

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: August 16, 2024

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

From: Guy D. Smith, Executive Director, Milwaukee County Parks

Subject: Tree Planting at the Kinnickinnic River Parkway

File Type: Information Report

REQUEST

This report is for informational purposes, there is no request at this time.

POLICY

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

BACKGROUND

Milwaukee County Parks (MCP) maintains 153 parks and stewards over 15,000 acres of land in Milwaukee County. Approximately 10,000 acres of this land is managed by the department in a natural state that promotes conservation and seeks to preserve these important green spaces for residents of Milwaukee County and Southeastern Wisconsin while maintaining and improving the long-term ecological resilience of the park system.

Expanding the tree canopy within MCP's system is a key priority of the department's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. To further the department's tree planting efforts, MCP is working in partnership with the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) and the non-profit Milwaukee Riverkeeper.

MMSD's Reforestation and Wetland Restoration (RWR) Program seeks to plant six million trees and restore 4,000 acres of wetlands over ten years throughout MMSD's service area in southeastern Wisconsin to strengthen the natural processes that support managing stormwater and reducing the risk of flooding. Mature trees and healthy wetlands are naturally effective resources to manage stormwater and bring additional local benefits of water and air quality improvement, reduction in the urban heat island effect, and habitat restoration. Natural flood management captures and holds stormwater

where it falls, reducing the volume of stormwater in the sewerage system and the amount of pollution discharged to surface waters.

Milwaukee Riverkeeper's (Riverkeeper) mission is to protect, improve, and advocate for water quality, riparian wildlife habitat, and sound land management in the Milwaukee, Menomonee, and Kinnickinnic River watersheds. MCP has significant experience working with Riverkeeper on waterway cleanups, targeted lagoon cleanings, and Area of Concern projects throughout Milwaukee County.

MMSD was awarded a grant from the United States Forest Service (USFS) that provides funding to support reforestation in southeastern Wisconsin. As part of this grant, MMSD is providing funding to implement natural flood management infrastructure for other governmental units, nonprofit organizations, and other property owners through its RWR Program.

Riverkeeper is looking to plant trees on MCP property as part of the RWR program. The first identified site is the Kinnickinnic River Parkway, north of the Kinnickinnic River between Montrose Avenue and W. Sumac Pl. Trees will be planted in an .5-acre area that is currently turf grass and is identified in the attached map. This work will be governed by a memorandum of understanding between MCP, MMSD, and Riverkeeper prior to the commencement of the work. Upon the completion of the work in the third quarter of 2024, Parks will be returning to the County Board with an action item to approve a conservation easement to for the newly planted trees. This easement will be with MMSD and will dedicate this reforested area for a limited term.

By partnering with MMSD and Riverkeeper, MCP will supports the priorities of MCP's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan by promoting the department's sustainability and improving the quality of life for all Milwaukee residents.

Related File No's:	24-440
Associated File No's (Including Transfer Packets):	
Previous Action Date(s):	

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
- 3B: Enhance the County's fiscal health and sustainability

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Jamie Ferschinger, Senior Project Planner, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, JFerschinger@mmsd.com

Cheryl Nenn, Riverkeeper, Milwaukee Riverkeeper, cheryl_nenn@milwaukeekeeper.org

Sarah Long, Reforestation Coordinator, Milwaukee County Parks, sarah.long@milwaukeecountywi.gov

Brian Russart, Natural Areas Supervisor, Milwaukee County Parks,
brian.russart@milwaukeecountywi.gov

PREPARED BY:

Peter Bratt, Director of Operations and Skilled Trades, Milwaukee County Parks

APPROVED BY:

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

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A - Power Point Presentation

Attachment B - Project Map

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
Felesia Martin, Committee on Parks & Culture Member
Juan Miguel Martinez, Committee on Parks & Culture Member
Jack Eckblad, 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