

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: March 17, 20243

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

From: Guy Smith, Executive Director, Milwaukee County Parks

Subject: Milwaukee County Parks Restrooms Policy

File Type: Informational Report

REQUEST

In response to questions raised during the 2023 Budget development, the Parks Department has provided a summary report on proposed restrooms operations in 2023.

POLICY

None

Wisconsin State Statutes:	
Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	
Specific Adopted Budget:	
Specific Adopted Budget Amendment:	
Specific Adopted Capital Project:	

BACKGROUND

In 2022, the County Board of Supervisors requested Milwaukee County Parks (Parks) to provide an informational report on plans for reopening restrooms at parks throughout the system.

Parks has historically attempted to open most permanent restroom facilities. Of the 156 parks in the countywide system, 77 locations have at least one permanent restroom facility on site. Most facilities are opened on a seasonal basis as many facilities are not designed for winter weather operations. For these seasonal facilities, most have their plumbing turned on in April or March, and then the plumbing is turned off in September or October, depending on the weather conditions. Two parks (Cupertino Park and Rose Park) have restroom facilities that are inoperable and are slated for removal. However, at both sites other restrooms are within 150 feet of these locations.

14 parks have restrooms that have at least one facility that is operated year-round by Milwaukee County Parks. These facilities are generally opened from 8am to 5pm daily, although permitted events will include restroom access for evening events. 54 parks have restrooms that are operated on a seasonal basis and are generally opened during

daylight hours.

Nine parks have restrooms operated by third-party providers and are listed below. These providers are required to provide public access during normal operational hours.

- Baran Park (operated by Journey House)
- Bender Park (Wake Zone)
- Bradford Beach, North Point (The Dock and Moosa's)
- Hoyt Park (Friends of Hoyt Park)
- Kulwicki Park (City of Greenfield)
- Rose Park (Senior Center – Department of Administrative Services) – operated year round
- Sherman Park (Mary Ryan Boys and Girls Club) – operated year round
- Tiefenthaler Park (PEAK) – operated year round
- Washington Park (Urban Ecology Center) – operated year round

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted park operations over the past three years. In 2020, restrooms were closed for a significant portion of the year, and experienced limited availability later in the year due to occupancy limitations. In 2021 and 2022, hiring of seasonal staff was impacted by the tight job market, and Parks has significantly fewer employees to operate and maintain grounds and facilities. In addition, some restrooms in recent years have experienced significant vandalism or crime occurring within the facility. When these incidents occur, facilities were closed and reopened only for permitted events.

For 2023, Parks intends to open available facilities at parks during daylight hours for public use as staffing permits. In the event of criminal damage to or vandalism occurring at restroom location maintained by Parks, the following steps will be taken:

- After the first incident, the location will be closed for public use for at least a week and be identified with a sign stating the closure.
- After the second incident occurs, the facility will be closed for public use for two weeks.
- If a third incident occurs, the facility will be closed for public use for a month.
- Following a fourth incident, the location will be closed for the remainder of the year.

In all situations that involve vandalism, repairs may require that the facility be closed for a longer duration.

In addition to these facilities, Parks will be placing portalets at sites throughout the park system to supplement restroom access for the 2023 season.

Related File No's:	
Associated File No's (Including Transfer Packets):	
Previous Action Date(s):	

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

None

FISCAL EFFECT

This item has no fiscal effect.

TERMS

None

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Guy Smith, Executive Director

Jim Tarantino, Deputy Director

PREPARED BY:

Peter Bratt, Director of Operations and Skilled Trades

APPROVED BY:

Guy Smith, Executive Director Milwaukee County Parks *Guy D. Smith*

ATTACHMENTS:

2023 Restroom Presentation

CC: David Crowley, County Executive
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
Sheldon Wasserman, Supervisor District 3, PEEC Chair
Steven Shea, Supervisor District 8, PEEC Vice Chair
Felicia Martin, Supervisor District 7, PEEC Member
Juan Miguel Martinez, Supervisor District 12, PEEC Member
Steve Taylor, Supervisor District 17, PEEC Member
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Mgr, Office of the County Clerk
Aaron Hertzberg, Director, Department of Administrative Services
Joseph Lamers, Fiscal & Budget Director, DAS
Vince Masterson, Fiscal & Strategic Asset Coordinator, DAS
Pamela Bryant, Capital Finance Manager, Comptroller's Office
Justin Rodriguez, Capital Finance Analyst, Comptroller's Office
Kelsey Evans, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk
Ciara Miller, Research & Policy Analyst, Office of the Comptroller
Anthony Rux, Budget & Management Analyst, DAS-PSB