

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: From the Executive Director of Milwaukee of County Parks, requesting authorization to commit capital funding by 2025 to improvements to the Washington Park 40th Street Parking Lot Project as part of the Development Agreement with Urban Ecology Center

File Type: Action Report

REQUEST

The Executive Director of Milwaukee County Parks is requesting authority to commit \$1,000,000 in capital funding by 2025 to the Washington Park 40th Street Parking Lot Project as part of the larger project with Urban Ecology Center to build a new Boathouse in Washington Park.

POLICY

Any single contract, or group of contracts between the same parties which generally relate to the same transaction, with a value or aggregate value of more than \$300,000, to which a county is a party, and which satisfies any other statutory requirements, may take effect only if it is approved by a vote of the board.

Wisconsin State Statutes:	59.52(31)(c)
Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	
Specific Adopted Budget:	
Specific Adopted Budget Amendment:	
Specific Adopted Capital Project:	

BACKGROUND

The Urban Ecology Center (UEC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit formed in 1991 whose mission is to foster ecological understanding as inspiration for change, neighborhood by neighborhood, by providing outdoor science education; by protecting and using public natural areas; by preserving these areas and making them safe, accessible, and vibrant; by promoting community through offering resources that support learning, volunteerism, stewardship, recreation, and camaraderie; and by practicing and modelling environmentally responsible behaviors.

UEC has leased the Washington Park Boathouse from Milwaukee County since 2007

(new lease in 2013, File No. 13-841) and has developed and operated educational, recreational, land stewardship, and community-serving programs in the park. The Washington Park branch of UEC focuses on the neighborhood on the north and east of the park which is plagued by high crime rates, low employment, poor graduation rates, and other impacts of poverty. UEC seeks to work in urban neighborhoods such as Milwaukee’s Washington Park that have been underserved by environmental educational programming.

Milwaukee County Parks provided an informational report to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors in the May 2018 cycle that described UEC’s proposal to purchase and renovate the Boathouse (File No. 18-318). In the July 2018 cycle, Milwaukee County Parks provided an action item to the County Board to pursue an Option to Purchase and Lease Agreement with UEC and at that time the County Board preliminarily approved the Term Sheet (File No. 18-495), provided that Milwaukee County Parks bring the final Option to Purchase and Lease Agreement back to the County Board for approval. In the March 2019 cycle, Milwaukee County Parks presented the Option to Purchase and Lease Agreement File No. 19-227, which was approved by the County Board and County Executive.

As part of File No. 19-227, the Memorandum of Understanding stated that the Parties understood that Milwaukee County could not commit to funding at that time. UEC has since been successful in its fundraising and is approaching 30% plans in its design phase and hoping to start construction of the Boathouse improvements in 2023. The parking lot that serves the park and the Boathouse is in severe disrepair and is listed on Milwaukee County Parks’ Five-Year Capital Request Budget. Milwaukee County Parks wishes to support the project by committing \$1,000,000 by 2025 in capital funding for the construction of the parking lot, access road, and improved lighting leading to the new building. The Option to Purchase Agreement authorizes Parks to enter into a Development Agreement for the new Boathouse and capital improvements. This commitment by Milwaukee County will become part of the Development Agreement for the project with UEC. UEC is providing \$115,000 to provide the design for these improvements. Both parties agree that if the improvement are more than \$1,000,000, they will work together to identify additional funding sources to complete the project.

Related File No’s:	13-841 , 18-318 , 18-495 , 19-227
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](#):

2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity

2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions

3A: Invest “upstream” to address root causes of health disparities

3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities

Urban Ecology Center’s mission is to connect people in cities to nature and each other, which supports Milwaukee County Parks mission to steward a thriving park system that positively impacts every park visitor. By partnering with UEC and providing a welcoming and safe parking lot and pathway to the UEC center in Washington Park we are positively impacting the community and fostering their connection with nature, which also leads to health equity.

FISCAL EFFECT

This will commit \$1,000,000 in capital funding in the 2024 or 2025 capital budget.

TERMS

One-million-dollar (\$1,000,000) commitment to the Washington Park 40th Street Parking Lot Project by 2025.


VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Ken Leinbach, Executive Director Urban Ecology Center,
kleinbach@urbanecologycenter.org

PREPARED BY:

Erica Goblet, Contracts Manager, Milwaukee County Parks

APPROVED BY:

Guy Smith, Executive Director Milwaukee County Parks 

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution

Fiscal Note

Aerial View

Photos

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

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
Kelsey Evans, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk
Ciara Miller, Research & Policy Analyst, Office of the Comptroller
Anthony Rux, Budget & Management Analyst, DAS-PSB