



The Milwaukee County Historical Society was founded in 1935 to collect, preserve, and make available materials relating to the history of the Milwaukee community.

MCHS acts as the third-party repository for historical Milwaukee County records, thus preserving and making the records permanently accessible to the community.



County Records Repository

The Milwaukee County Historical Society currently holds more than 12,000 cubic feet of historical County records.

Recent acquisitions include:

- Medical Examiner records
- Records from several units formerly located in the 633 Building
- Records from the old Marcia P. Coggs Building



MCHS as a Cultural Organization

Provide history-based cultural experiences to more than 25,000 people annually:

The Research Library

- Serves more than 5,000 patrons per year
- Provides vital records that allow people to access benefits, a forever ID, or to prove next of kin

Museum and Historic Sites

- Exhibits
- Programs and events

Education Programs:

- Serve more than 7,000 school children annually
 - Hands on History
 - Field trips



FY 2026

- Complete move into 10930 W. Lapham St. building
 - Offset \$50,000 in maintenance and upkeep expenses for the County
 - Transfer records from VRC
 - Ultimately save the County over \$150,000/year in storage costs
- Trimborn Farm RFP
 - Aid in transfer of Trimborn to outside entity
- Diversify collections, exhibits, and programs
 - 2026 Exhibit
- Expand education programs

We are pleased to see that the FY 2025 funding level remains in the FY 2026 recommended budget, and we request that it continue to be maintained.



**SINCE
1935**



**MILWAUKEE CO.
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**





MARCUS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Our Purpose



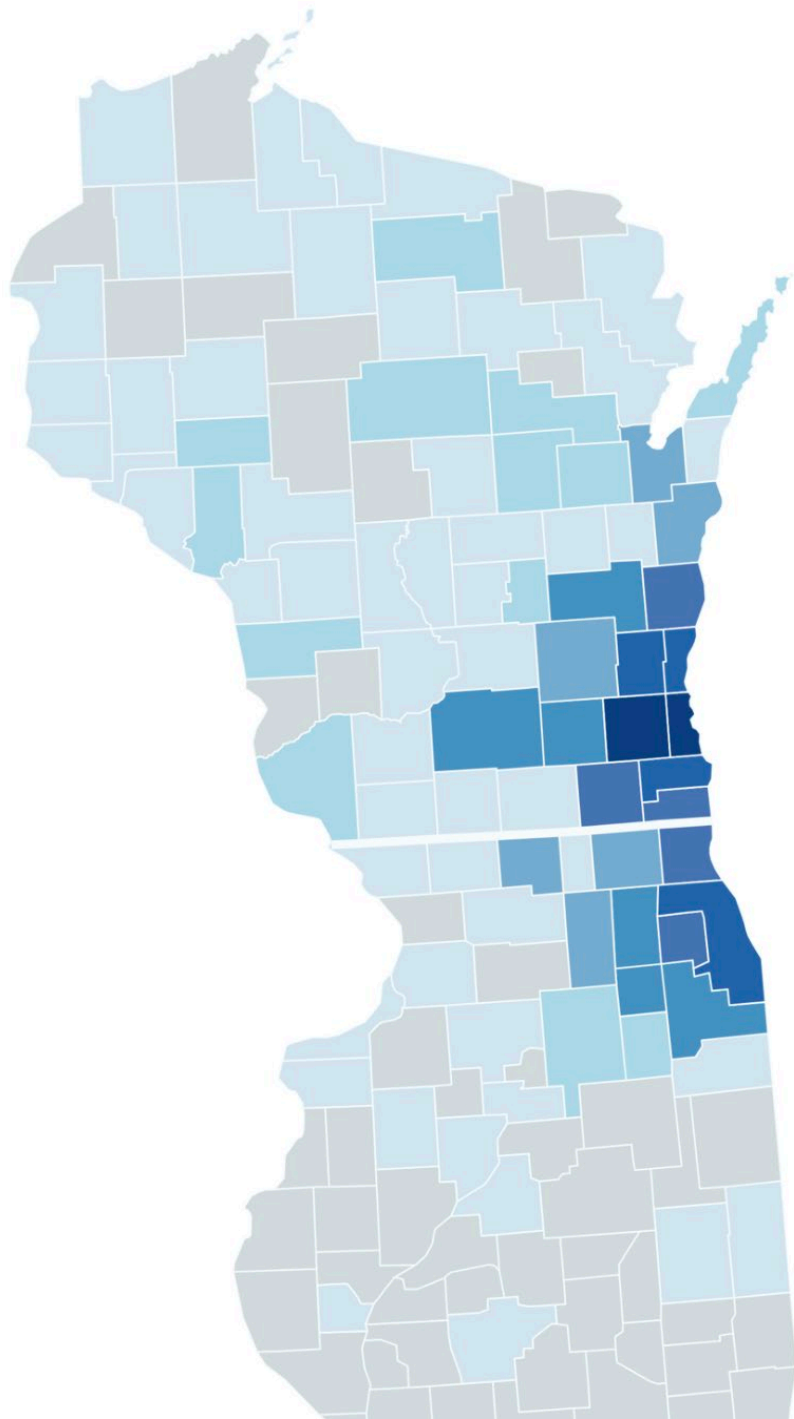
From construction in 1966 to today, the Marcus Performing Arts Center has been a cornerstone for arts, culture, and design in Milwaukee County.

**Milwaukee County War Memorial
Performing Arts Center**
Erected as a living memorial to all
who gave their lives in the service
of our country and dedicated to
the enrichment of life through
culture and beauty
By The County Of Milwaukee
and by thousands of citizens of
Milwaukee County and nearby
communities who made this
structure possible through their
efforts and contributions



Together, Milwaukee County and the Marcus Performing Arts Center have sustained this vital asset. With no deferred maintenance, the facility is positioned to be *the* space for unique cultural experiences for the whole community and contribute significant economic impact long into the future.

Impact on Milwaukee County and Surrounding Counties



MPAC attracts patrons from all over the region. Over half of ticket buyers reside in neighboring counties and travel to downtown Milwaukee to experience live performing arts.

This map highlights ticket sales that include audience zip code data from the 2023/24 season.



LOWER

HIGHER

Economic Impact on Milwaukee County

Estimated Annual Economic Impact
\$59.1 Million

Annual sales tax
\$1.3+ million (\$890K outside Milwaukee County)

Source: Arts & Economic Prosperity AEP6 Calculator





Over the past 10-year agreement, the County has Invested about **\$13M** to support critical infrastructure.



During that
time, MPAC
has also
invested an
additional
\$16M in
campus
improvements



Complete roof replacement

Safety & Security equipment

Drain line & exterior paving

Digital signage



The Cultural Heart of
Milwaukee for Everyone



Recommended Budget
October 10, 2025

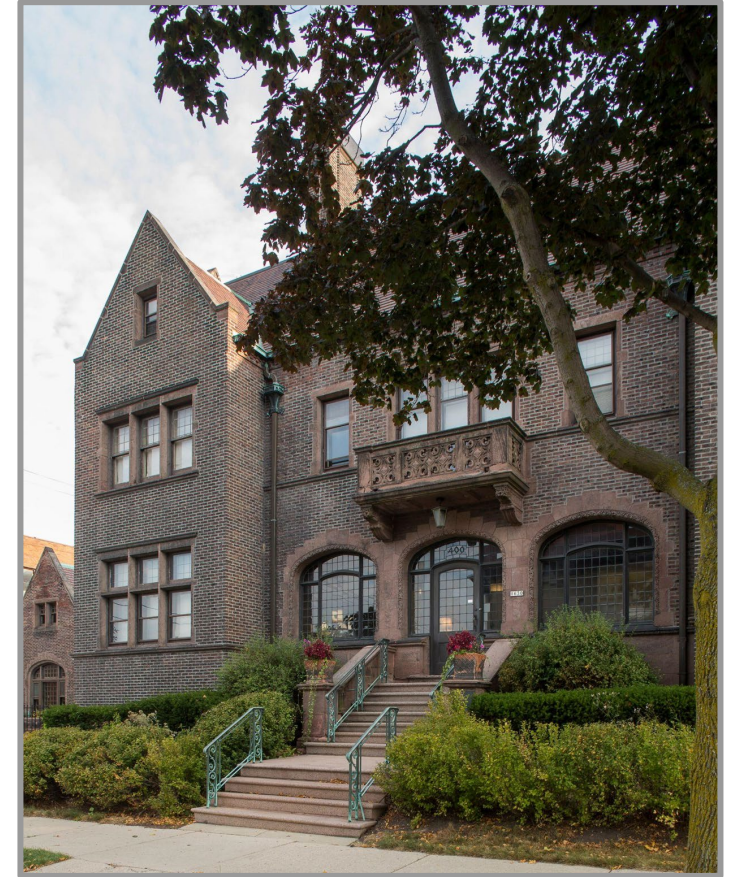
Presented by Bill Wood, Interim Executive Director



Department Purpose

The Charles Allis Art Museum enhances Milwaukee County's quality of life by providing opportunities to engage with history, culture, and the arts. This public-private partnership preserves the architecturally significant home and art collection of Charles and Sarah Allis, while sharing Milwaukee's industrial and entrepreneurial history.

The museum offers vibrant exhibitions, educational programs, performances, and events, including local art showcases, concerts, films, family workshops, and lectures. It collaborates with Milwaukee High Schools for a student art show and is available for civic, cultural, and private group rentals. It is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



2025 “Pivot” from CAVT to CAAM



- Staff Reduction and Restructuring (1.5 continuing, 1 new part-time hire, and 3 new “adhoc” part-time hourly positions);
- Board Rebuild/Restructure (composition and size changed, revised bylaws);
- Strategic Planning Process Initiated (begun September and to be completed January 2026);
- Remained Open to the Public w/ Regularly Scheduled Hours (with onsite board “volunteer” support);
- Delivered Public Programming– 3 core “branded” programs: “Arts@1801,” “Artist-in-Residence,” “Community Exhibits” (with onsite support of the board);
- Continued Rentals of Facility (with onsite support of the board);
- Membership Program Suspended;
- Budget Reduction of Approximately 70% (\$1.1 Million in ‘24 to \$350,000 in ‘25).

2026 “1st Stride” for CAAM



- Staff Rebuild (1 new part-time hire, transition 1 part-time position to full time);
- Board Restructure (add 3 to 4 new board members);
- Begin Implementation of New Strategic Plan (work toward established identity/brand development, fundraising, budgetary, programming, and curatorial goals through 2028);
- Increase Regularly Scheduled Public Hours (Sundays);
- Continue Public Programming– 3 core “branded” programs: “Arts@1801,” “Artist-in-Residence,” “Community Exhibits”);
- Expand Rentals of Facility & Income Generating Programs;
- Reestablish Membership Program;
- Budget: approximately \$395,000
(establish internal budget development and tracking process with staff)

2025 Public Programs/Rentals



- “Artist in Residence” (Hattie Grim: “Birds and Bodies” Exhibit Opening Reception, Artist Talk, and Artist Workshop–)
- “Art@1801” (Opening Reception & Fieldtrip)
- “Spring into the Allis” (Concert)
- “Community Exhibits” (new in 2025: “The Human Condition”)
- “Doors Open” (Guided Tours and Docent Talks)
- Rentals (“Vino Royal” & “Her Kind of Space”)
- Forthcoming Holiday Exhibits/Events



-- Admissions: 1,353 (584 paid), Event Attendance: 399 --

2026 Changes to Public Programs



- Add Part-time Staff Member;
- Expand "Art@1801" (increase grant size);
- Expand "Artist in Residence" (grants and community partners),
- Expand "Spring Into the Allis" (Autumn at the Allis" & "Allis in the Summer Time");
- Double "Community Exhibits";
- Restructure & Restart Membership Programs.



2026 Budget Overview



- **\$395,000** annual 2026 operational budget for CAAM
 - 46.5% Milwaukee County (approx \$185K)
 - 36% Individual & Other Donations (approx \$140K)
 - 10% Grant Funds (approx \$40K)
 - 2.5% Admissions (approx \$10K)
 - 2.5% Rentals (approx \$10K)
 - 2.5% Membership & Gift Shop (approx \$10K)



THANK YOU!

Questions?





**MILWAUKEE
COUNTY**



Cultural Contributions: Committee on Finance

October 10, 2025



Vision: We connect people with art, each other and the world.

Mission: We share extraordinary works of art, reveal their compelling stories and create meaningful experiences to grow and inspire our community



FY26 Planned Exhibitions:

- *The Bradley Collection of Modern Art: A Bold Vision for Milwaukee*
- *Gertrude Abercrombie: The Whole World is a Mystery*
- *Seeking Revelation: German Romantic Prints and Drawings, 1770-1850*
- *Looking Forward: New Gifts of Art*
- *Currents 40: Widline Cadet*



FY25 School Impact:

- *Served 23,562 students on 603 tours*
- *FREE admission for 1,724 K-12 teachers*

FY26 Reducing Barriers:

- *Bus Scholarship Fund for City of Milwaukee K-12 Schools with 60%+ Economically Disadvantaged rating*



Community Impact:

- *Kids 12 & Under FREE endowment*
- *Kohl's Art Studio onsite and in the community – 40,000 youth & families*
- *Native Initiatives Advisory Group: Homelands collaboration*
- *Family Sundays: Día de los Muertos*



Welcoming Guests:

- *In FY25, the Museum welcomed 243,116 guests (54% from Milwaukee County)*
- *Thursday Nights at MAM reached 8,007 visitors last year*
- *Return of MAM After Dark, yoga, quarterly free days and summer Mondays*



**Thank you for
supporting the
Milwaukee Art Museum**

Extension Milwaukee County

2026 Budget



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
MILWAUKEE COUNTY

Department Overview

- Extension is a partnership between Milwaukee County Government and the University of Wisconsin- Madison
- Extension's mission is to teach, lead, and serve by connecting the people of Milwaukee County with the university and engaging them in life long learning that transforms lives and communities
- Extension's vision is to be a thriving, well-known, and sought-out educational resource that reflects the rich diversity of communities in Milwaukee County

Summary of Budget Changes

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education Federal funding was eliminated by Congress resulting in a loss of ten nutrition educators and coordinators
- The fee for service for educators under the professional services contract increases by 3%.
- Department will continue to partner with Milwaukee County Parks Department on county budget management



Program Highlights

Community Youth Development

**Garden Education at the Vel R. Phillips
Juvenile Justice Center**



**Students learn basic gardening skills
and help to maintain the garden beds.**

The Growing Connections Program



**Continued learning and development of the
garden on 5th & Becher. More raised beds
and the start of a food forest!**

4-H/Youth Development and Stem



**4-H youth learned to
transplant herbs at Victory
Garden Initiative.**



**Youth at the Kellogg PEAK
Initiative and seniors from Cherry
Court learned to cook together
from a professional chef.**



**4-H youth at summer camp tested
water samples for invasive carp in
the Wisconsin River.**

4-H/Youth Development and Stem



7 Milwaukee 4-H youth were selected to receive a full scholarship to attend Space Camp in Alabama.



During a week of 4-H intergenerational activities, youth at Kellogg Peak Initiative learned to play chess.



Two 6th grade classrooms at Story School participated in a 4-H Science Fair after a year of 4-H STEM lessons.

4-H/Youth Development and Stem

Highland Community School 4-H Club



4-H youth at summer camp made Milwaukee 4-H t-Shirts.



Youth from the Highland 4-H Garden Club learned how to make and jar jam.

Financial Literacy

Tahnee Aguirre, Human Development and Relationships Educator delivers the **financial education** and **Rent Smart (rent education)** portions of the ***Building a Path to Success*** workshop, a six-week series led by **My Way Out**, at the **Milwaukee County Community Reintegration Center** (formerly the House of Corrections). The program supports reentering individuals with **technology skills, financial literacy, rent education, and resume and interview preparation.**



Rent Smart Series



Graduation Ceremony 2025



Male Cohort 2025

Literacy Link

Amareli Aranda, a Family Engagement and Relationships Intern, has started the **Literacy Link: Read & Connect Workshop** and **Literacy Link: Making Reading Memories** program. This program occurs once a month at the **Milwaukee Community Reintegration Center (CRC)** to upwards of 12 parents in a small group. This program is designed to **strengthen the bond** between parent and child and **minimize the damaging impact** of too much stress when a parent is incarcerated. The Literacy Link's new partnership with the Milwaukee CRC began in June '25 and has already reached over 50 children and 35 parents.



Urban Agriculture



UW Extension leverages academic expertise to support environmentally sustainable, socially responsible urban agriculture in Milwaukee County



Extension Milwaukee County hosts the first-ever USDA Urban Demonstration Farm Network. Field day events learn about soil health practices



Urban Agriculture



Student beekeepers learn about native pollinators, honey production, and the urban planted landscape during an intensive 9-month beekeeping class



Community members build raised bed construction skills to overcome soil resource concerns during a Milwaukee Urban Demonstration Farm Network event

FoodWise

West Allis Senior Center



Seniors at the West Allis Senior Center participate in StrongBodies lessons and focus on low impact fall prevention exercises.

Eating Smart, Being Active



FoodWise Nutrition Educator demonstrates how to cook low fat, low sodium recipes using a variety of kitchen appliances and parents receive air fryers.

Healthy Weighs for Less at Cross Lutheran Food Pantry



FoodWise Nutrition educator teaches a lesson using foods available at the food pantry at Cross Lutheran so participants can see how to use pantry items.



Questions?

Contact Information

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Area Extension Director
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Thank you!



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
MILWAUKEE COUNTY

Parks Department

2026 Recommended Budget
October 2025



Department Purpose

Parks Mission

To steward a thriving park system that positively impacts every Milwaukee County Park visitor.

Parks Vision

To foster dynamic connections through our land and community, heighten the quality of life in the county, and lead as a model park system.



2025 Successes

- Investment in Parks – Capital Projects Completed:
 - South Shore Beach rehabilitation
 - South Shore Playground
 - Mitchell Airport Playground
 - McKinley Marina new boat launch
 - Kohl and Bender new Oak Leaf Trail segments-in progress
 - Underwood parkway/trail conversion - in progress



2025 Successes - Continued

- Inaugural July 3 drone show
- 4 new Friends groups formed and 3 underway
- Milwaukee Parks Foundation
 - Atkinson Park and Harley Park (almost complete) open air shelters, Tiefenthaler Park lighting, and trails crew at McGovern Park ongoing
- Partner support
 - Milwaukee Downtown BID #21- MKE Dog Exercise Area jointly operated.



2025 Successes – Continued

Activity and Revenue Growth

- Golf continues trend of growth:

Period	Total Rounds	Total Revenue
2024 (Week 39)	337,190	\$10,310,410
2024 Year End	385,542	\$11,674,676
2025 (Week 39)	341,070	\$10,646,570

- Boerner Botanical Gardens - China Lights
- Special Event Attendance
 - Lakefront event attendance 540,000+
 - Harley Homecoming, Air and Water Show, Brewfest, Drone Show, Milwaukee Marathon and Kite Fest



Challenges

- Recent catastrophic flooding event
- Loss of Federal Inflation Reduction Act Grant (\$1.5mil)
- Labor budget – continually increasing cost to maintain services
- Sustainable Funding – growth in philanthropy and earned revenue is positive, structural gap is growing
- Public Safety – adjusted pool hours
- Deferred Maintenance
- Equipment and Vehicle Maintenance



Strategic Plan Alignment

- Identify \$500,000 in savings based on smart building portfolio management
 - ARPA energy efficiency projects ongoing, building and lighting conversions for lower maintenance
- Complete long-range plans for 3 identified parks
 - Completed Walkers Square plan, focusing on McGovern
- Reduce actively managed lands by 100 acres and increase natural areas by 100 acres
 - Identified 125 acres of managed land for conversion to natural areas
- Increase tree plantings above existing planned amount by 1,350
 - 3,488 trees planted



Strategic Plan Alignment

- Complete Trail Comprehensive Plan
 - Trail Network Plan underway with first community input session held
- Create 3 pickleball court sites with one in each region
 - Froemming, West Milwaukee complete
 - Jackson Park – under construction



Strategic Plan Alignment

- Leverage \$300,000 annually from philanthropy
 - \$560,391 budgeted from Milwaukee Parks Foundation
- Increase number of volunteers and hours served:

Period	Number of Volunteers	Volunteer Hours Served
2023	900	16,000
2024	3,833	12,649
2025	1,300	12,000
2026 Goal	4,600	15,000

- Create discrete, measurable career path with competencies by area or position
 - Completed career pathway document



Budget Data

BUDGET SUMMARY

Category	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Budget	2026 Recommended Budget	2025/2026 Variance
Expenditures					
Personnel Costs	24,524,355	32,999,392	26,078,706	26,903,188	824,482
Operations Costs	14,602,947	14,472,318	15,525,843	15,398,920	(126,923)
Debt & Depreciation	937	3,181	0	0	0
Capital Outlay	1,665,948	2,341,322	1,862,741	1,730,000	(132,741)
Interdepartmental Charges	5,912,215	6,063,910	5,695,983	6,553,273	857,290
Total Expenditures	\$46,706,401	\$55,880,124	\$49,163,273	\$50,585,381	\$1,422,108
Revenues					
Other Direct Revenue	28,179,741	28,804,260	26,188,718	28,930,824	2,742,106
State & Federal Revenue	183,523	457,353	699,407	400,000	(299,407)
Indirect Revenue	11,382	5,589	0	0	0
Total Revenues	\$28,374,645	\$29,267,202	\$26,888,125	\$29,330,824	\$2,442,699
Tax Levy	\$18,331,756	\$26,612,922	\$22,275,148	\$21,254,557	(\$1,020,591)
Personnel					
Full Time Pos (FTE)	283.00	301.00	311.00	309.00	(2.00)
Overtime \$	368,553	444,306	168,417	229,200	60,783
Seasonal/Hourly/Pool	3,780,505	4,567,094	6,361,361	6,756,115	394,754

Revenue/Expense Ratio

Year	Total Earned Revenue	Total Expenditure	% of Total Budget that is Earned Revenue
2021	\$19,104,289	\$35,560,013	53.7%
2022	\$21,279,344	\$40,273,969	52.8%
2023	\$22,356,101	\$43,162,688	51.8%
2024	\$24,151,663	\$46,201,853	52.3%
2025	\$27,386,100	\$49,535,451	55.3%
2026	\$29,330,824	\$50,585,381	58.0%



Changes in 2026

- Right of Entry permit fees have been increased in 2026 to align with industry standards and a new hotline renewal fee has been added to the fee schedule.
- Rental rates and fees are minimally increased for various golf rounds, Domes admissions, pools, facilities and pavilions.
- \$200,000 of tax levy in the Parks Department is replaced with General Transportation Aids (GTA) funding in the 2026 Budget. The GTA allocation provides funding for roadway work done in Parks in collaboration with the Department of Transportation. This includes but is not limited to roadway painting and sweeping, asphalt and mastic work, catch basin cleaning and repairs, and salting in winter.



Changes in 2026

New FTE Positions:

- Maintenance needs increasing due to increasing usage and to support revenue growth
- Golf Operations (3 Maintenance Workers)
- Horticulture (1 Horticulturist at Boerner Botanical Gardens)



Closing

- Parks is anticipating minimal program changes in 2026
- Successful growth in revenue show the importance and demand of Parks in our community.
- Parks' 2026 budget relies more heavily on earned revenue than any prior year, revenue cannot be expected to cover declining public support over the long term
- Need to reduce obligations and services in future years if tax levy support continues to decrease



Questions?





**MILWAUKEE
COUNTY**

Milwaukee County Zoo

2026 Recommended Budget
October, 2025



Department Purpose

VISION

A world where wildlife and people thrive.

MISSION

Inspire people to conserve wildlife and wild places

VALUES

Inclusion
Accountability
Empathy
Fun

Respect
Innovation
Collaboration

Foundational Principles: Culture, Community
Impact, Financial Strength and Stewardship



KEY COMMITMENTS

Care

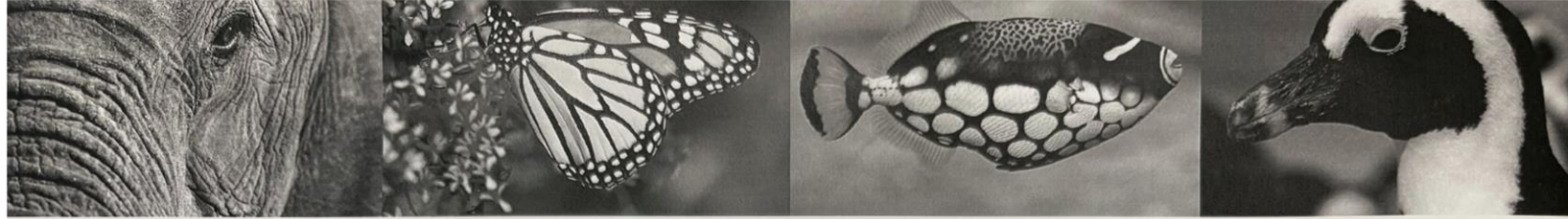
Enhancing wellbeing and pursuing the highest standards in veterinary care, husbandry, and zoo habitat design.

Connect

Immersing people in nature and creating memorable, educational experiences that inspire empathy and environmental action.

Conserve

Saving wildlife and wild places here and across the globe by leading and partnering on conservation projects.



2025

Angela Peterson Excellence in Diversity Award

Top Honors

The following award is given to

Project SEARCH

Milwaukee County Zoo



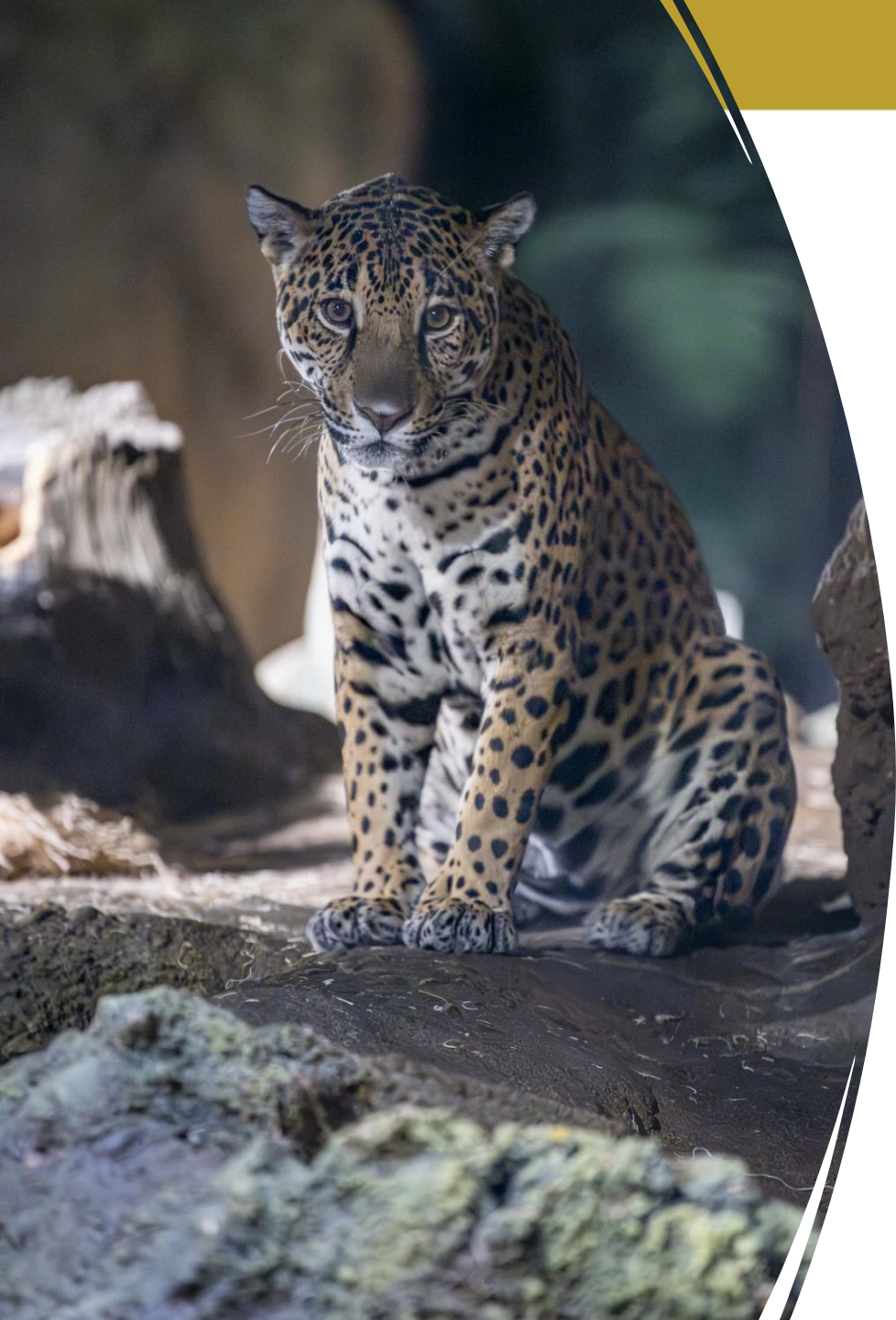
Dan Ashe
President and Chief Executive Officer, AZA

ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS

2025 Successes

Association of Zoos
and Aquariums
Diversity Award





2025 Successes – Continued

- Arrival of Jaguar Filly in January
- First year of animal care interns as paid positions
- Zoo's Veterinary Residency Program was approved by the American College of Zoological Medicine
- Development of a robust employee checklist to enhance the new employee onboarding experience
- Implemented a new preventative maintenance program

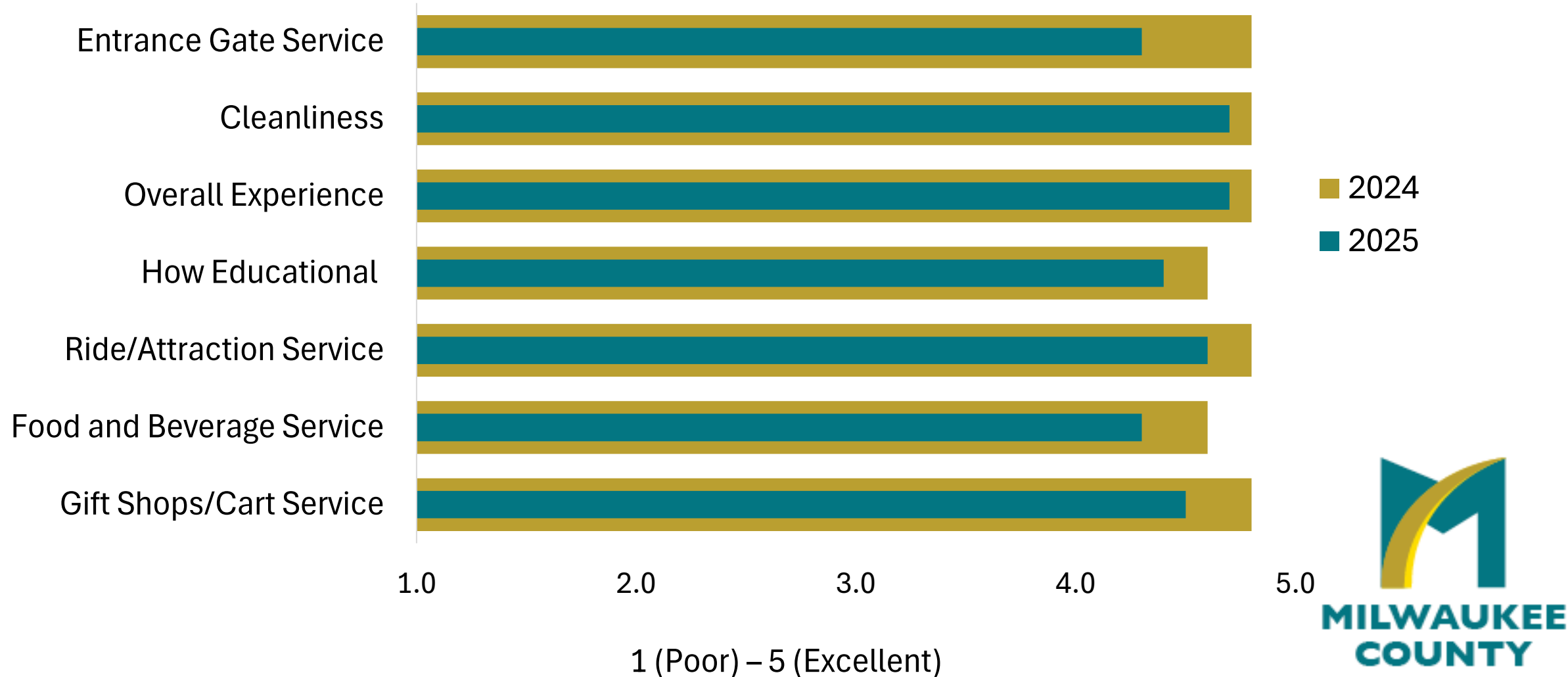
2025 Successes - continued

- Successfully fledging a Humboldt Penguin chick in the breeding season immediately following the move to the newly renovated Penguins of the Pacific habitat

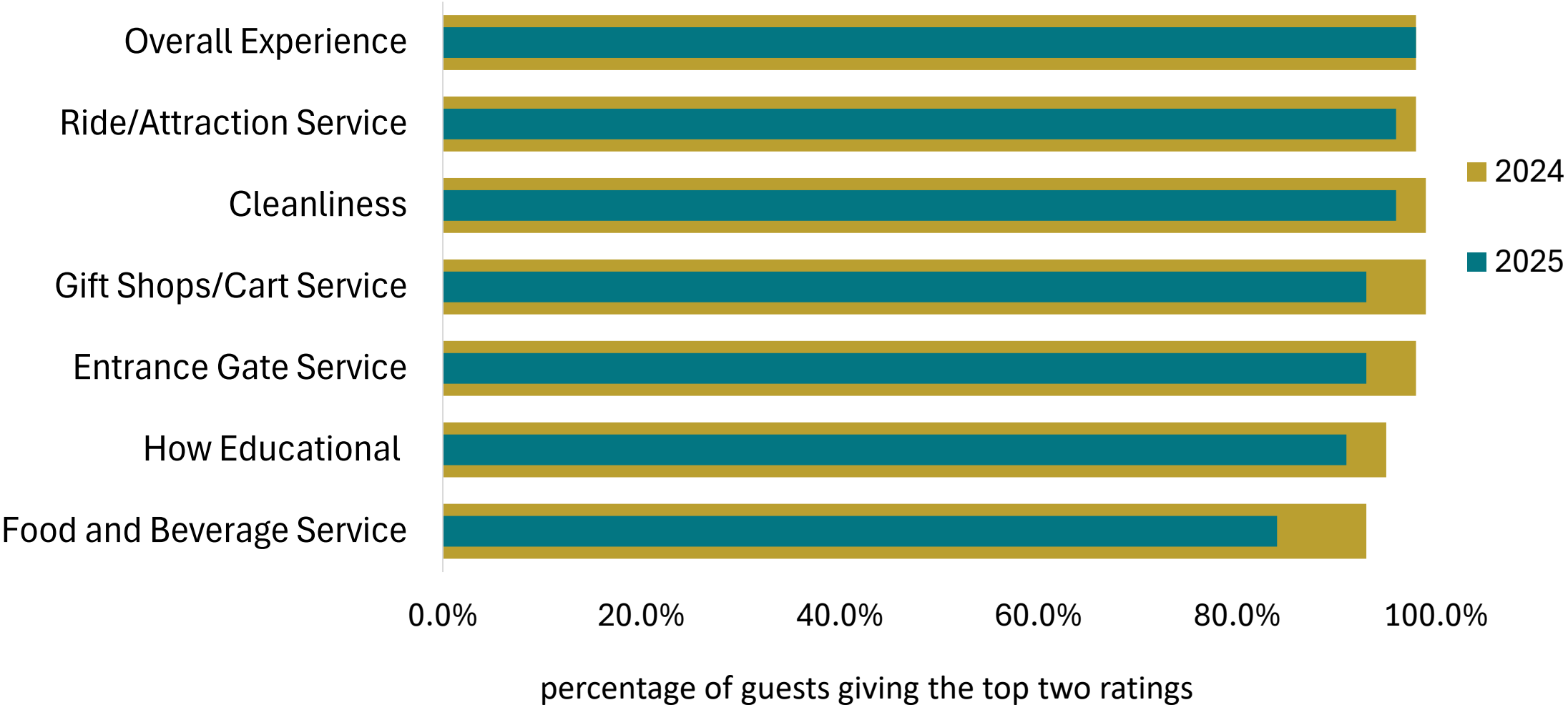


2025 Exit Survey Results

While all were slightly less than those in 2024, the Zoo maintained high average ratings over “4” for each performance metric in 2025.



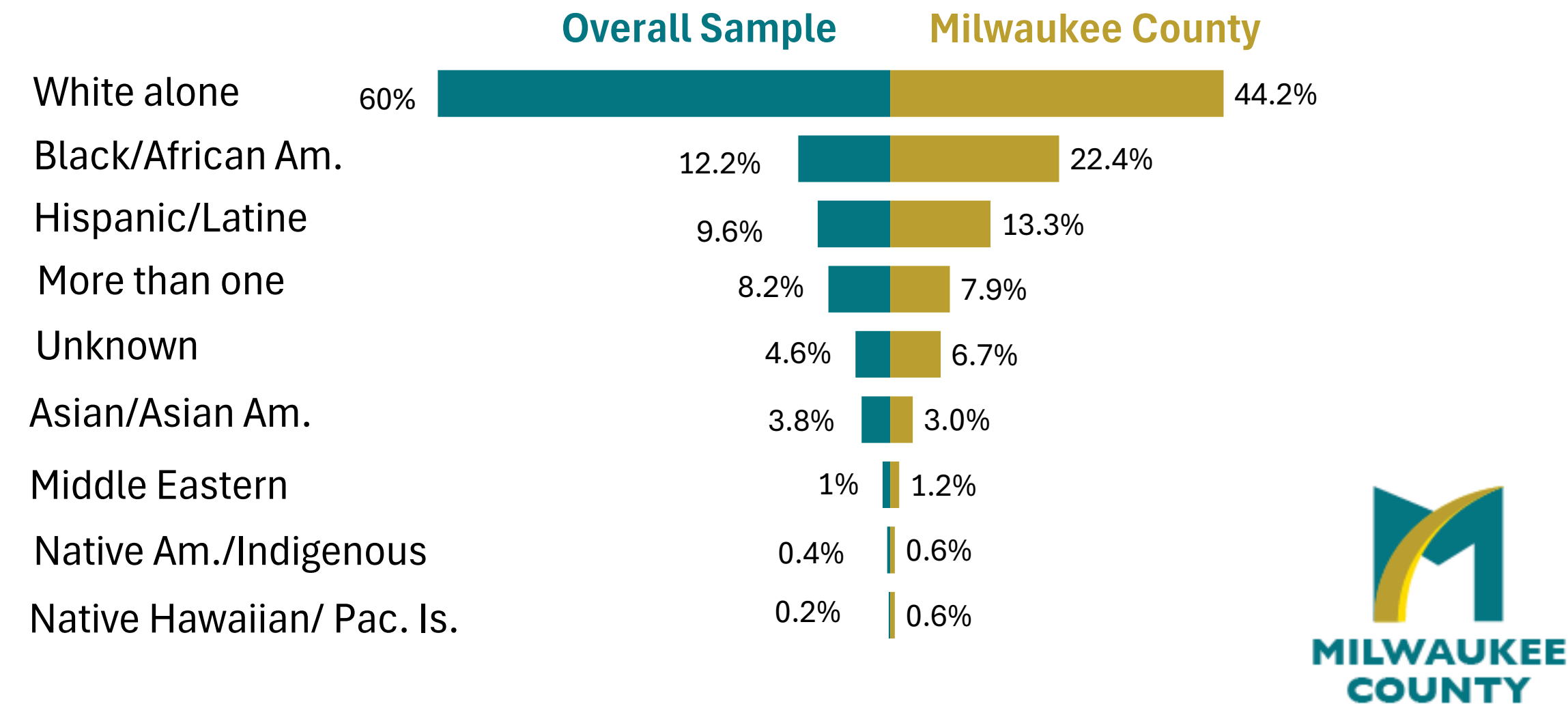
The Zoo’s goal was surpassed for each performance metric in 2025, aside from “food and beverage service”.

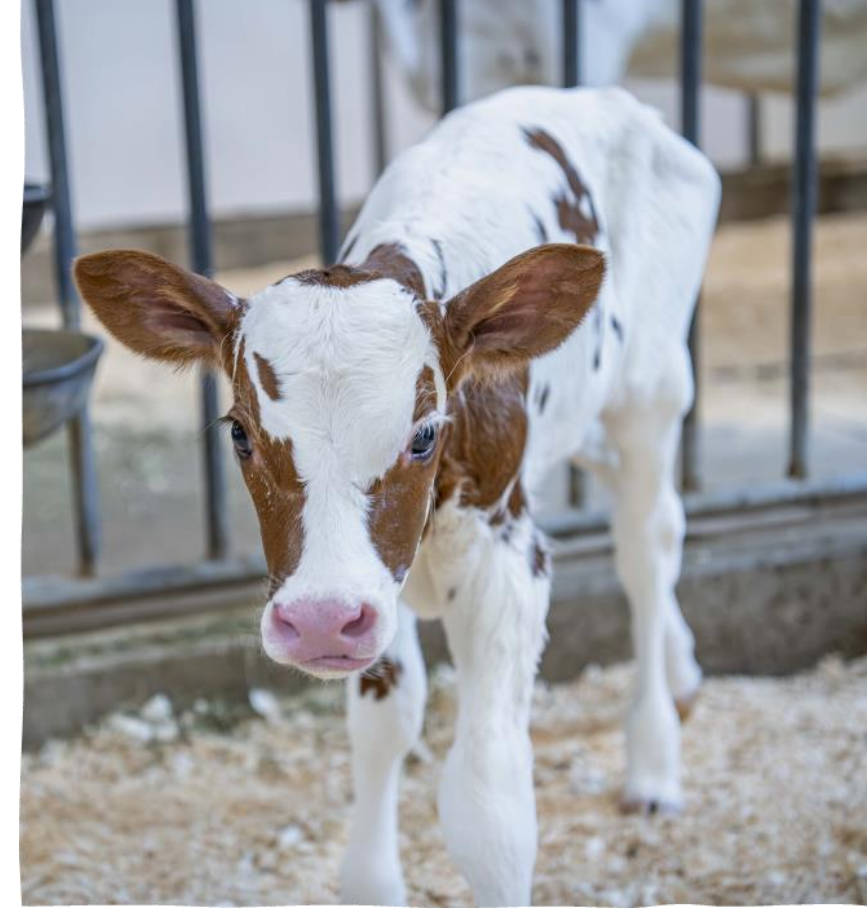


Quality of
animal care
ratings were
high again this
year
& averaged
4.6 out of 5,
with 93%
giving the top
two ratings.



Milwaukee County subsample is more diverse than the overall sample.





Animal Births

Listed in order left to right: Bonobo, Japanese Macaque (3), Ayrshire Cow

Not Shown: Bactrian Camel, Prehensile-tailed Porcupine

2025

Hatchings

- Listed from right to left: Crested Wood Partridge Chick (3), Green Aracari Chick
- Not Shown: Blue-grey tanager (2), Crocodile bird (2), Humboldt Penguin (1), Luzon bleeding-heart dove, Northern bald (Waldrapp) Ibis, Northern spider tortoise (2), Spangled Cotinga



2025 Community Engagement

Intentional Outreach

- Forest County Potawatomi Visit – Crandon, WI
- Pride Parade – Zoo Float
- WI Indigenous Youth Summit - Crandon Event
- Milwaukee County Take a Child to Work Day Event



Zoo Resource Table at Events

- County Days
- 4th Annual Honoring the Heartbeat Mental Health & Wellness Powwow
- Juneteenth Celebration
- 2026 Budget Listening Session
- MC Sheriff's Office National Night Out
- Harvest Fest (October)



Zoo's Accessibility Impact

\$1.68M Back to the Community in 2024.



33 Total Access Programs

- 6 Free Days
- Military & Veterans Day
- Senior Celebration
- \$4 on the 4th of July
- \$4.14 Day on 4/14/25
- Frosty Free Week
- Flex Ticket Pricing
- Mother's Day & Father's Day
- Special Needs Program
- Scouting the Zoo
- Kulture City Certification
- Purple Heart Pass
- MC School Field Trips



Challenges

- Managing guest expectations during the home stretch of the Rhino construction, with pathways and habitat access changing to accommodate stages of construction.
- Our top complaint is guest wait time for admittance due to admission gate entry times, especially on Free Days, events and popular weekends.
- Poor summer weather conditions, including the impact from the Canadian wildfires
- Consumer spending trends and local competition for entertainment dollars
- Geriatric animal population



Strategic Plan Alignment

Create Intentional Inclusion

- Expand the Zookeeper Seasonal Program
- Marketing to broader, diverse audiences
- 22% T/M contracts to TBEs

Bridge the Gap

- Provide a safe, welcoming environment to all
- Cristo Rey HS Intern Program
- Actively gathers and incorporates feedback from guests & community

Invest in Equity

- Increase revenues to reduce reliance on Tax Levy funds
- Accessibility programs
- \$241 million economic impact, \$80 million in earnings; 2,927 jobs

Budget Data

Category	2025 Budget	2026 Budget	Variance
Expenditures	\$22,003,143	\$22,664,169	\$661,026
Revenues	\$21,932,797	\$22,668,006	\$735,209
Tax levy	\$70,346	(\$3,837)	(\$74,183)

Changes in 2026

Revenues

- Attendance is projected to increase by 2%, for a target of 1,302,379 guests.
- Admission revenue increases \$513,864.
- School field trip prices are increasing by \$0.50 in all categories; County Wednesday rate increases by \$0.50
- Group Sales revenue is projected to increase by \$124,786, driven by an expanded rental marketing campaign.
- Adding new public events, generating \$51,000 in new revenue.
- 2026 will feature a special exhibit on Pollinators, highlighting the essential role bees, butterflies and other pollinating species play in sustaining ecosystems and global food supplies.



2026 Changes Continued

- Sponsorship revenue is projected to increase by \$67,500, driven by new events and a strategic program realignment designed to better match market rates and enhance partner engagement.

Expenditures

- Salaries and wages increase by \$149,689 due to the 1% raise and changes resulting from the December HR Compensation Study changes.
- Salaries and wages increase by \$58,208, reflecting additional hours to expand the Seasonal Zookeeper staffing program.
- Utilities increase by \$56,210
- Savings of \$100,000 are included due to the new Gateway POS that will be operational in January of 2026.
- Animal food increases \$61,500

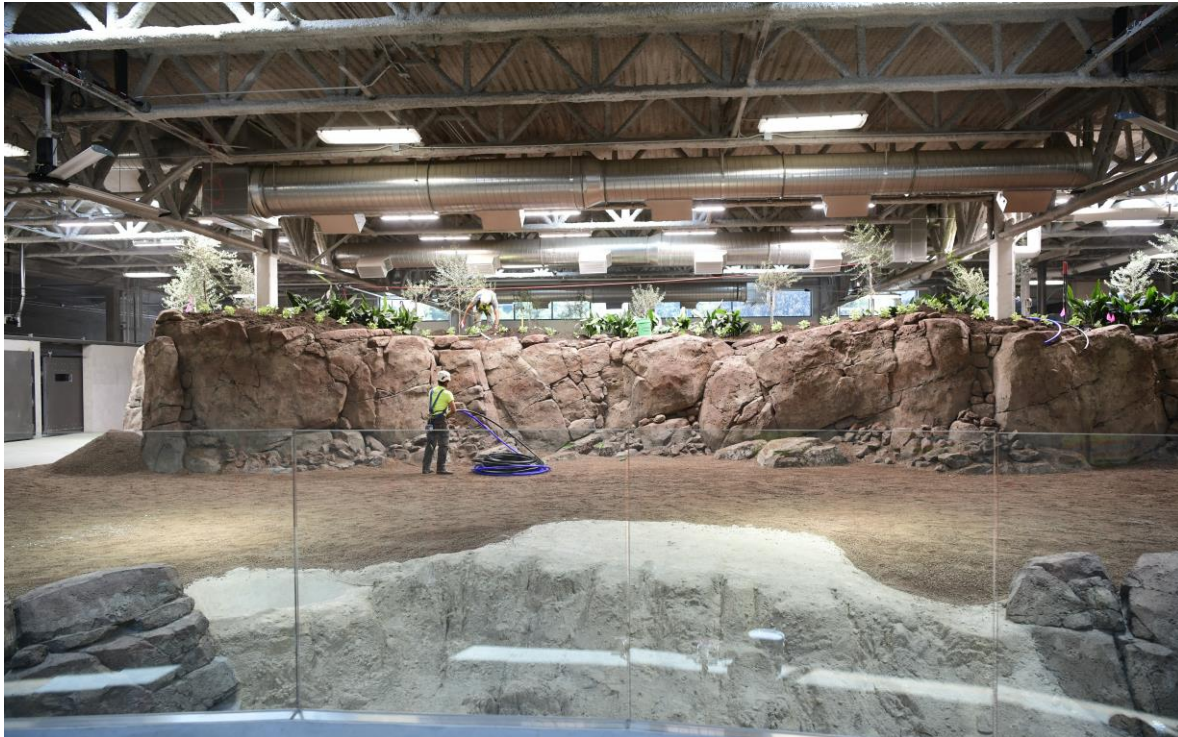


2026 Changes Continued

- Repair/maintenance expenditures increase \$79,000 to help reduce deferred maintenance projects.
- Fleet Management crosscharge increases \$133,730 from \$654,677 to \$788,407.



Indoor Rhino / Hippo Habitat





RHINOS RETURN

2026 Capital Projects

\$175,000 in Design funds to replace the Zoofari Conference Center roof and AC.

- The building generates \$80,000 to \$100,000 in revenues annually
- Houses Rental Facility, Maintenance Shop and staff, SSA warehouse



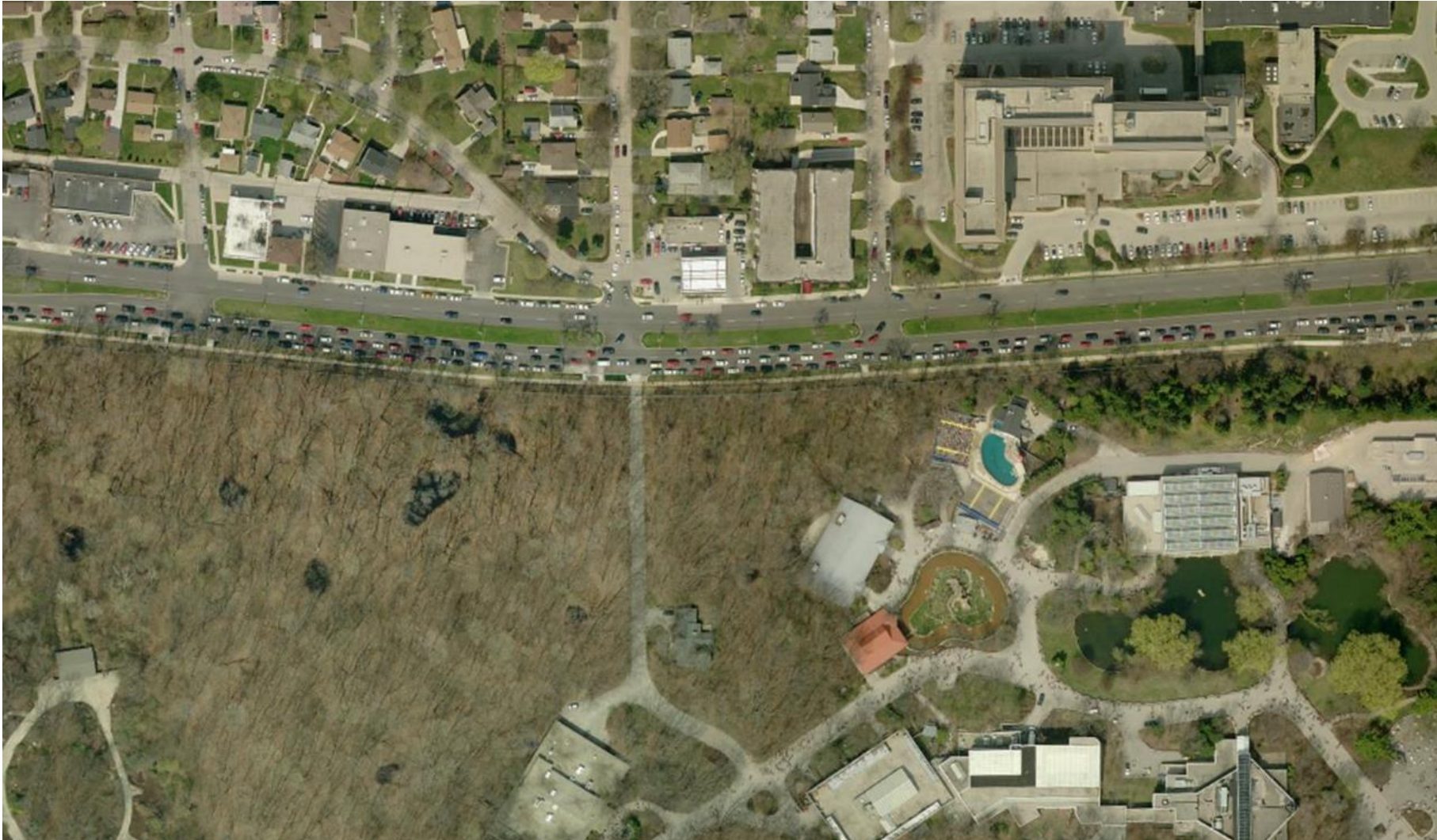
Front Entrance Capital Project



Issue:
Entering
and
Exiting
the Zoo



Front Entrance Project



**Traffic
Congestion:**

Off Ramp on
Hwy 100 to Zoo



Zoo Entrance – Safety Concerns



Zoo Entrance
at Bluemound
Rd & 99th
Street During
October Free
Day



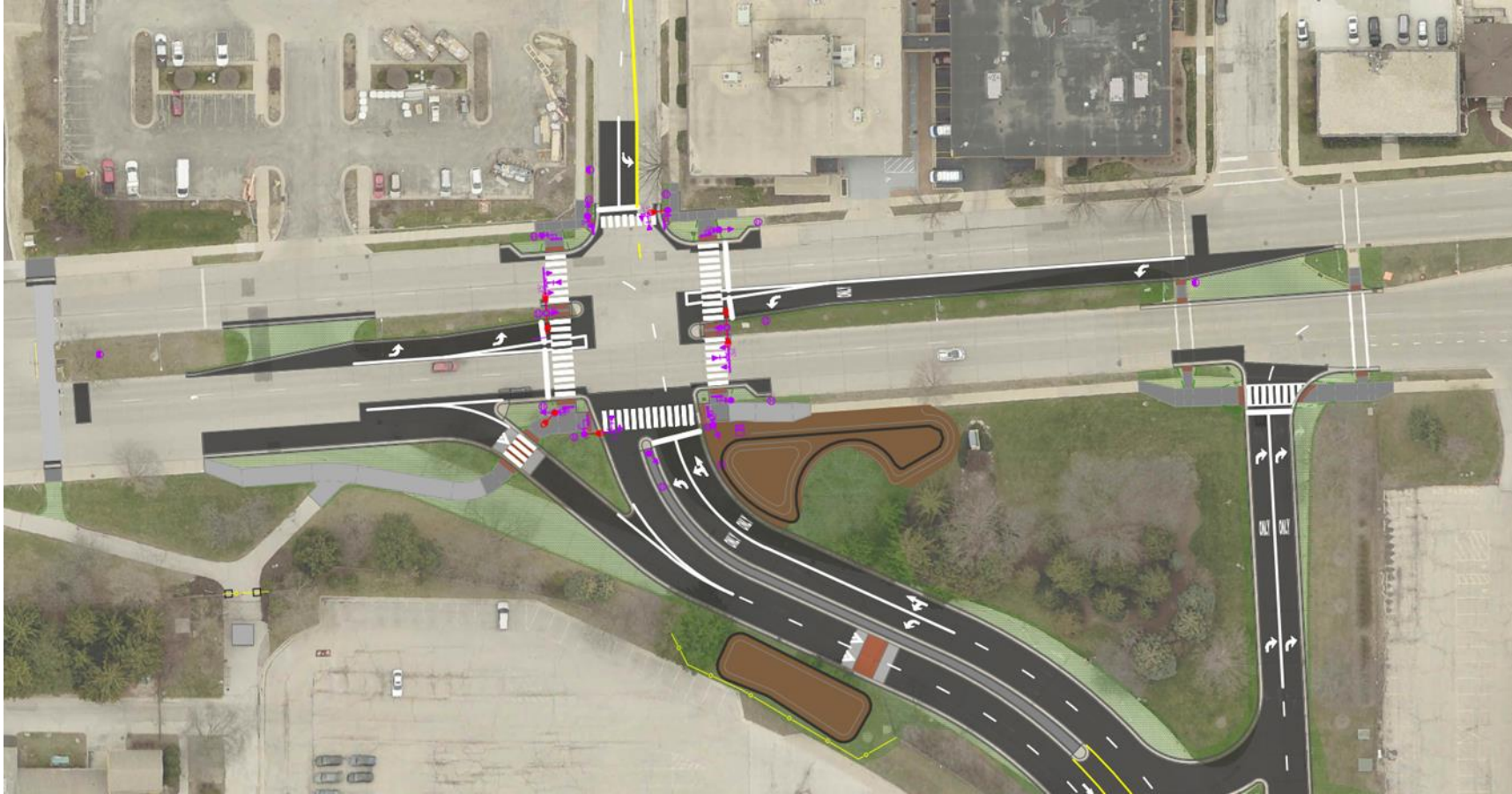
Zoo Exit – Traffic Operations and Safety



Northbound
left two
staged
crossing
exiting the
Zoo



Solution to Traffic Issues



- Signalized intersection at Bluemound Road and 99th Street
- Eliminates challenging northbound lane movement at 98th Street
- Replace the pedestrian hybrid beacon with a familiar signalized crossing

Ticketing Solution





The End

Questions?





**MILWAUKEE
COUNTY**

Milwaukee County Zoo

2026 Recommended Budget
October, 2025



Department Purpose

VISION

A world where wildlife and people thrive.

MISSION

Inspire people to conserve wildlife and wild places

VALUES

Inclusion
Accountability
Empathy
Fun

Respect
Innovation
Collaboration

Foundational Principles: Culture, Community
Impact, Financial Strength and Stewardship



KEY COMMITMENTS

Care

Enhancing wellbeing and pursuing the highest standards in veterinary care, husbandry, and zoo habitat design.



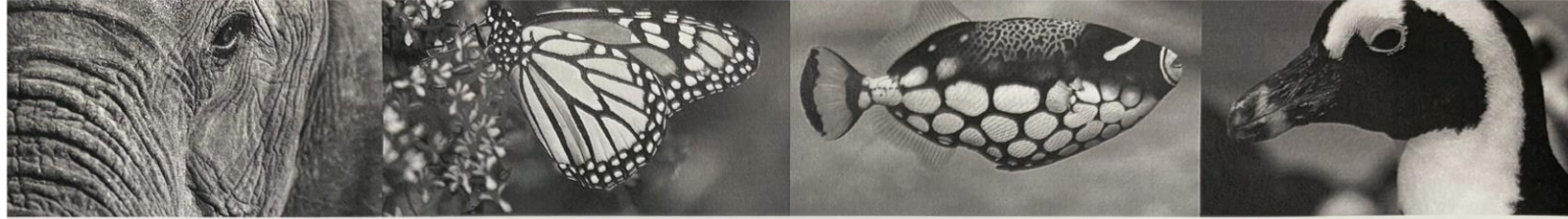
Connect

Immersing people in nature and creating memorable, educational experiences that inspire empathy and environmental action.



Conserve

Saving wildlife and wild places here and across the globe by leading and partnering on conservation projects.



2025

Angela Peterson Excellence in Diversity Award

Top Honors

The following award is given to

Project SEARCH

Milwaukee County Zoo



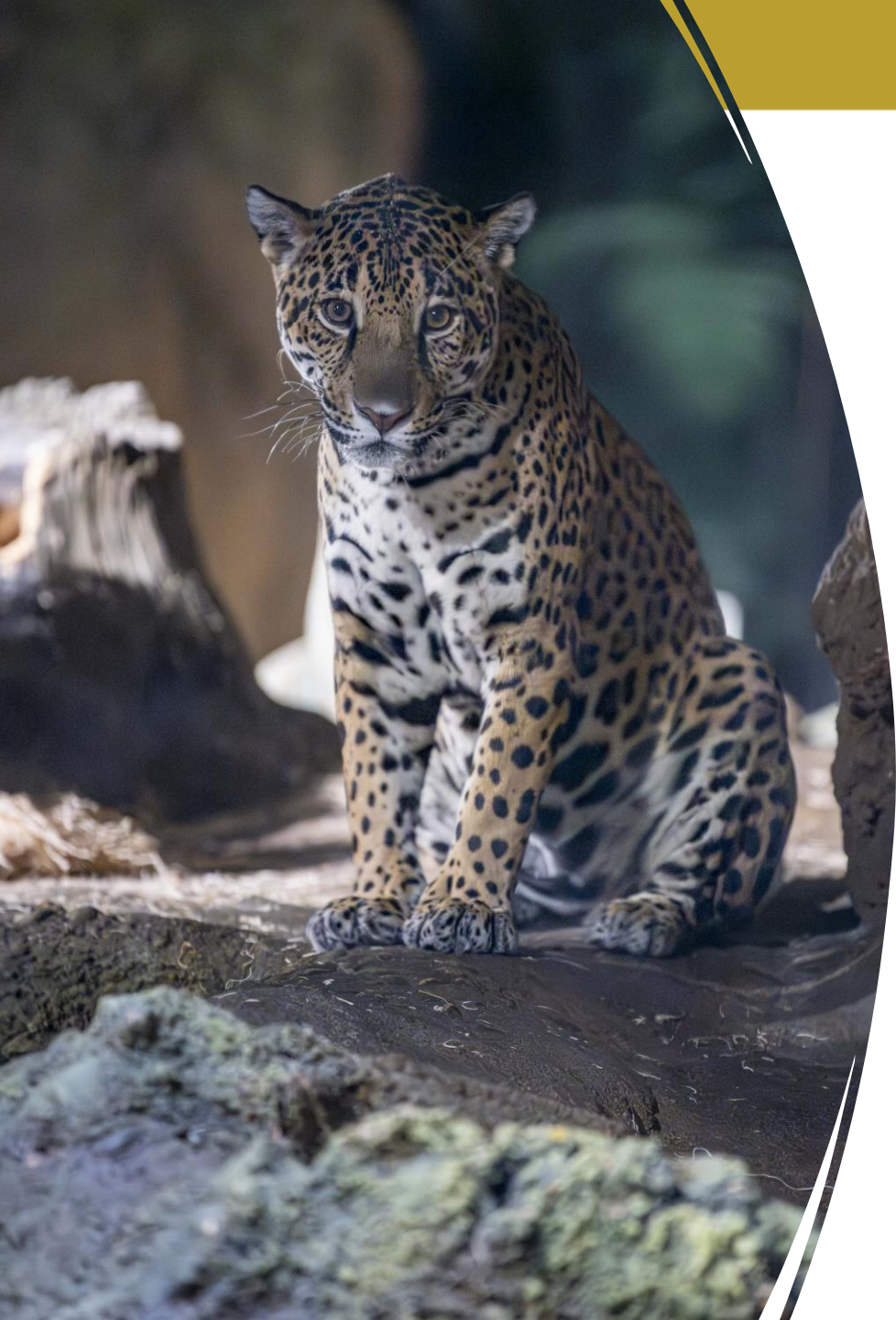
Dan Ashe
President and Chief Executive Officer, AZA

ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS

2025 Successes

Association of Zoos
and Aquariums
Diversity Award





2025 Successes – Continued

- Arrival of Jaguar Filly in January
- First year of animal care interns as paid positions
- Zoo's Veterinary Residency Program was approved by the American College of Zoological Medicine
- Development of a robust employee checklist to enhance the new employee onboarding experience
- Implemented a new preventative maintenance program

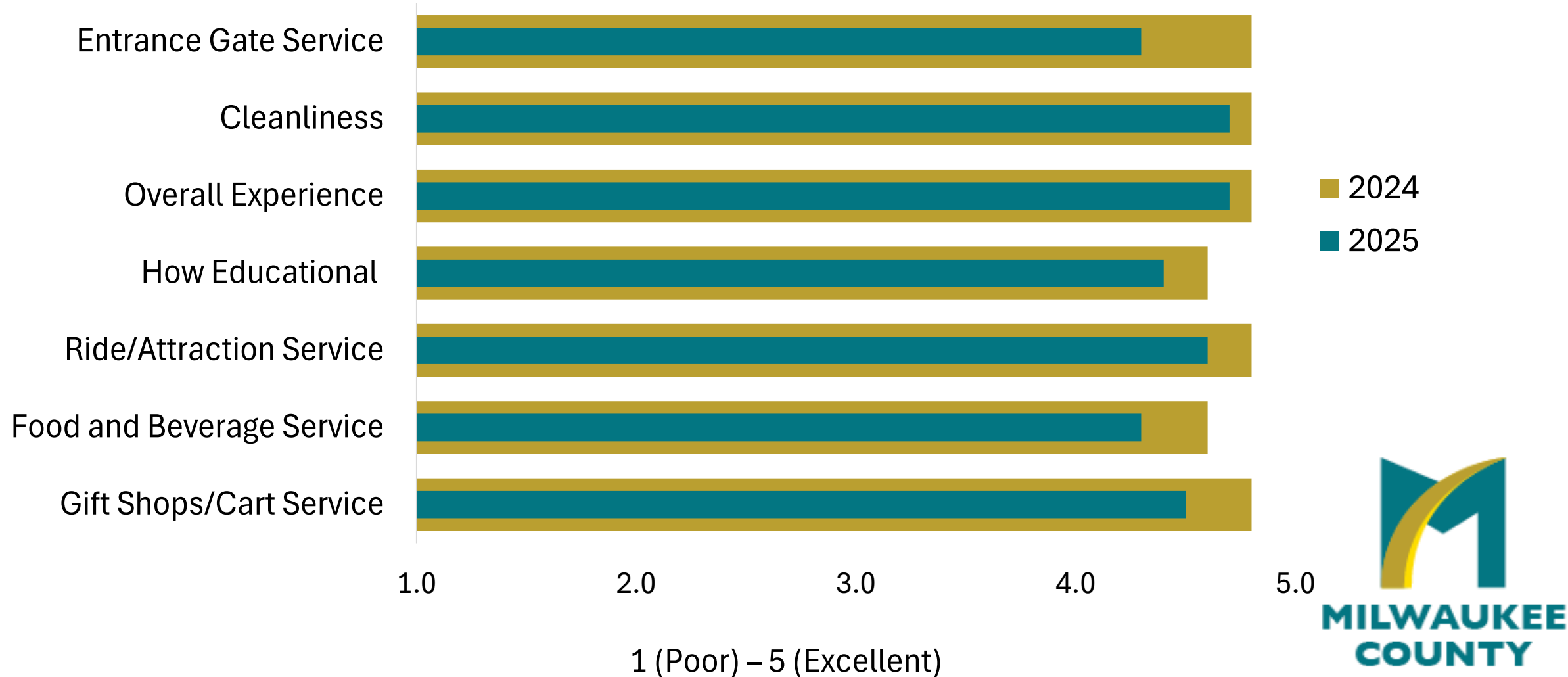
2025 Successes - continued

- Successfully fledging a Humboldt Penguin chick in the breeding season immediately following the move to the newly renovated Penguins of the Pacific habitat

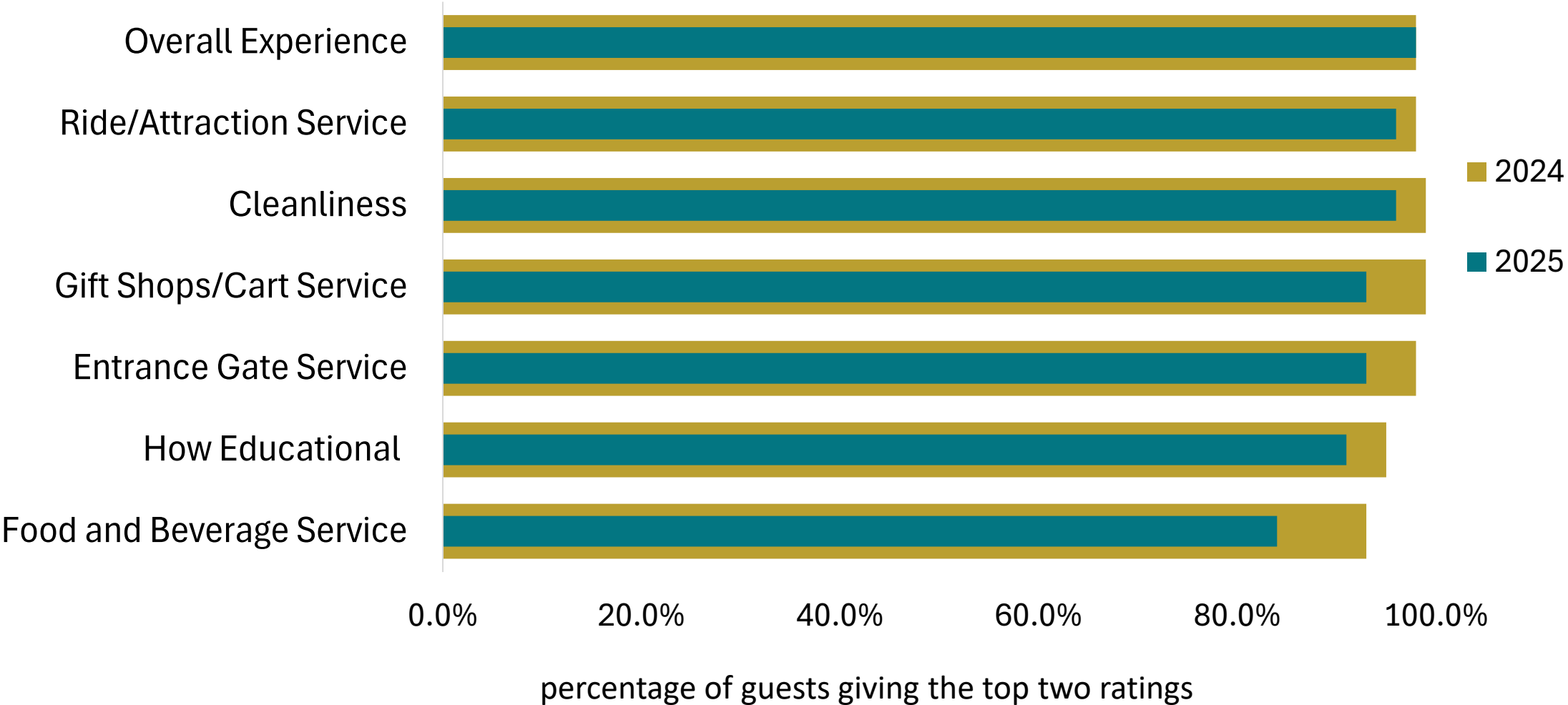


2025 Exit Survey Results

While all were slightly less than those in 2024, the Zoo maintained high average ratings over “4” for each performance metric in 2025.



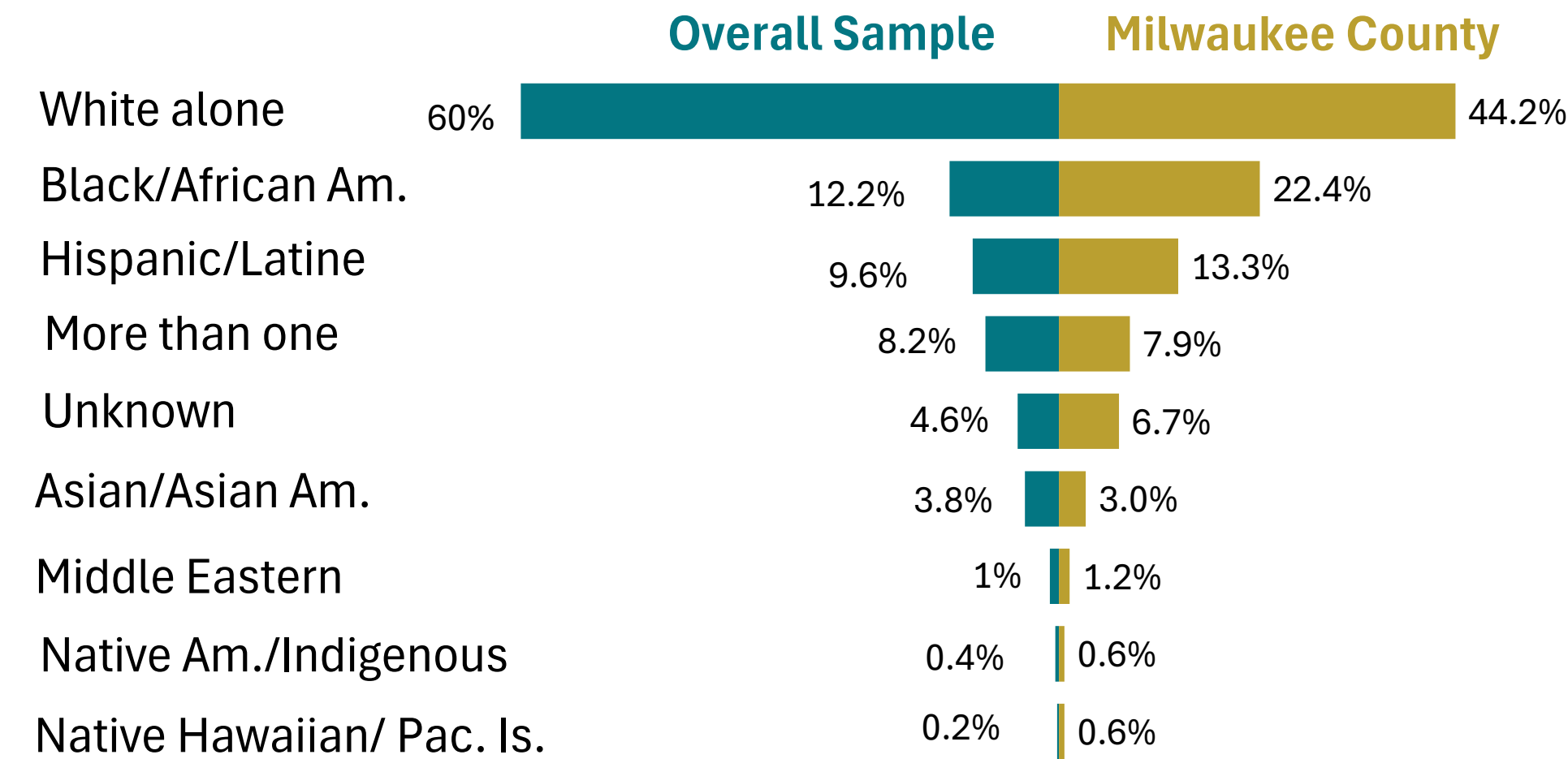
The Zoo’s goal was surpassed for each performance metric in 2025, aside from “food and beverage service”.

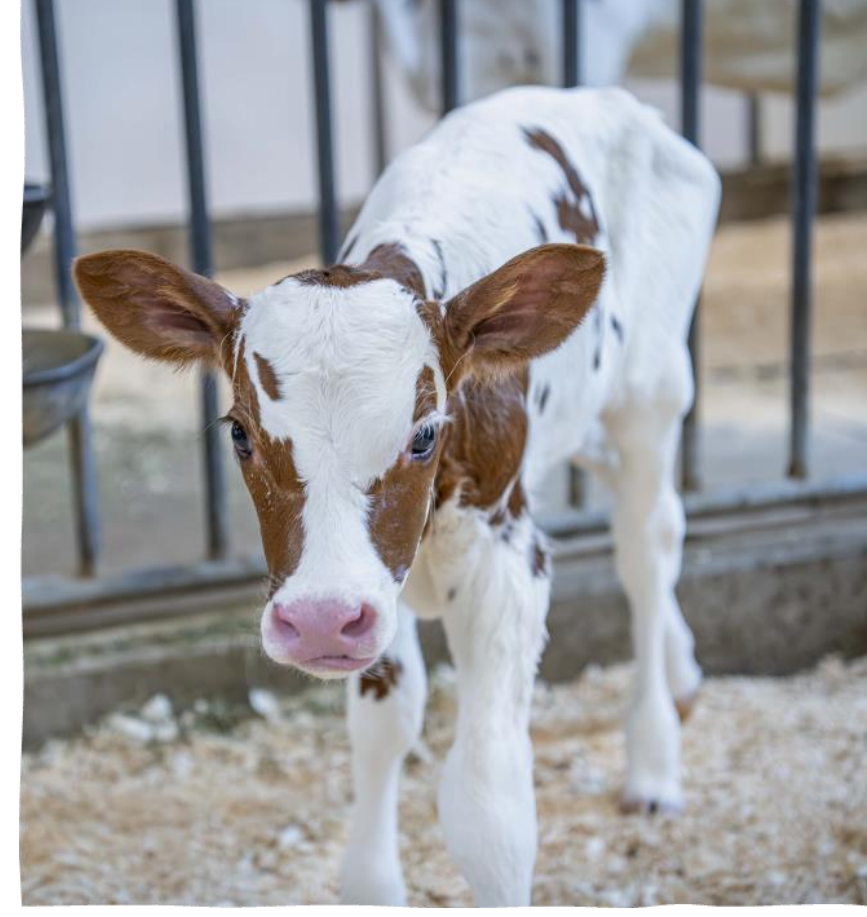


Quality of
animal care
ratings were
high again this
year
& averaged
4.6 out of 5,
with 93%
giving the top
two ratings.



Milwaukee County subsample is more diverse than the **overall** sample.





Animal Births

Listed in order left to right: Bonobo, Japanese Macaque (3), Ayrshire Cow

Not Shown: Bactrian Camel, Prehensile-tailed Porcupine

2025

Hatchings

- Listed from left to Right:
Crested Wood Partridge
Chick (3), Green Aracari
Chick
- Not Shown: Blue-grey
tanager (2), Crocodile bird
(2), Humboldt Penguin (4),
Luzon bleeding-heart dove,
Northern bald (Waldrapp)
Ibis, Northern spider
tortoise (2), Spangled
Cotinga



2025 Community Engagement

Intentional Outreach

- Forest County Potawatomi Visit – Crandon, WI
- Pride Parade – Zoo Float
- WI Indigenous Youth Summit - Crandon Event
- Milwaukee County Take a Child to Work Day Event



Zoo Resource Table at Events

- County Days
- 4th Annual Honoring the Heartbeat Mental Health & Wellness Powwow
- Juneteenth Celebration
- 2026 Budget Listening Session
- MC Sheriff's Office National Night Out
- Harvest Fest (October)



Zoo's Accessibility Impact

\$1.68M Back to the Community in 2024.

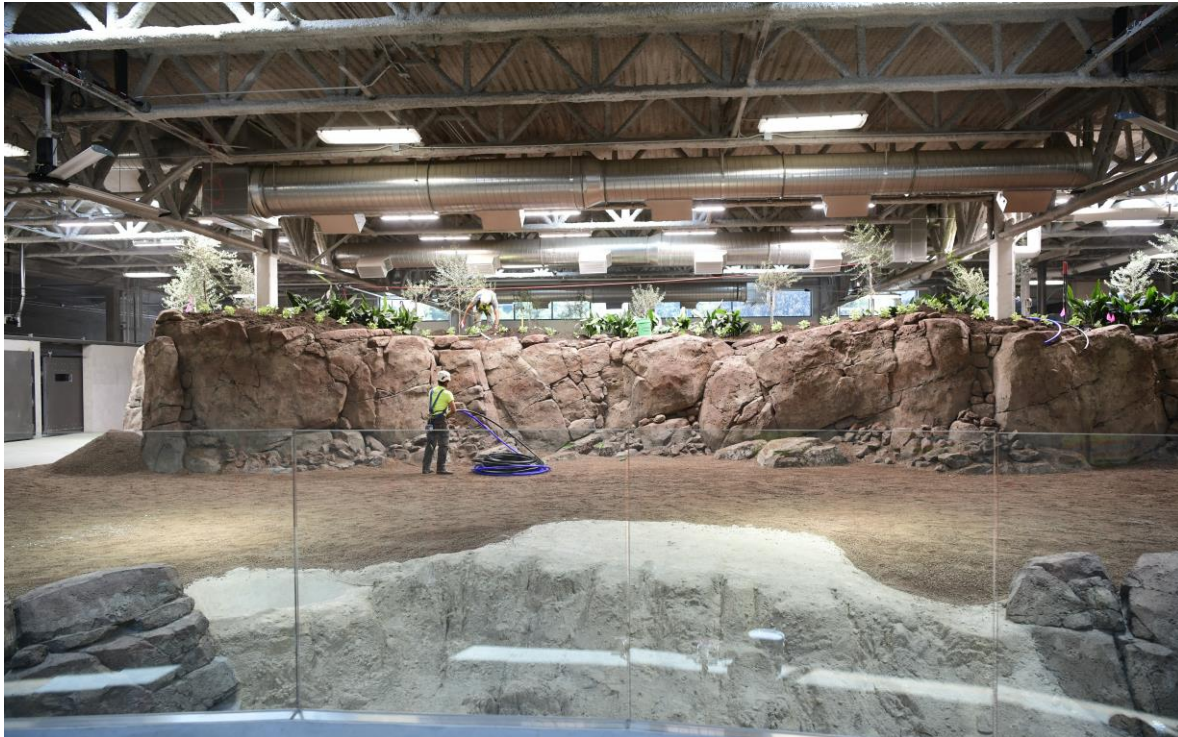


33 Total Access Programs

- 6 Free Days
- Military & Veterans Day
- Senior Celebration
- \$4 on the 4th of July
- Frosty Free Week
- Flex Ticket Pricing
- Mother's Day & Father's Day
- Special Needs Program
- Scouting the Zoo
- Kulture City Certification
- Purple Heart Pass
- MC School Field Trips



Indoor Rhino / Hippo Habitat





RHINOS RETURN

Challenges

- Managing guest expectations during the home stretch of the Rhino construction, with pathways and habitat access changing to accommodate stages of construction.
- Our top complaint is guest wait time for admittance due to admission gate entry times, especially on Free Days, events and popular weekends.
- Poor summer weather conditions, including the impact from the Canadian wildfires
- Consumer spending trends and local competition for entertainment dollars
- Geriatric animal population



Strategic Plan Alignment

Create Intentional Inclusion

- Expand the Zookeeper Seasonal Program
- Marketing to broader, diverse audiences
- 22% T/M contracts to TBEs

Bridge the Gap

- Provide a safe, welcoming environment to all
- Cristo Rey HS Intern Program
- Actively gathers and incorporates feedback from guests & community

Invest in Equity

- Increase revenues to reduce alliance on TL
- Accessibility programs
- \$227.9 million in economic impact, \$75.1 million in earnings; 2,810 jobs

Budget Data

Category	2025 Budget	2026 Budget	Variance
Expenditures	\$22,003,143	\$22,664,169	\$661,026
Revenues	\$21,932,797	\$22,668,006	\$735,209
Tax levy	\$70,346	(\$3,837)	(\$74,183)



Changes in 2026

Revenues

- Attendance is projected to increase by 2%, for a target of 1,302,379 guests.
- Admission revenue increases \$513,864.
- 2026 will feature a special exhibit on Pollinators, highlighting the essential role bees, butterflies and other pollinating species play in sustaining ecosystems and global food supplies.
- School field trip prices are increasing by \$0.50 in all categories; County Wednesday rate increases by \$0.50
- Goup Sales revenue is projected to increase by \$124,786, driven by an expanded rental marketing campaign.
- Adding new public events, generating \$51,000 in new revenue.



2026 Changes Continued

- Sponsorship revenue is projected to increase by \$67,500, driven by new events and a strategic program realignment designed to better match market rates and enhance partner engagement.

Expenditures

- Salaries and wages increase by \$149,689 due to the 1% raise and changes resulting from the December HR Compensation Study changes.
- Salaries and wages increase by \$58,208, reflecting additional hours to expand the Seasonal Zookeeper staffing program.
- Utilities increase by \$56,210
- Savings of \$100,000 are included due to the new Gateway POS that will be operational in January of 2026.
- Animal food increases \$61,500



2026 Changes Continued

- Repair/maintenance expenditures increase \$79,000 to help reduce deferred maintenance projects.
- Fleet Management crosscharge increases \$133,730 from \$654,677 to \$788,407.



2026 Capital Projects

\$175,000 in Design funds to replace the Zoofari Conference Center roof and AC.

- The building generates \$80,000 to \$100,000 in revenues annually
- Houses Rental Facility, Maintenance Shop and staff, SSA warehouse



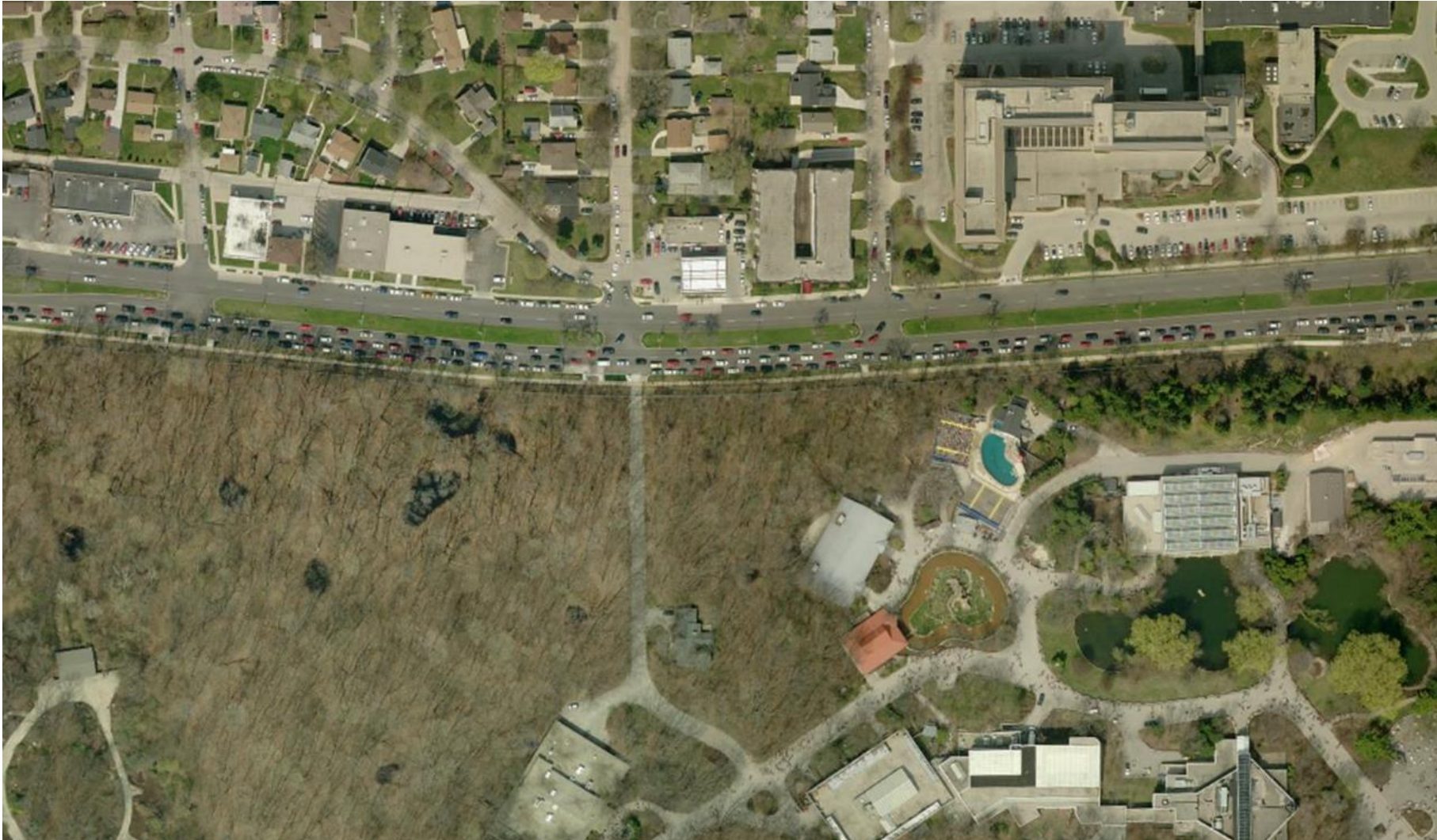
Front Entrance Capital Project



Issue:
Entering
and
Exiting
the Zoo



Front Entrance Project



**Traffic
Congestion:**

Off Ramp on
Hwy 100 to Zoo



Zoo Entrance – Safety Concerns



Zoo Entrance
at Bluemound
Rd & 99th
Street During
October Free
Day

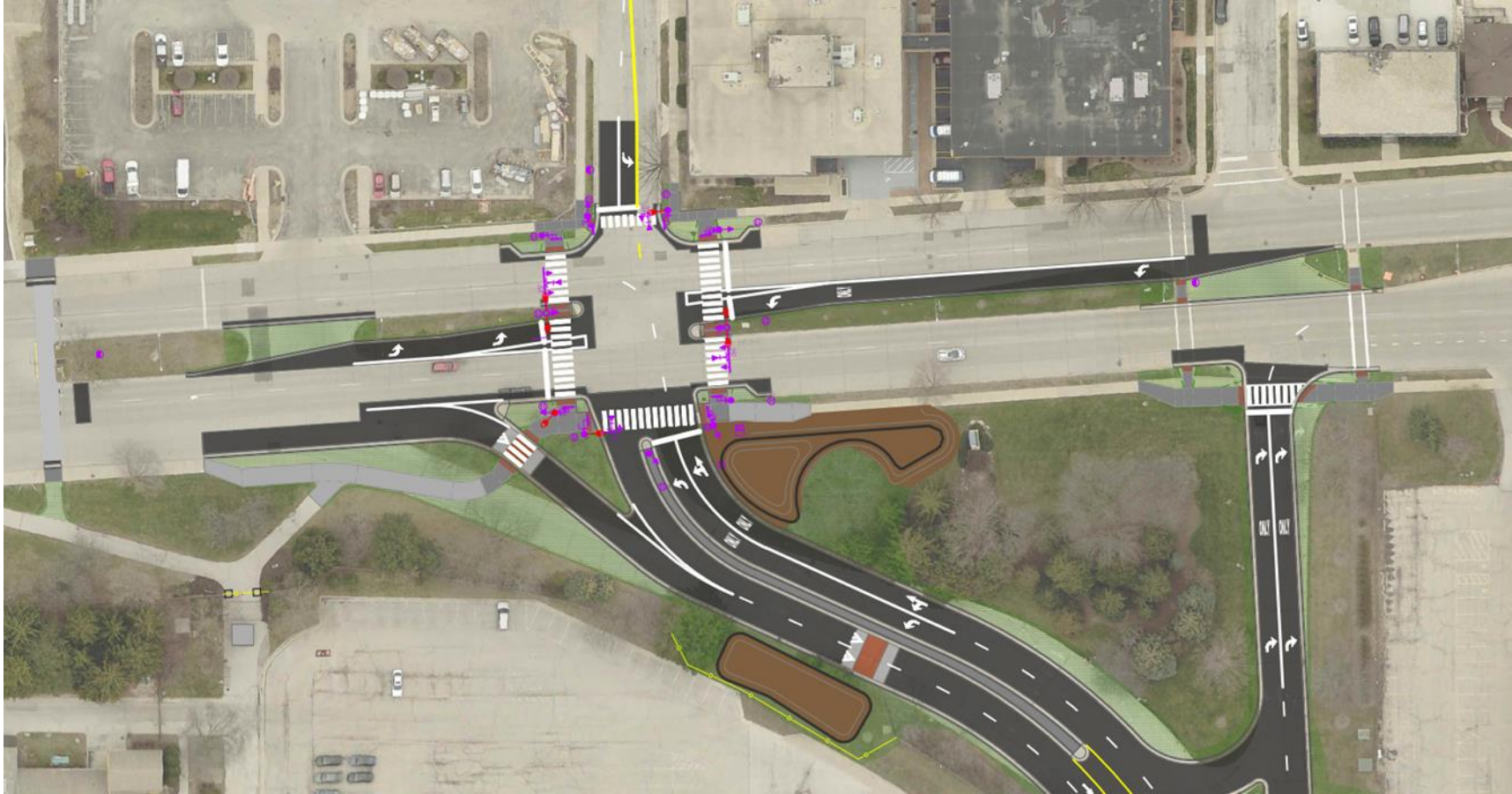


Zoo Exit – Traffic Operations and Safety



Northbound
left two
staged
crossing
exiting the
Zoo

Solution to Traffic Issues



- Signalized intersection at Bluemound Road and 99th Street
- Eliminates challenging northbound lane movement at 98th Street
- Replace the pedestrian hybrid beacon with a familiar signalized crossing

Ticketing Solution





The End

Questions?





**MILWAUKEE
COUNTY**