

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: 5/21/2025

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

From: Guy Smith, Executive Director, Milwaukee County Parks

Subject: Milwaukee County Parks 2024 Annual Report

File Type: Informational Report

This informational report provides a report on how Milwaukee County Parks set and achieved its 2024 goals.

POLICY

This report aligns to Chapter 108: Achieving Racial Equity & Health.

Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	Chapter 108: Achieving Racial Equity & Health
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ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

- 1A: Reflect the full diversity of the County at every level of County government
- 1B: Create and nurture an inclusive culture across County government
- 1C: Increase the number of County contracts awarded to minority and women-owned businesses
- 2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity
- 2B: Break down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered
- 2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions
- 3A: Invest “upstream” to address root causes of health disparities
- 3B: Enhance the County’s fiscal health and sustainability
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities

Alignment to the above strategic goals is articulated in responses to the questions below.

BODY

1. Please submit your Scorecard Report along with this report, to show progress on your Department/Office's top goals in 2024. If you would like to add any additional information about the extent to which you accomplished your goals, please do so here.

Scorecard and Parks' Strategic Plan is attached to this report. In addition to the 5 Key Performance Indicators that are included in the Scorecard, Milwaukee County Parks made significant progress on the following goals in 2024 –

- Identify \$500,000 in cost savings based on smart portfolio management
- Increase tree plantings above existing planned amount by 1,350
- Hire 3 full-time engagement staff
- Leverage \$300,000 annually from philanthropy
- Identify current baseline of diversity among workforce and track progress

2. What key factors *enabled* progress toward accomplishing these goals?

Parks' goal to increase natural areas was supported by grant support to convert agricultural lands to natural areas. Our ability to provide free to use picnic sites in 20 locations was made possible by very healthy revenue generation in other areas such as golf and food and beverage sales which enabled less revenue to be collected from picnic reservations. The great increase in volunteerism was enabled by the hiring of 3 full-time engagement staff and a renewed effort to accurately track volunteers and hours of service that they provide. The County's ARPA allocations to Parks greatly enabled the ability to save operating expenses through smart portfolio management. Projects like the installation of credit card payment stations at boat launches and the replacement of steam boilers reduced the amount of time spent on the operations of these sites. Grant funding through the Milwaukee Parks Foundation has helped Parks achieve its goals of increasing tree plantings and leveraging funds from philanthropy.

3. What key factors *hindered* progress toward accomplishing these goals?

Parks has several goals that are directly tied to the ability of Milwaukee County to fund capital projects, the lack of capacity to fund all priorities that are capital needs is a hindrance to several goals. Priority actions and KPIs within our Strategic Plan will require outside funding and partnerships to supplement County capital funding such as increasing the trail system, improving the condition of basketball courts, creating an accessible playground, and upgrading facilities to be more accessible.

The implementation of the Aquatics Facility Plan is a key priority and one that was elevated to be included on the Scorecard, and yet Parks has not implemented any recommendations of the Plan. That project has faced delays and is currently anticipated to be completed in Q3 2025.

4. If any goals are changing, please list your Department/Office goals for 2025. (Please put "N/A" if your goals will remain the same.)

N/A

FISCAL EFFECT

The report is informational only and there is no fiscal impact.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**PREPARED BY:**

Jim Tarantino, Deputy Director

APPROVED BY:

Guy Smith, Executive Director

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Parks' Strategic Plan

Parks Scorecard

CC:

David Crowley, County Executive

Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office

Sheldon Wasserman, Committee on Parks & Culture Chairperson

Steve Taylor, Committee on Parks & Culture Vice Chairperson

Priscilla Coggs-Jones, Committee on Parks & Culture Member

Jack Eckblad, Committee on Parks & Culture Member

Felesia Martin, Committee on Parks & Culture Member

Juan Miguel Martinez, Committee on Parks & Culture Member

Anne O'Connor, Committee on Parks & Culture 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

Allyson R. Smith, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk

Anthony Rux, Budget & Management Analyst, DAS-PSB

Sandy Saltzstein, Research and Policy Analyst