

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: November 12, 2021

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

From: Guy Smith, Executive Director, Milwaukee County Parks

Subject: From the Executive Director of Milwaukee County Parks, requesting authorization to apply and accept WisDOT Transportation Alternatives Program grants for a Trails Network Plan Update and Realignment of Flooded Oak Leaf Trail – Root River Line.

File Type: Action Report

REQUEST

Milwaukee County Parks is requesting approval to submit and accept (if awarded), Wisconsin Department of Transportation - Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grants for a Trails Network Plan Update and Realignment of Flooded Oak Leaf Trail Root River Line (from Morgan to Howard).

BACKGROUND

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a legislative program that was authorized in Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (or "FAST Act"), the federal transportation act that was signed into law on December 4, 2015. All TAP projects must support walking and/or biking for transportation and require sponsors to pay at least 20% of approved projects costs. Paved multiuse trail projects and plans are two of the most common application types. TAP grants are very competitive and projects must commence within four years of the award date. TAP Applications for the 2022-2026 Program Cycle are due Friday, January 28, 2022. Milwaukee County Parks is planning to submit for two projects for funding consideration:

1. Trails Network Plan Update
2. Realignment of Flooded Oak Leaf Trail Root River Line (Morgan to Howard).

Project	Total Cost (100%)	Federal Share (80%)	Local Share (20%)
Trails Network Plan Update	\$150,000	\$120,000	\$30,000
Realignment of Flooded Oak Leaf Trail Root River Line	\$637,966	\$510,373	\$127,593

The current Milwaukee County Trails Network Plan is from 2009. Of the 19 recommended multiuse trail segments, 11 have been constructed or have funding secured as of the date of this report. A plan update is timely and will allow community

input to inform the development of strategic recommendations for potential Oak Leaf Trail (OLT) expansion as well as to add recommendations for hiking, mountain biking, cross country skiing, and water trails to accommodate growing user populations. Equity and multichannel broad public input will be included in the planning process, as well as an informational update to the County Board. Results from the in-process Northwest Trail Connections Plan will be incorporated into the plan as well.

The section of the Oak Leaf Trail requesting realignment lies between Morgan and Howard. This section was built decades ago in an area that now experiences constant flooding caused by changing weather and nearby development. The trail is now degraded, cracked and sunken from sustained periods of standing water. The continual ponding is 10 feet wide, 10-50 feet long, and up to 12 inches deep, effectively closing the trail most days of the year. Many residents and trails users have contacted Milwaukee County Parks about the flooding, even relaying reports of users taking off their shoes and socks to wade through the water as the area is marshy with no dry option available. Realigning the OLT between Morgan and Howard would raise and rebuild approximately 1/2 of a mile of trail and address the flooding.

Parks investigated fixing the trail in-house, but the project requires 2,300 feet of new trail and significant earth work that is beyond the scope of routine maintenance. Restoring this portion of the OLT is pressing, this segment connects other key portions of the larger trail network. The current detour is a narrow road that sustains heavy truck use due to an adjacent landfill, discouraging its use.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

These projects will allow Milwaukee County to provide a trail system that supports health equity by applying a racial equity lens to trail development and use 80% grant funding to enhance fiscal health (2A, 2C, 3B).

FISCAL EFFECT

Twenty percent of project costs, estimated to not exceed \$157,593, need to be locally funded to leverage up to \$630,373 in federal investment.

TERMS

Applications are due January 28th, 2022. TAP projects are capped. A TAP project may not be substituted for another project. TAP projects must commence within four years of the award date.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Sarah Toomsen, Manager of Planning & Development, Milwaukee County Parks
Jeremy Lucas, Director of Administration & Planning, Milwaukee County Parks

PREPARED BY:

Jessica Wineberg, Trails Coordinator, Milwaukee County Parks

APPROVED BY:

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

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution

Fiscal Note

cc: David Crowley, County Executive
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
Sheldon Wasserman, Parks, Energy & Environment Chair, Supervisor District 3
Steven Shea, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Vice-Chair, Supervisor District 8
Felesia Martin, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 7
Sylvia Ortiz-Velez, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 12
Liz Sumner, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 1
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
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
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk
Kelsey Evans, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk
Emily Peterson, Research & Policy Analyst, Office of the Comptroller
Anthony Rux, Budget & Management Analyst, DAS-PSB