An Overview of Milwaukee County's Senior Center and Wil-O-Ways Facilities

Department of Administrative Services
Department of Health and Human Services

MILWAUKEE COUNTY

Agenda

Overview of the 5 County Owned Senior Center and 2 Wil-O-Ways Facilities

- Facilities Conditions & Needs

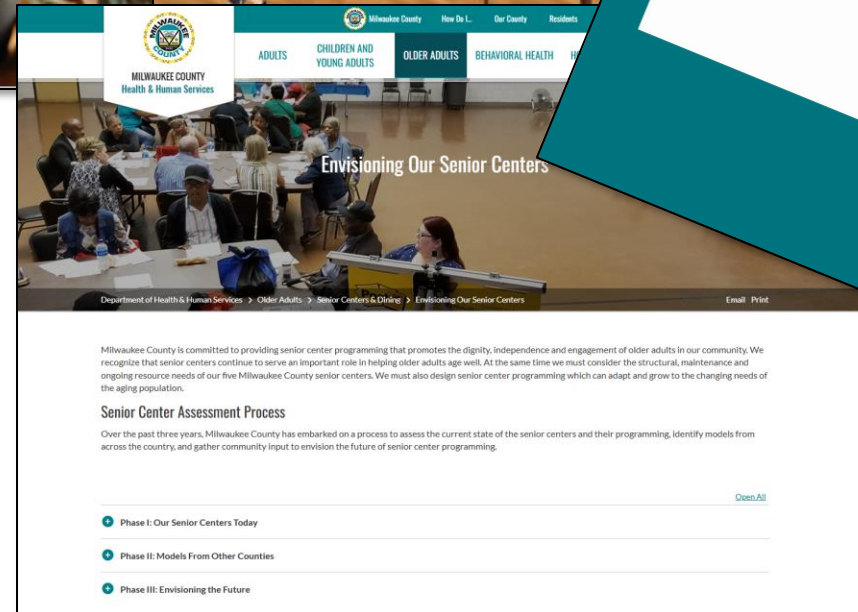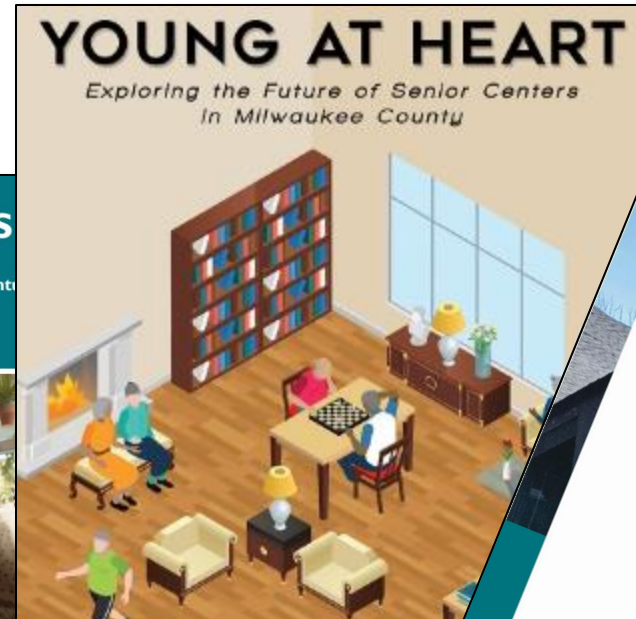- Programming & Operations

Conclusions

Questions

Background

Board Files:
- 25-593
- 25-414
- 24-730
- 19-448
- 14-47

Commission on Aging:
- 24-166
- 23-66
- 21-141
- 19-193
- 18-144
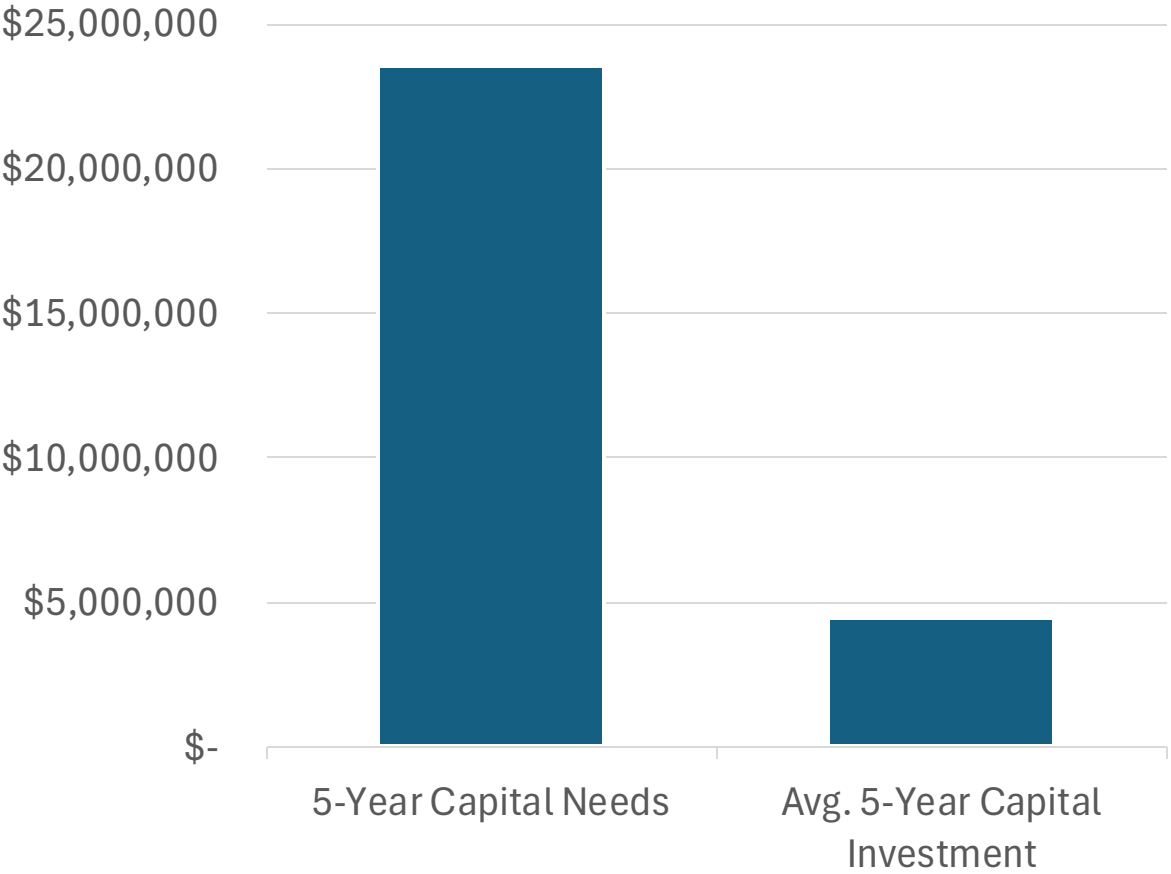
Facility Conditions & Needs

Facility Characteristics

Facility	Size (Square Feet)	Year Constructed
Clinton Rose Senior Center	35,706	1982
Kelly Senior Center + Kelly Nutrition Building	17,010	1956
McGovern Park Senior Center	12,983	1974
Washington Park Senior Center	36,820	1967
Wilson Park Senior Center	35,540	1980
Wil-O-Way Grant	11,400	1979
Wil-O-Way Underwood	10,350	1964

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Capital and Operational Spend & Needs

Facility	Capital Investments 2014-2025	Avg Capital Investment / Year	Avg Operating Spend / Year	5-Year Capital Needs *
Clinton Rose Senior Center^	$5,116,537	$465,140	$156,607	$2,938,058
Kelly Senior Center	$609,967	$55,452	$60,993	$3,022,158
McGovern Senior Center	$643,158	$58,469	$86,373	$3,123,878
Washington Senior Center	$1,525,526	$138,684	$138,386	$5,246,158
Wilson Senior Center	$1,099,819	$99,984	$237,464#	$4,738,508
Wil-O-Way Grant	$355,195	$32,290	$43,934	$1,552,500
Wil-O-Way Underwood	$386,793	$35,163	$68,748	$2,931,500
TOTALS	**$9,736,995**	**$885,181**	**$792,506**	**$23,552,761**

^ Includes one time $4 Million Flexible Facilities grant in capital spend.

*Excluding splash pads and playgrounds.

Wilson numbers increased by operational spend on emergency HVAC repairs in 2025
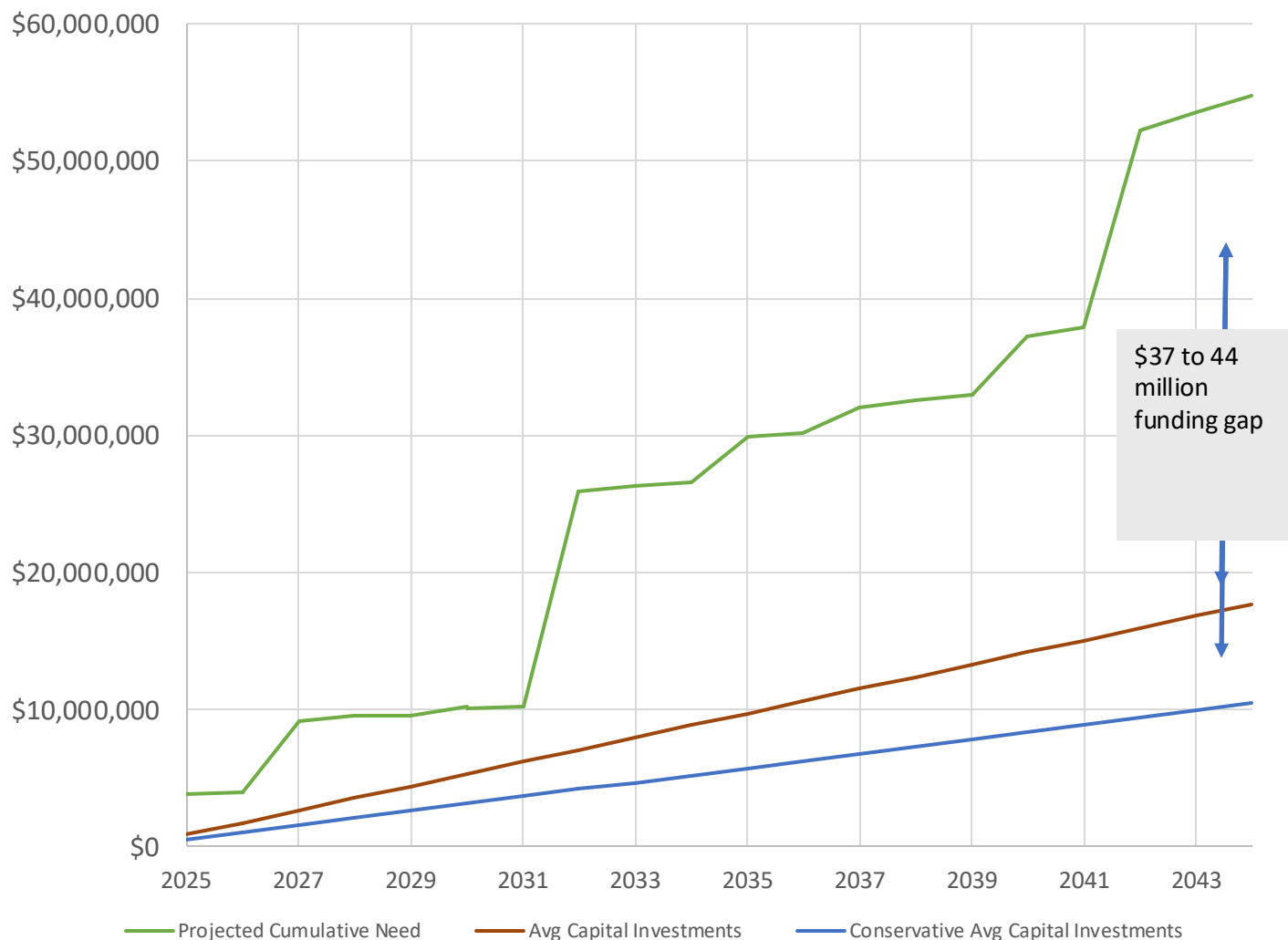
5-Year Needs v. Avg Spend

Wilson Senior Center: Malfunctioning Security Louvers

Chart showing two bars:
- 5-Year Capital Needs: approximately $23,500,000
- Avg. 5-Year Capital Investment: approximately $4,400,000

Y-axis values: $-, $5,000,000, $10,000,000, $15,000,000, $20,000,000, $25,000,000

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Long Term Projected Need & Avg Capital Investment

Wil-O-Way Grant: Rooftop HVAC end-of-life condition

$37 to 44 million funding gap

Chart axis labels:
- $60,000,000
- $50,000,000
- $40,000,000
- $30,000,000
- $20,000,000
- $10,000,000
- $0

X-axis: 2025, 2027, 2029, 2031, 2033, 2035, 2037, 2039, 2041, 2043

Legend: Projected Cumulative Need — Avg Capital Investments — Conservative Avg Capital Investments

Facility Conditions Sampling

WIL-O-WAY UNDERWOOD RECREATION

ROOFING AT END OF LIFE CONDITION

MISSING GUTTER SECTION

ROOFWATER FREEZES ON SIDEWALK

MISSING & INEFECTIVE GUTTERS LEAD TO ICE
DAMING, ROOF DAMAGE, & SLIPPERY WALKWAYS

INACTIVE/OBSOLETE ALARM

FURNACE - END OF USEFUL LIFE

WATER HEATER - END OF USEFUL LIFE

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Facility Conditions Sampling

WIL-O-WAY GRANT RECREATION

DAMAGED GUTTERS

DEFECTIVE ALARM SYSTEM: TYPICAL OF
MCGOVERN, WILSON, KELLY, & WASHINGTON PARK

SPLASHPAD FILTRATION EQUIPMENT
DETERIORATED & NEARING END OF LIFE CYCLE

ROOFING AT END OF LIFE CONDITION

NONFUNCTIONING SECURITY SYSTEM

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Facility Conditions Sampling

WASHINGTON PARK SENIOR CENTER

INOPERABLE HVAC CONTROLS

ROTTED WINDOWS-TYPICAL ON ALL WINDOWS AT WASHINGTON PARK

ROOFING MEMBRANE AT END OF USEFUL LIFE & FREQUENLTY LEAKS

INTERIOR DAMAGE DUE TO FAILED WINDOWS

DISCONNECTED GEARS TO OPERATE/OPEN LOUVERS FOR HVAC

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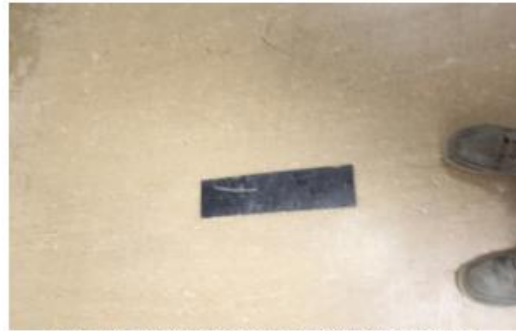
Facility Conditions Sampling

KELLY SENIOR CENTER

KELLY-NUTRITION BLDG
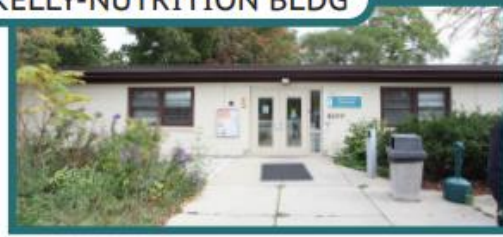
ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS AT END OF USEFUL LIFE

TILE FLOORING FAILING & EXPOSED MASTIC

INEFFICIENT ORIGINAL 1950'S WINDOWS

OUTDATE ELECTRICAL

OUTDATED SECURITY SYSTEM

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Facility Conditions Sampling

WILSON PARK SENIOR CENTER

DETERIORATED SIDING - MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

MISSING INSULATION AT FOUNDATION

DETERIORATED ROOFING & EAVES

WILDLIFE NESTING IN DETERIORATED SIDING

MALFUNCTIONING SECURITY LOUVERS

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Facility Conditions Sampling

MCGOVERN SENIOR CENTER

RUSTING MECHANICAL SYSTEMS-EVIDENCE OF REPEATED FLOODING IN BASEMENT

PUBLIC ACCESS COMPUTERS USED FOR HVAC CONTROLS

OUTDATED SECURITY SYSTEM

FIRE ALARM PANEL WITH TROUBLE CODE SHOWN

DAMAGED AIR EXCHANGING FAN DOESN'T WORK

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Facility Conditions Sampling

CLINTON ROSE SENIOR CENTER

OUTDATED SECURITY SYSTEM

ROOFTOP COOLING TOWERS - NEARING END OF LIFE USE

OUTDATED COMMUNICATION SYSTEM - BEING UPDATED WITH CURRENT ONGOING PROJECTS

MALFUNCTIONING SECURITY LOUVERS

OUTDATED HVAC CONTROLS - BEING UPDATED WITH CURRENT ONGOING PROJECTS

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Programming & Operations

Milwaukee County Senior Centers

- Transferred from Parks to Department on Aging: 1995-2002
- Align Programming with Area Aging on Aging
- Contract for Programming with nonprofit providers:
  Goodwill, Interfaith, and Serving Older Adults of Southeast WI.
  - Recreation & Socialization
  - Fitness & Evidence Based Health Promotion classes
  - Arts, Crafts, Music, Dance, Spirituality, Cultural Celebrations
  - Senior Dining, Nutrition Education, Meals on Wheels
  - Education, Technology, Advocacy, Access to Benefits

Other Activity in Senior Centers

- Senior Stockbox Distribution
- Aurora Mobile Clinic
- Hunger Task Force Mobile Market
- Public Hearings and Forums
- City of Milwaukee Polling Sites
- Emergency Heating/Cooling/Shelter
- Facility Rental in Evenings and Weekends

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Programming Revenue

- Programming primarily funded through County Tax Levy:

Year	Amount Allocated	Present Value of Allocation
2005	1,012,182	**$1,625,757**
2010	$1,347,601	**$1,938,619**
2015	$1,330,847	**$1,761,394**
2020	$936,867	**$1,135,519**
2025	$1,225,000* (1x $200,000)	Also includes $185,000 OAA funding

- Revenue generated by Program Vendor:

Facility Rental	$ 85,320
Grants, Gifts, and Contributions	$684,900
Sales & Program Revenue	$ 80,280
TOTAL	**$850,500**

Programming Value

- Senior Centers serve 4800+ older adult residents with 75,000+ hours of specific programming & 125,000+ meals annually

- Promote Health & Longevity
  - Socialization & Engagement
  - Mental Acuity
  - Nutritious Meals
  - Physical Fitness, Exercise, and Evidence-based Health classes
  - Volunteerism, Friendship, & Purpose

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Programming Value

- Addresses Social Isolation & Loneliness
  - Loneliness is an epidemic (US Surgeon General)
  - No barriers to participation
- Increases Equity & Democratization
  - Serves older adults who don't have access to high-cost senior living facilities and athletic clubs
  - Engages residents in civic conversation across social spectrum
  - Provides a public forum for the common good

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Commission on Aging Planning

- 2017: Comprehensive Facility & Programming Studies (baseline)
- 2018: Review of Programming in other area senior centers
- 2019: "Young at Heart" Report by Wisconsin Policy Forum
  - Reviewed senior centers in five similar counties
  - Posed questions about the value of maintaining senior centers in MKE
- 2020: "Envisioning the Future of Senior Centers" report
  - Public assessment of value, access, programming, and model of senior centers in Milwaukee County w/500+ responses
- 2023: "MKE HUBS" report
  - Answered questions posed by WI Policy Forum report
  - Affirmed value of maintaining senior center programming
  - Recommended changes to facility model & delivery of programs

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- **Programming, Camps & Events at Wil-O-Way**
- **OPD + Easterseals Partnership** Fostering independence, socialization & fun for all abilities
- **Seasonal Recreation**: Bowling, ceramics, cooking, outings, dances
- **Summer Camps & Respite**: Outdoor adventures, goal-setting, inclusive group sessions
- **Special Events**: Holiday dances, talent shows, family gatherings with adaptive supports
- **Tap the Potential**: Skill-building, community integration, volunteer & social opportunities
- **Populations Served**
- Youth & Teens (3–18): Camps, after-school recreation
- Young Adults (15–25): Life skills, independence, vocational readiness
- Adults (18+): Recreation, employment, community engagement
- Older Adults (40+): Wellness, connection, continued activity
- Support also for mental health, AODA, workforce development
- **Impact**
- Expands inclusive recreation across ages
- Provides caregiver respite
- Supports youth transitions
- Builds community-based programs reflecting participant needs
- **Together, OPD & Easterseals celebrate all abilities and remove barriers.**

- **Key Program Features**
- Daily activities: life skills, arts, music, recreation
- Community outings: parks, libraries, cultural sites
- Health & wellness: movement, nutrition education
- Individualized service plans for participant goals
- Transportation coordination available
- **Population Served**
- Adults (18+) with developmental disabilities, autism, cognitive impairments
- Supportive staff-to-client ratio
- Focus on independence, friendships, daily living skills, and quality of life
- **Program Impact**
  - Vibrant day program fostering self-esteem, community engagement, and inclusion

- **Key Features**
- Social & recreational: music, art, games, themed events
- Educational enrichment: literacy, current events, skill-building workshops
- Volunteer & community engagement opportunities
- Access trips: museums, YMCA, Milwaukee Public Museum, and more
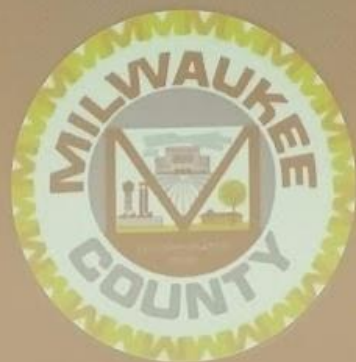- Person-centered planning aligned with individual goals
- **Population Served**
- Adults (18+) with developmental & intellectual disabilities
- Inclusive of physical limitations & dual diagnoses
- Focus on community inclusion, personal growth, and functional skills
- **Shared Impact**
- Reflects Milwaukee County's commitment to inclusive, community-based services

- **Wil-O-Way Facility Rentals**
- **Locations**
- Grant Park – South Milwaukee
- Underwood Creek Parkway – Wauwatosa
- **About** Accessible community spaces for individuals, families, and organizations. Designed for inclusive events with kitchens, tables, chairs, and accessible restrooms.
- **Events Hosted**
- **Private Celebrations**: birthdays, showers, graduations, retirements, reunions
- **Community & Nonprofit**: support groups, advocacy events, inclusive dances, seasonal celebrations (with partners like Easterseals & Goodwill)
- **Workshops & Trainings**: staff development, caregiver sessions, educational seminars (AV-ready spaces)
- **Recreational Programs**: adaptive fitness, arts & crafts, social clubs
- **Scheduling**

Conclusions

Take Aways

- Senior Centers and Wil-O-Ways continue to provide **valued opportunities for connection, health, learning, and inclusion** for older adults and persons with disabilities.

- All 7 **facilities** have reached or are approaching **end of initial planned life**.

- Current **capital and operational funding averages are insufficient** to maintain the existing facilities and programming.

- Programming, operations and maintenance needs are **non-mandated services that rely almost entirely on tax-levy**, leaving no flexibility for inflation, changes, or unexpected costs.

- Several **reports and community discussions** have been completed to help guide planning efforts.

- The **current fiscal path is unsustainable**.

Questions?