are now more than 1,000 acres in public ownership throughout this project providing a mix of recreational park land, trails and open grassland environments. These lands are critical to preserving the open appearance and continuous habitat corridors that provide separation between the rapidly expanding residential areas of Madison and Verona. Recently the City of Madison constructed two large stormwater basins southeast of the park and also acquired a remnant prairie hillside that extends northeast from the ponds. This large block of public land provides important water quality protection for Badger Mill Creek and could serve as a major linkage of open space between Badger Prairie Park and the Goose Lake wetland mitigation site with minimal additional acquisition.

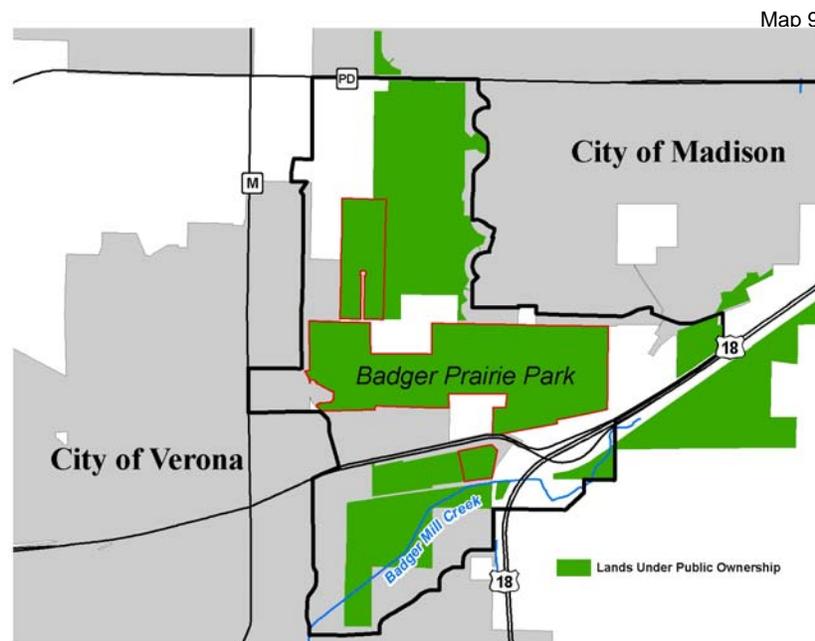
Opportunities

- Acquisition of lands east of the landfill can solidify open space corridor between Madison and Verona as identified in adopted Ice Age Junction Natural Resource Area Plan.
- Potential to create one of the largest open grassland habitat areas in urban Dane County.
- Preservation of lands identified in this plan will maintain open viewsheds from both public and private lands.

Constraints

- Additional developments south and east of Badger Prairie Park could fragment existing continuous open space corridors.

Map 9 presents existing public lands.



PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Trails

A variety of both hard and natural surface recreation trails occur throughout the project area. The public input process revealed a strong desire by user groups to maintain a variety of trail experiences, most notably to provide additional natural surface hiking trails with improved way-finding signage throughout the prairie restorations north of Cross Country Road. Layout of these trails must be done in coordination with the Dane County Naturalist to insure they may also function as firebreaks. Amount of additional trails should be conservative so as to not fragment open grassland habitat areas. Provision of a natural surface trail from the trailhead parking area at McKee Road to the vista immediately south is recommended. The view from this point is one of the best in the area. The mountain bike/hiking natural surface trails south of Cross Country Road and the Reddan fields are in need of consolidation and realignment. There are many duplicative trails that become confusing and redundant. Correction of these trails will be made by Dane County park planning staff working with the field mow crew to identify trails to be eliminated and realigned in the spring of 2010. Cost would be minimal.

Development of several hard surface trails is recommended within the park and planning area. The Ice Age Junction bicycle pedestrian trail will be developed during the spring of 2010. Trail construction is primarily funded through a Federal grant and a generous donation from the Madison Community Foundation. Landscape screening between the trail and neighboring backyards should be installed behind homes immediately north of Cross Country Road. This may take the form of a split rail fence and a mix of deciduous and evergreen plantings. Exact quantities and placement will be coordinated on site between the park planner and neighboring landowners. An approximate 1,700' long x 10' wide crushed limestone trail is proposed from the Ice Age Junction bicycle pedestrian trail to the Reddan Soccer Complex. The trail would provide bicycle connectivity from the southwest Madison metro area to the soccer complex and would most likely result in some reduction of automobile traffic on event days.

The existing interior park road from the park shelter by the water tower to the MAYSA leased lands south of Cross Country Road is recommended to be converted to a multi-use hard surface trail. High traffic volumes and speeding through the park interior were identified as two of the largest issues to be resolved through this planning process. Conversion of this roadway to a trail will enhance open grassland environments and recreational use of the roadway by cyclo-cross and roller skiing user groups. The trail will also serve as a non-motorized east west link between the Verona library and the Ice Age Junction bicycle pedestrian trail. Eventually the City of Verona is considering extending a bicycle pedestrian trail from the library to the high school.

Development of approximately 2,000' of 5' wide crushed limestone trail is proposed to extend from the new Badger Prairie Health Care facility campus to the future playground/small dog exercise area and ending at the proposed playground/shelter area west of the existing dog exercise area. The trail would provide families visiting patients and employees relief from the hospital environment and a convenient way to exercise over lunch hours or breaks. An approximate 50' long by 5' wide pedestrian bridge would be necessary to cross the drainage swale that surrounds the property. This trail is not intended to accommodate bicycles.

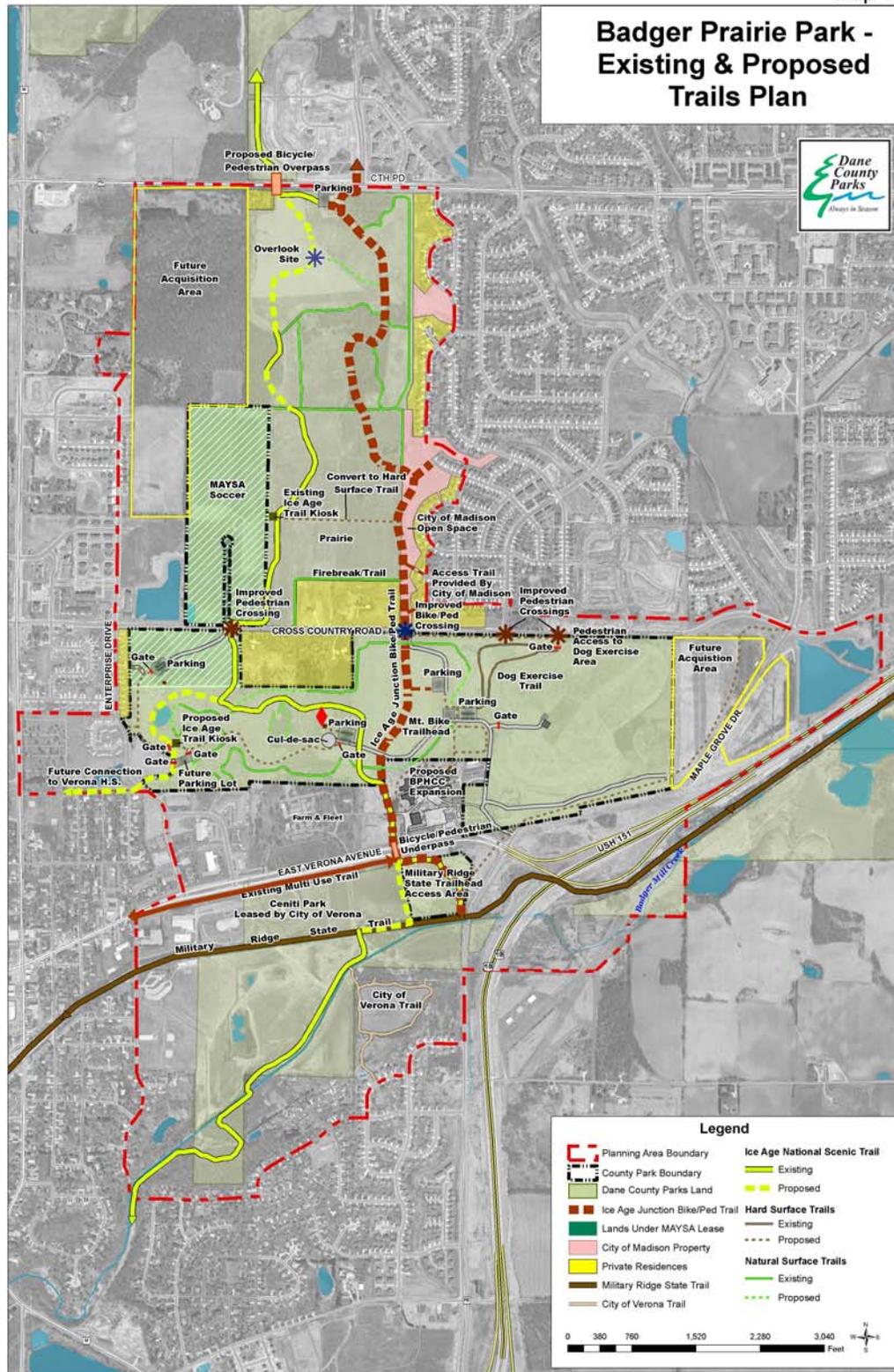
Approximately 1,700' of 8' wide paved trail is proposed along the south side of Cross Country Road from the east end of the dog exercise area to the proposed park entrance. The path would greatly enhance pedestrian access to the park. Pedestrian crossing improvements should be considered at two locations on Cross Country Road.

Dane County would coordinate with the City of Madison and City of Verona on construction of an approximately 5,000' long by 10' wide off-road paved trail from the intersection of Cross Country and Maple Grove Roads to the Military Ridge State Trail parking lot on Old CTH PB.

Because of the park's urban nature and proximity to extensive residential areas, a developmental trail system the same or similar to the United Way Born Learning Program could be considered at this park. This is a trail program that provides an engaging path of interactive activities that helps parents promote language and pre-literacy skills, motor skills and school readiness in their young children. Research shows from the time children are born they learn all the time, everywhere and from everything, not just at school. This trail program can provide a light and fun learning environment where parents can lead children through interactive and engaging learning stations. Development of this program would be expedited through a volunteer or non-profit organization.

Map 10 presents existing and proposed trails.

Map 10



Ice Age National Scenic Trail (IAT)

Improvements included under this section would be considered and implemented by the Ice Age Trail Alliance and their partners. The shelter area by the water tower is proposed to be the location of the first primitive campsite for hikers on the trail. Dane County Parks will continue to work with the National Park Service and the Alliance on development of this facility. A spur trail is proposed from the existing alignment south of Cross Country Road to a proposed Ice Age trailhead/kiosk area just east of the library. The Alliance will work to further both educational and trail connectivity to the library and Verona high school.

Pedestrian crossing improvements for the trail are recommended at Cross Country Road that may also facilitate Reddan event spectators. The City of Verona is currently working with MAYSA on possible concepts, consideration of a shared crossing with the IAT should be considered. MAYSA is currently working on plans to improve the fields south of Cross Country Road that may require the IAT to be realigned to the east within their designated 100' wide easement.

The Alliance is currently in the process of realigning the trail from the recently constructed underpass through the Verona Little League Complex parking area and south to Badger Mill Creek. Work is also underway to relocate the trail out of a perennial wet stretch and construct a puncheon boardwalk structure south of the existing bridge.

The Alliance will also work on realigning the trail to the proposed scenic overlook south of the McKee Road parking lot as this facility becomes developed.

All trail realignments will be completed by the Alliance. Proposed trail changes within the park boundary will be field reviewed by Dane County prior to implementation.

Ice Age National Scenic Trail improvements are shown on Map 10.

Roads and Parking Lots

Traffic related issues both inside and outside of the park were the primary concern heard throughout the planning process. Modifications to traffic circulation patterns, roadways and parking lots could greatly improve many of the issues. Within the park, this plan recommends creation of individual access areas for each region/program area of the park and abandonment of the east west park road between the water tower and Reddan field parking south of Cross Country Road. Instead, a cul-de-sac would be developed just west of the existing shelter parking lot. A bicycle pedestrian gate with spur trail would connect to the abandoned park road that would then become a multi-use trail. At the library and north of the tree nursery, a 20 to 30-car parking lot would be developed for walk-in or bike-in access to the park and trails. Dane County will investigate cost share of this facility with the Verona library. Segregation of these park areas would eliminate through traffic. Note: Dane County Parks will consider continuing to allow MAYSA to utilize roadway section between their south fields and the library during large events with the understanding MAYSA would be responsible for opening and closing gates, and maintenance/upkeep of the roadway for automobiles. If on-going issues or complaints would arise from this provision, Dane County would permanently abandon this park roadway.

A second 10 to 15-car parking lot is proposed immediately west of the existing dog exercise parking area to serve as a mountain bike trailhead area. This parking lot would only be developed if usage of the mountain bike trails increased or could be considered an expansion of dog exercise parking if a need was realized.

A new vehicle park entrance with a 40 to 50-car parking lot is proposed from Cross Country Road to the proposed shelter area. A two-sided 4'x10' park master sign would be installed at the new entryway. Investigate adding stop signs and reducing the speed limit on Cross Country Road with the City of Madison. This entrance would not be interconnected with existing park roads to the south to avoid non-park traffic shortcutting to USH 151 from area neighborhoods.

Improvements would also be made to the existing entrance off Maple Grove Road. The entrance to the park will be coordinated to connect into the new Badger Prairie Health Care Center entry road and will include a new one-sided 4'x10' master sign and landscaping.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is currently working on plans to expand the Park and Ride/Military Ridge Trailhead lot on CTH PB. Of note, this expansion is also proposed to include adding a Madison Metro bus stop that could provide bus access to the park, Ice Age and Military Ridge Trails, and future community gardening area. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources currently leases this parking area and is working with both the City of Verona and WDOT on design of the parking lot.

Aeromodeling Field

The Badger Prairie Park aeromodeling field is the only public model airplane flying field in Dane County. The facility has a very regular user group that actively assists with upkeep and maintenance of the grounds. Vandalism and theft has been an issue at the field in the past.

There are several improvements recommended for the air field including:

- Provision of a portable toilet.
- Installation of a gate at the entry to the field.
- Rolling landing fields after periods of heavy rain.
- Hauling and spreading topsoil to level off settling and ruts on landing fields.
- Doubling size of existing gravel parking lot, adding parking stops and topdressing with recycled asphalt aggregate or chip sealing to reduce dust in staging area.
- Creating hard surface pads at airplane stands to reduce maintenance.
- Adding signage to discourage spectators from entering into pilot area.
- Delineate "No Fly Zones" with low ground beacons.
- Reconfiguration of existing field to allow for a north/south landing pattern.
- Installation of an at-grade storage pavilion.

Dane County staff would work with the aeromodelers on review and approval of all recommended improvements before implementation.

Shelters, Fencing and Playgrounds

Badger Prairie Park currently has 2 existing park shelters and 1 playground area. One of the existing shelters is located south of Cross Country Road on lands leased by MAYSA where there has been ongoing maintenance and vandalism issues. By lease agreement, MAYSA is responsible for upkeep of this building. Currently, MAYSA has indicated they are interested in removal of this shelter building and perhaps replacing with a much smaller structure that did not include bathroom facilities. Removal and replacement would be undertaken by MAYSA. The existing shelter by the water tower recently had municipal water services extended to it as a component of the Badger Prairie Health Care Center expansion project. This master plan recommends replacement of the existing playground facility adjacent to the shelter/restroom facilities and installation of an accessible path from the parking lot.

Development of another picnic shelter/restroom facility is recommended at the proposed new entrance off Cross Country Road. The shelter would be approximately 40'x 50', horizontal in profile and include an attached restroom with drinking fountain. The restroom would include 2 unisex facilities with flush toilets and a storage chase area. Placement of the structure would be at the toe of the existing slope to minimize visual impact to the park. A playground area would also be included with development of this program area.

It is recommended that a small park pavilion and playground area be constructed between the Badger Prairie Health Care Center and proposed small dog exercise area. The pavilion would be approximately 10'x 20' and horizontal in profile. A 3-sided kiosk would provide visitors with historical information about the Badger Prairie Health Care Center. A single stall vault toilet would be developed adjacent to the pavilion/playground. Development of this program area would benefit park users, persons visiting patients at the BPHCC and employees of the health care center.

Neighboring property owners are often unclear as to the exact boundaries of the park and sometimes mistakenly place personal property or structures on County-owned lands. Often times these situations can be corrected by notifying landowners and having the park boundary surveyed and boundary staked. In situations where ongoing issues occur, Dane County will consider installation of a 4' high woven wire boundary fence.

Reuse of salvaged building materials, green building concepts, wind and solar power should all be investigated during the design phase of these proposed structures in the park.

Interpretive and Educational Signage

Interpretive and educational signage helps park users understand a sense of place that may be unique to a property and can provide visitors with an enhanced feeling of connectivity and appreciation for the park. History of the Badger Prairie Health Care Center and County Farm present several opportunities for on-site interpretation throughout the park and along trails. A graphic artist would be commissioned to work with County staff on researching content and graphic layout.

Improvements recommended within the MAYSA master plan that are included in the terms of the lease agreement are not subject to County approval. Recommendations within this plan that are associated with the Reddan Soccer Complex include:

- Continue working with MAYSA and the City of Verona on future roadway improvements at Cross Country Road that allow for a pedestrian crossing of the Ice Age Trail.
- Continue working with MAYSA and the City of Verona on annexation of lands north of Cross Country Road (including ROW) that will allow provision of sewer and water services.
- Consider updating/amending lease agreement with MAYSA for the Reddan Soccer Complex to reflect current operational conditions and the long-term vision for the property.
- Coordinate connection of bicycle pedestrian trail connection from Ice Age Falls residential area to Reddan Soccer Complex.
- Investigate provision of fill material (generated by Ice Age Junction Bike/Ped Trail construction) for field improvements south of Cross Country Road.
- Investigate potential partnerships with MAYSA and the City of Verona on acquisition of land north and west of the Reddan Soccer Complex.

For additional information about the Reddan Soccer Complex master plan, contact MAYSA at 608-276-9030.



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PREFERRED CONCEPT PLAN
MAYSA - REDDAN PARK
VERONA, WISCONSIN
DECEMBER 8, 2008



PROJECT No. 6.016

Natural Resources and Vegetation Management

Open grassland environments should continue to be the primary restoration efforts for this project area. The Dane County Parks Naturalist actively works with a large volunteer staff to manage and maintain these lands. Wetland restoration efforts south of East Verona Avenue and north of Badger Mill Creek have had very limited success due to spread of reed canary grass. Removal of woody species in these areas and along Badger Mill Creek is perhaps the best management strategy for these lands to maintain the open landscape to the extent possible. Related, removal of woody species from the perimeter of the land fill would also help to maximize open grassland environments and reinforce the connection between grassland restorations at Goose Lake and the park. Dane County Parks operations staff could complete removal over the winter months.

The area designated as utility open space adjacent to the Ice Age Junction Bike/Ped Trail should remain a fallow, open grassland environment as long as there is a continuing desire to provide space for large-scale special events such as the Civil War re-enactment. Should this use dissolve, these lands should be converted to prairie east to the proposed shelter area.

There are several colonies of black locust between the dog exercise area and Cross Country Road that should be removed as time/staffing allows. Establishment of vegetation screening of residential lands to the north should be coordinated with the Dane County Parks Naturalist.

The aesthetics and water quality of Badger Mill Creek could benefit greatly by continued volunteer efforts to remove invasive woody species from the stream corridor. In particular, removal of all non-native woody species between the spring pond at the Military Ridge Park and Ride lot to the creek could greatly enhance this area. Consideration could also be given to widening and re-meandering the outflow channel between the pond and the stream.

Long-range restoration efforts at Badger Mill Creek could potentially result in future brown trout fishing opportunities in the park and re-establishing the meander of the stream.

Community Gardening

Interest in community gardening has been growing rapidly in Dane County and opportunities to provide suitable lands appear scarce. Approximately 5 acres of existing agriculture land south of the Military Ridge park and ride and Badger Mill Creek could potentially be converted to community gardens. The property is quite accessible to area residents by bicycle or walking via the Military Ridge and Ice Age Junction bicycle pedestrian trails. The park and ride lot is also soon proposed to be included as a regular stop on the Madison Metro bus line.

Easy access by persons who may not have an automobile and close proximity to the metro area of Dane County would make this site a suitable candidate to consider for establishment of a community gardening program. Provision of a small 8-10 car parking lot off old CTH PB could be done in conjunction with plans to improve sanitary sewer access by the City of Verona. Small storage areas for garden tools would further enhance the ability of users to access the property without using a car. Rainwater could be captured from the roof of the storage structure to rain barrels for watering. Dane County is continuing to explore development of this program on County-owned lands by non-profit groups. Start up, coordination and management would be the responsibility of the non-profit organizing group.

Recreation

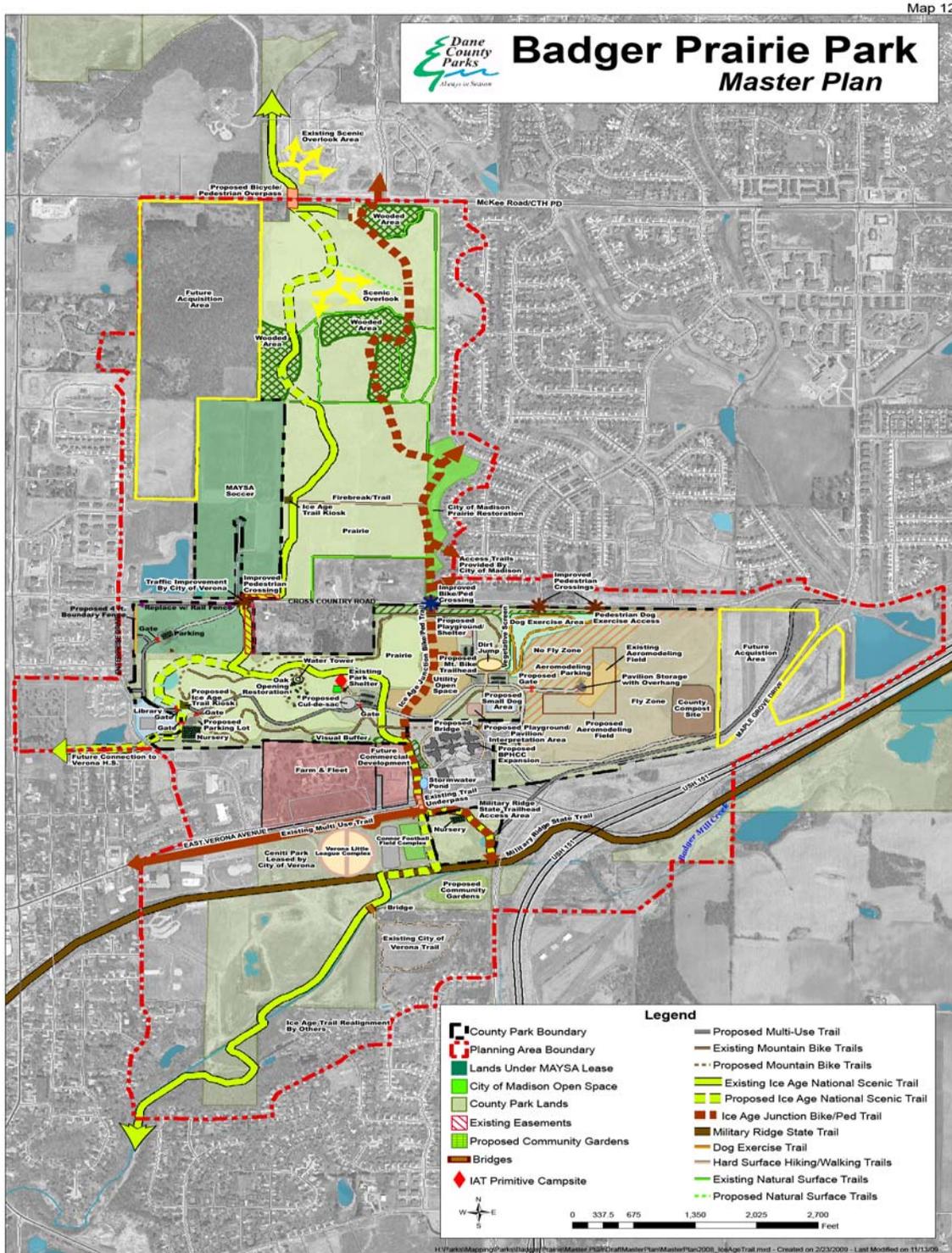
This master plan recommends aeromodeling, off-leash dog exercise areas and trail-orientated recreation continue to be the primary recreation uses at the park. The majority of recreation recommendations of this plan are outlined prior in the plan by type and use. The following projects are two new program areas that were requested during the public input process.

An approximate 3-acre new small dog exercise area is proposed immediately south of the existing dog exercise area parking lot. These facilities are designated for small size dogs and puppies and have been very popular at other parks. As use of these facilities increases, expansion of the existing dog exercise parking lot may be necessary.

Future development of a dirt jump technical element for bikes could be considered if a volunteer group took an active role in managing and maintaining the facility similar to the aeromodeling field. The jump would be located immediately north of the dog exercise area parking lot. A user permit fee would be required to offset ongoing maintenance duties. Volunteers would assist with mowing, trash pick up, selling and checking permits and general oversight of the area. Design and construction of the jump would be coordinated with interested off-road bike enthusiasts and other park departments that have developed similar facilities.

This plan recommends that existing and future development of recreation program areas continue to be compatible with the open grassland environments that are the primary park and open space function of this corridor.

Map 12 presents an overview of recreation facilities and park improvements proposed in this plan.



Action Plan

The action plan identifies major capital park improvement projects to be carried out over the next 7 years. Implementation of tasks identified in the action plan will be contingent on availability of funding and staff to carry them out. Barring these constraints, items prioritized as “immediate” should occur within 1-3 years, “pending” within 3-5 years and “future” would occur within 5-7 years or as necessary milestones are realized. *All estimated costs are general and should be revised after detailed plans and specifications are completed for each project.*

TASK	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	PROJECT SCOPE	COMMENTS/ COST
Planning, Design, Permits and Engineering New Entrance at Cross Country Road	Immediate	Consultant	Site development, grading plans, cost estimates and permits for new park entrance and parking lot.	Estimated Cost: \$25,000
Construct New Entrance at Cross Country Road and Parking Lot	Immediate	DCP/DCH	Construct approximately 1,000' of park entrance road and 40 to 50-car parking lot. Includes signage and landscaping.	Project could be contracted with Dane County Highway. Coordinate access with City of Madison. Estimated Cost: \$125,000
Planning, Design, Permits and Engineering New Parking Lot Area at Library	Immediate	Consultant	Grading plans, cost estimates and permits for proposed parking area at library.	Estimated Cost: \$10,000
Construct New Parking Lot and Roadway Improvements at Library Area	Immediate	DCP/DCH	Construct 20-30 parking lot, necessary gates with trail bypasses and cul-de-sac to facilitate abandonment of main east-west park road.	Investigate if Verona Library has interest in cost sharing on parking lot. Estimate Cost: \$90,000
Replacement of existing playground structure at Shelter 1.	Immediate	DCP	Removal of existing play equipment and installation of new natural playscape area with access path from parking area.	Estimated Cost: \$30,000
Creation of small dog exercise area.	Immediate	DCP	Fencing, paths, gates, bag dispensers, landscaping.	Estimated Cost: \$40,000
New Master Sign and Entry Improvements at BPHCC	Immediate	DCP	Relocation of BPHCC entry road will require new entry signage	Estimated Cost: \$7,000

TASK	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION	PROJECT SCOPE	COMMENTS/ COST
1,700' long x 10' wide crushed limestone trail from Ice Age Junction bicycle pedestrian trail to the Reddan Soccer Complex	Immediate	DCP	Construct in conjunction with Ice Age Junction Bike Ped Trail if possible.	Estimated Cost: \$35,000
2,000' of 5' Wide Crushed Limestone Trail from BPHCC to Proposed Shelter	Pending	DCP	Includes pedestrian bridge over existing drainage swale.	Priority could be increased to "immediate" pending completion of BPHCC and small dog exercise area. Estimated Cost: \$40,000
1,700' of 8' wide paved trail along the south side of Cross Country Road	Pending	DCP	Work with City of Madison Engineering on pedestrian cross walk improvements	Estimated Cost: \$35,000
5,000' long by 10' wide paved trail from Cross Country Road to Military Ridge Park and Ride	Pending	DCP/City of Madison?	Pending Future Acquisition	Estimated Cost: \$105,000
Construct New Parking Area for Mountain Bike Trail Head	Pending	DCP	Parking lot for 10-15 cars, could be expanded if necessary.	Estimated Cost: \$40,000
Develop Shelter 2 Program Area	Pending	DCP	Includes construction of approx. 2,000 sq. ft. shelter with restroom facility, playground area, and all accessible pathways for pedestrian circulation.	Timeline dependent on budgets and demand. Estimated Cost: \$300,000
Interpretive Signage Study and Implementation	Pending	Consultant	Hire consultant to research BPHCC history and complete graphic layout. Installation as shown on plan.	Estimated Cost: \$25,000
Construction of Proposed Pavilion and Playground	Future	DCP	20' x 20' open pavilion, vault toilet, play area at future small dog area.	Timing based on demand, budget. Estimated Cost: \$125,000

ACQUISITION

This plan recommends two proposed land acquisition projects that are northwest and southeast of the park.

The City of Verona and Madison Area Youth Soccer Association have expressed interest in a potential partnership on acquisition of the 100-acre parcel that extends from west of the Reddan Soccer Complex and north to McKee Road. Verona and MAYSA have interest in the approximate 20 acres of open land immediately west of Reddan for development of future active recreation facilities and possible roadway connections. Dane County would have interest in the 80 acres to the north as lands that are within the Ice Age National Scenic Trail corridor.

Dane County and the City of Madison have both had interest in acquiring the approximate 31 acres of property east of the former landfill site and south of Maple Grove Road. The City of Madison recently made a substantial investment in a large water quality facility and remnant prairie hillside to the east of these proposed acquisition parcels. The property reinforces the open space corridors identified in the Ice Age Junction Natural Resource Plan and provides opportunities for off-road trail connections to the park and the Military Ridge State Trail from adjacent residential areas. These properties would ecologically complement and expand adjacent open grassland environments already in place east, west and south of the park.

These future acquisition areas are identified on Map 12.

SUMMARY

For the past 35 years, perhaps no other property in the Dane County Park system has been considered for as many diverse uses as this project area. The large amount of undeveloped open space between two of the fastest growing areas in Dane County continue to foster regular interest from a variety of groups for potential future park and non-park uses of this property. This master plan recommends Badger Prairie Park continue to be maintained as the last remaining open space between Madison and Verona. This is consistent with preservation efforts of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail corridor and open grassland environments that have been created. It is also consistent with the Ice Age Junction Natural Resource Area project plan adopted by the County and local units of government in 1993.

This master plan is meant to serve as a guide for future acquisition and orderly development of the project area. Additional detailed construction drawings and planning will still need to be prepared for many of the recommendations found within this plan. As the park and recreation use continue to grow over the next 5-10 years, the plan should be revisited and amended as necessary to reflect current trends and conditions.