

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: August 12, 2022

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

From: Guy Smith, Executive Director Milwaukee County Parks

Subject: Distribution of Parks Capital Projects

File Type: Informational Report

REQUEST

After the July 19, 2022 meeting of the Committee on Parks and Culture it was requested that the Parks Department provide a report on the geographic distribution of investment throughout Milwaukee County.

POLICY

Wisconsin State Statutes:	
Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	Ch. 108 – Achieving Racial Equity and Health
Specific Adopted Budget:	
Specific Adopted Budget Amendment:	
Specific Adopted Capital Project:	

BACKGROUND

Related File No's:	22-384, 22-780
Associated File No's (Including Transfer Packets):	
Previous Action Date(s):	

Milwaukee County Parks owns, operates, and maintains over 150 parks and dozens of parkways, trails, and recreational amenities in 18 of the 19 municipalities and in each of the 18 Supervisory Districts that comprise Milwaukee County. There are many ways of quantifying the geographic distribution of County Parks amenities, one way is to calculate the total acreage of parks sites in each County Supervisor District which is included in the table below.

District Number	Total Parks Acreage within District	County Parks and Parkways within District
1	325.5	6
2	264.8	14
3	80.6	18
4	209.3	11
5	138.8	7
6	207.1	12
7	126.0	8
8	200.1	10
9	543.7	11
10	100.0	5
11	230.8	9
12	102.9	4
13	108.7	11
14	70.7	6
15	166.8	10
16	186.5	8
17	622.8	12
18	311.4	11

The Parks system is made up of small neighborhood parks, medium sized community parks, large regional parks, expansive natural areas, and parkways of various sizes. Neighborhood parks as small as Gilman Triangle (0.3 acres, District 3) and land within the Root River Parkway corridor (11,600 acres, Districts 9, 11, 16, 17) are all included in the chart above. Each park has varying investment needs, buildings and built assets require the most frequent investment of time and maintenance dollars and some parks have no buildings and would therefore have less investment.

Milwaukee County Parks invests in the maintenance and operation of the parks system through various means that are tracked independently and to varying degrees. One form of investment is the daily and ongoing maintenance provided directly by Parks staff. Some of this maintenance is tracked through the Parks' work order management software CityWorks. If a maintenance activity was not generated by a work order through CityWorks then it is not tracked and the level of investment cannot be estimated. A proxy for the level of maintenance provided to each park is the labor associated with operating it, to that end the Parks Department spreads staffing levels across the system equally so that there is a consistent level of maintenance and oversight for each park. Parks operations are managed by units, each of 7-8 parks with 4 full time staff and about one dozen seasonal park workers.

Another means of tracking investment is through the maintenance budget that the Parks Department uses throughout the year to address minor and major facility repairs. The budget for maintenance is around \$1,000,000 per year and every dollar of it is spent on needs in every park throughout the system. The first order of prioritization for major

maintenance investment is public health and safety – whether a maintenance need is required because it addresses an issue that poses an imminent threat or danger to the public. Urgent maintenance needs emerge consistently throughout the parks system and are not tied to any specific district or municipality. Addressing these safety concerns tends to consume the entire annual major maintenance budget leaving no resources for additional investment in facilities for preventive maintenance. Attached to this report is a summary of the spending of major maintenance dollars from 2020 and 2021 to show a snapshot of investment in facility repairs.

The third type of investment that can be tracked in the parks system is the annual capital improvement budget for the Department. In File #22-780 presented to the Committee on Parks and Culture in July 2022, Parks presented the requested capital improvement budget for 2023 that is 43 projects totaling over \$45 million in expense. That same report notes that “The available 2023 bond financing is estimated at \$45.8 million, and the available cash financing is estimated at \$11.4 million” for all County capital projects. A lack of resources creates the need to prioritize capital projects and Milwaukee County Parks uses a Park Equity Index to inform the ranking of these projects. An informational report was provided earlier this year to describe the data that goes into the Park Equity Index and how it can be used (File #22-384). The process of ranking of capital projects also considers a range of other factors such as the physical condition of the assets requiring repair, age of the assets, levels of service within the parks system, and other considerations. Attached to this file are two maps, one indicated where current approved Parks capital projects are located and another with the 2023 requested capital projects by current Supervisory District. Given the redistricting of Supervisory Districts that recently occurred it would be challenging to compare capital investments by district to an era before the district boundaries changed.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Describe how the item aligns to the objectives in the [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 - Milwaukee County declares that it will, at a minimum, use racial equity tools to evaluate the impact of decisions on black and brown communities for the following enterprise-wide areas - The budget, Processes, policies, and procedures”
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities

FISCAL EFFECT

None

TERMS

None

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

None

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James Tarantino, Deputy Director Milwaukee County Parks

APPROVED BY:

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

ATTACHMENTS:

Current Parks Capital Project Map
Requested Parks Capital Project Map
Major Maintenance Spending 2020/2021

CC:

David Crowley, County Executive
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
Sheldon Wasserman, Supervisor District 3, PEEC Chair
Steven Shea, Supervisor District 8, PEEC Vice Chair
Felicia Martin, Supervisor District 7, PEEC Member
Juan Miguel Martinez, Supervisor District 12, PEEC Member
Steve Taylor, Supervisor District 17, PEEC Member
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Mgr, Office of the County Clerk
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