

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: 12/12/2025

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Amos Morris, Executive Zoo Director *Amos D. Morris, Jr.*

Subject: A report from the Executive Zoo Director requesting authorization to retroactively submit and accept a Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) grant for the Green Infrastructure Partnership Program (GIPP) in an amount not to exceed \$250,000 for Capital Project WZ0174 – Zoo Front Entrance Reconfiguration

File Type: Action Report

REQUEST

The Milwaukee County Zoo Executive Director is requesting authorization to retroactively submit and accept a MMSD grant for the Green Infrastructure Partnership Program (GIPP) in the amount of \$250,000 for capital project WZ0174 – Zoo Front Entrance Reconfiguration. MMSD will reimburse the GI (Green Infrastructure) Project installation costs up to \$250,000 or 50% of the GI Project Installation costs, whichever is less. Capital Project WZ0174 – Zoo Front Entrance Reconfiguration currently includes \$500,000 in green infrastructure improvements.

POLICY

Per Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances, departments are required to seek County Board approval to submit a grant application that requires a County match with County funding or in-kind services.

Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	56.06(1)
Specific Adopted Budget:	25-668
Specific Adopted Capital Project:	WZ0174 – Zoo Front Entrance Reconfiguration

BACKGROUND

The Milwaukee County Zoo (MCZ) submitted Capital Project WZ0174 – Zoo Front Entrance Configuration (construction funds) as part of the Zoo's 2026 capital requests. The MCZ contracted with Strand Associates for the design of the front entrance, and part of the contract included seeking grant funds to help offset the project costs. Strand Associates recommended that MCZ apply for the MMSD GIPP grant during the design phase, and the grant application was approved. The 2026 Capital Budget was approved by the County Board of Supervisors on November 6 and signed by the County

Executive on November 7, 2025, which includes the Zoo's Front Entrance Project. With the approval of the 2026 Budget by the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors and the County Executive, the MCZ is requesting retroactive approval to submit and accept the \$250,000 MMSD GIPP grant.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Describe how the item aligns to the objectives in the [strategic plan](#):

- 1B: Create and nurture an inclusive culture across County government: The redesigned front entrance integrates green infrastructure features such as bioswales and enhanced landscaping that create a more welcoming, accessible and environmentally responsible entry point for all visitors.
- 1C: Increase the number of County contracts awarded to minority and women-owned businesses: Implementation of GI components provide opportunities to engage minority and women-owned firms. The project's contract approach will follow County procurement standards that prioritize outreach and the inclusion of certified diverse vendors.
- 2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity: Green infrastructure improves stormwater management, reduces flooding and enhances air and water quality. These environmental benefits directly support healthier conditions for residents and visitors, advancing broader County health equity goals.
- 2B: Break down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered: The project is a partnership between MCZ and MMSD. This cross-agency collaboration demonstrates shared responsibility for environmental stewardship and visitor experience.
- 3A: Invest "upstream" to address root causes of health disparities: Green infrastructure reduces stormwater runoff, improves water quality, mitigates urban heat and enhances natural green space, all of which are upstream public-health strategies that reduce environmental stressors.
- 3B: Enhance the County's fiscal health and sustainability: The MMSD grant offsets capital costs for the entrance project while reducing long-term stormwater fees and maintenance expenses.

FISCAL EFFECT

Capital Project WZ0174 - Zoo Front Entrance Reconfiguration includes \$500,000 in green infrastructure, including a \$250,000 grant from an MMSD GIPP grant that will be reimbursed to Milwaukee County upon installation of the Green Infrastructure

components and submission of the baseline report.

TERMS

This grant is effective from July 11, 2025, through December 31, 2027.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Amos Morris, Executive Zoo Director, Amos.Morris@milwaukeecountywi.gov
Vera Westphal, Deputy Zoo Director, Vera.Westphal@milwaukeecountywi.gov

PREPARED BY:

Vera Westphal, Deputy Zoo Director

APPROVED BY:

Amos Morris, Executive Zoo Director

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution, Fiscal Note, MMSD GIPP Funding Agreement

cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk
Allyson R. Smith, Finance Committee Coordinator
David Crowley, County Executive
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive
Liz Sumner, Comptroller
Aaron Hertzberg, Executive Director Administrative Services
Isaac Rowlett, Interim Director of Strategy Budget and Performance
Jim Moon, Deputy Comptroller
Steve Cady, Director Research and Policy, Comptroller's Office
Anthony Rux, Sr Analyst Budget and Management, DAS-SBP
Vera Westphal, Deputy Zoo Director
Matthew Haseman, Zoo Director of Facilities