

# **Exhibit O**

# **Environmental**

# **Assessment**

# SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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June 12, 2014

Mr. John Dargle, Jr., Director  
Milwaukee County Parks  
9480 Watertown Plank Road  
Wauwatosa, WI 53226-3560

RE: SEWRPC No. CA-410-325

Dear Mr. Dargle:

This is to acknowledge receipt of, and to respond to, your letter of June 9, 2014, in which you requested the Commission staff to evaluate the environmental and recreational significance of the potential disposition of the O'Donnell Park parcel located on Lincoln Memorial Drive north of East Michigan Street, in the City of Milwaukee.

Pursuant to your request, the Commission staff has reviewed this matter and offers the following comments for your consideration insofar as the environmental and recreational significance of the subject matter is concerned:

1. The boundaries of the O'Donnell Park property under consideration are shown on an enclosed Commission 2010 orthophotograph. The site encompasses approximately 7 acres.
2. The subject parcel does not contain primary or secondary environmental corridor or isolated natural resource area, floodlands, or any other natural resource feature.
3. The park contains a number of features, including a rentable meeting room (Miller Brewing Company Pavilion); Betty Brinn Children's Museum; green space for passive recreation use; and underground public parking. The parking facility provides parking for visitors of the facilities listed above, and also for nearby major attractions such as the Art Museum, Veterans Park, and Summerfest, and also for downtown Milwaukee. A segment of the Oak Leaf Trail is located adjacent to the eastern boundary of O'Donnell Park.

The following comments are offered for consideration as to the relationship of the potential disposition to the adopted framework of regional/County plans:

1. The adopted regional and County park and open space plans identify O'Donnell Park as part of a major park denoted in the plans as Lake Michigan North. Major parks are defined as large, publicly owned outdoor recreation sites which provide opportunities for resource-oriented activities and which are generally 100 acres or more in size. The Lake Michigan North major park consists of a cluster of smaller parks—Back Bay, Bradford Beach, Juneau Park, Lake Park, O'Donnell Park, McKinley Park, and Veterans Park—which essentially create a larger park area along the Lake Michigan shoreline.

2. The aforementioned plans recommend that Milwaukee County continue to maintain and improve this major park area, always keeping in mind the functions served by the individual component sites of the park.
3. The Long Range Lakefront Committee Plan, adopted by the County in 2011, raises the potential for redevelopment of O'Donnell Park, including for other than park uses. The plan recommends that any O'Donnell Park redevelopment should preserve the lake and museum vistas, and parkland and green space. The plan acknowledges that potential redevelopment may require relocation of the Betty Brinn Children's Museum. The plan also notes the potential for redevelopment to provide a more gradual grade change from the Milwaukee downtown to the lakefront.

Given the foregoing, the Commission staff would recommend that, from both the environmental and recreational perspectives, any disposition of O'Donnell Park include a mechanism that under new ownership the goals of the Lakefront plan can be implemented, including:

1. Maintain or enhance the existing Lake Michigan and museum vistas from O'Donnell Park.
2. Maintain or enhance the existing parkland and related green space within O'Donnell Park until redevelopment occurs consistent with the Lakefront plan.
3. Honor the existing lease agreements for the Betty Brinn Children's Museum in the Park or, at the Museum's discretion, reach an appropriate agreement to relocate the Museum.

In addition, the parking structure at O'Donnell Park currently provides parking for nearby museums and for lakefront parks and events. Consideration should be given to how their parking needs would continue to be met.

We trust that the foregoing findings and comments will be helpful to Milwaukee County as the potential disposition of O'Donnell Park is considered. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,



Kenneth R. Yunker, P.E.  
Executive Director

KRY/DAS/dad  
#218373-O'Donnell Park Review

Enclosure

