



# MILWAUKEE COUNTY PARKS AQUATICS STUDY 2025





# STUDY GOALS

1. Assess existing system
2. Public feedback
3. Evaluate future state options
4. Make recommendations for 20-year planning horizon





# Milwaukee County's Aquatic Facilities

- (2) indoor deep-well pools,
- (3) outdoor aquatic parks,
- (8) outdoor pools,
- (1) privately operated outdoor pool,
- (7) splashpads,
- (25) wading pools



# Challenges

- **Aging Swimming Pool Infrastructure**

- *Newest pool was constructed 15 years ago*
- *Indoor Pools reaching approximate age of 50 years*

- **Lifeguard Staffing Challenges and Safety Concerns**

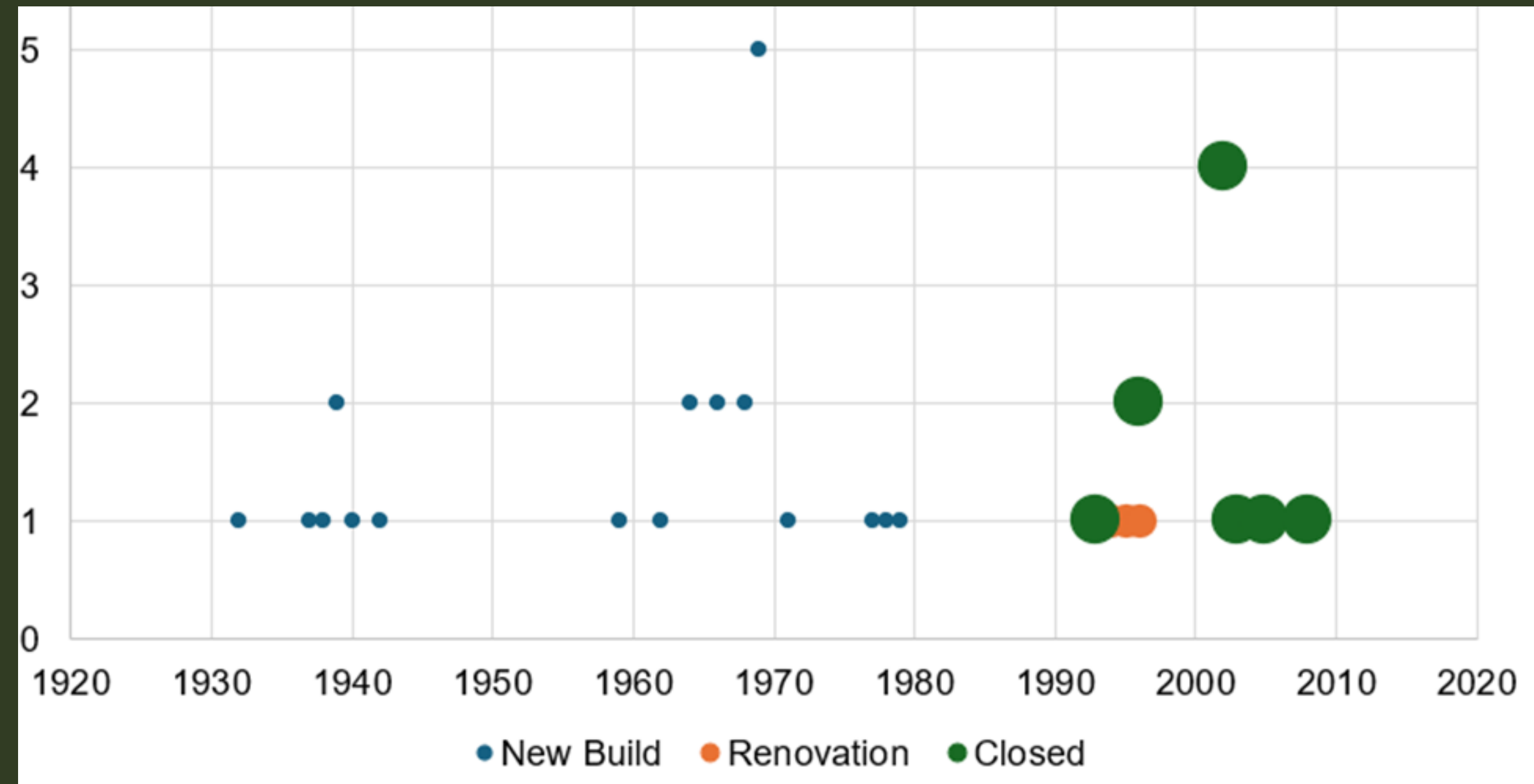
- *Facility closures and reduced hours due to staffing shortages*
- *Crime incidents on pool decks*

- **Facility Utilization and Effectiveness**

- *Varying attendance levels across different pools*
- *Underutilization of some facilities*
- *Impact of external factors like weather and competition from other facilities*
- *Multiple pool closures from 2000 to 2010*

- **Community Needs and Priorities**

- *Balancing community access with safety concerns*
- *Considering the role of the county as a provider of aquatic services*
- *Determining the appropriate level of investment in aquatic facilities*

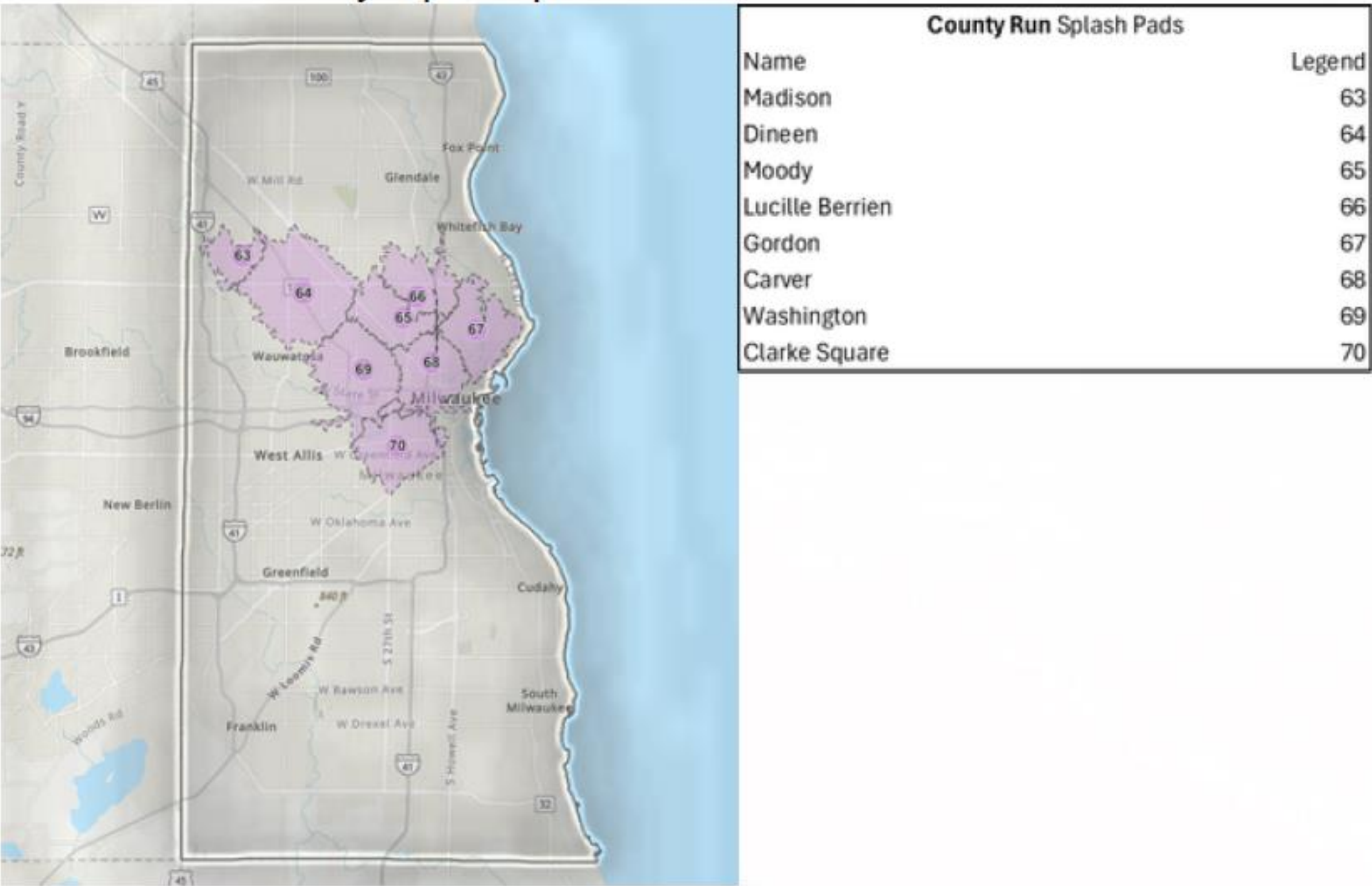


*County Pool Milestones*

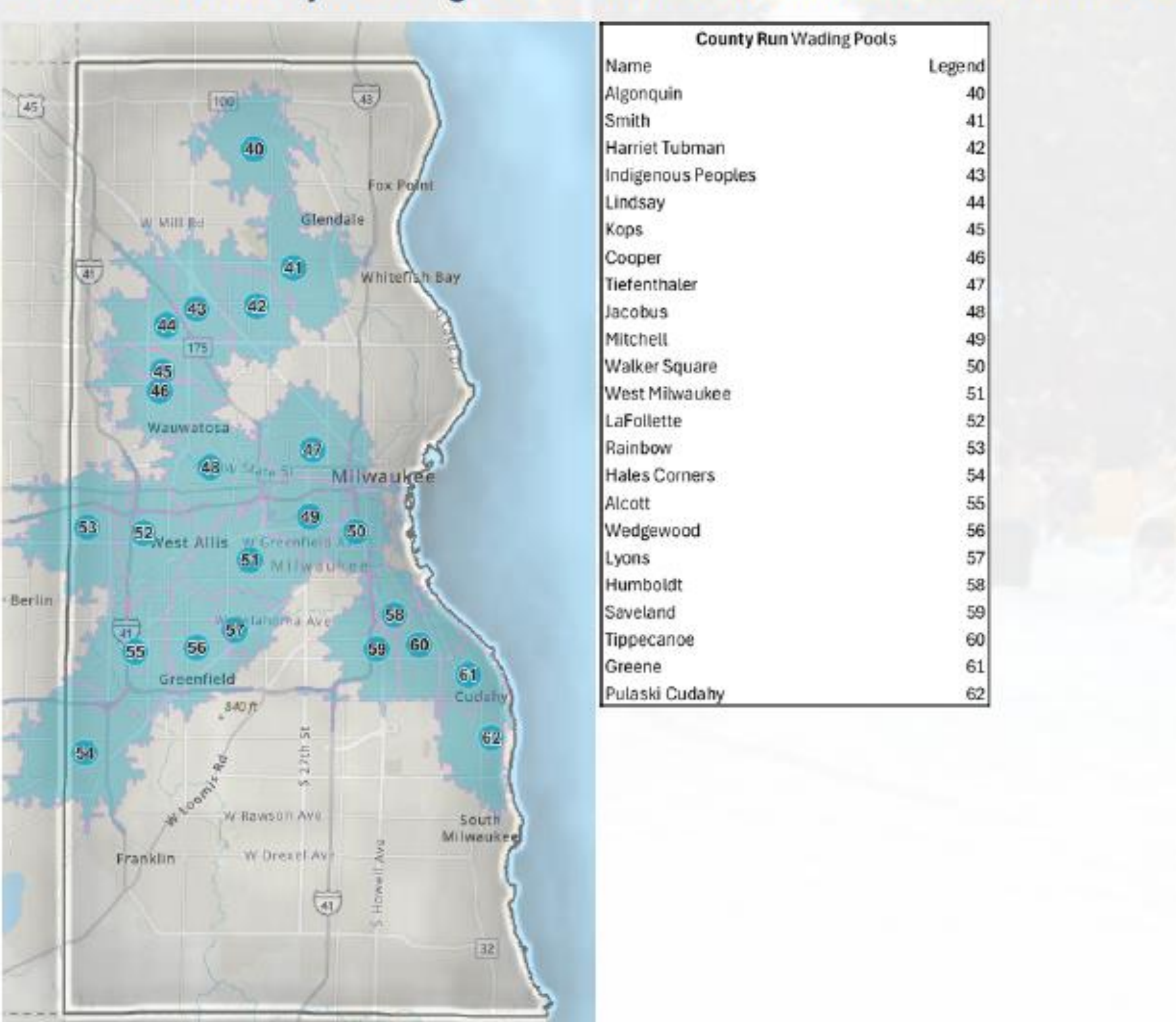


# Splashpads | Wading Pools

Milwaukee County Splashpads - 5-minute drive time service area



Milwaukee County Wading Pools - 5-minute drive time service area

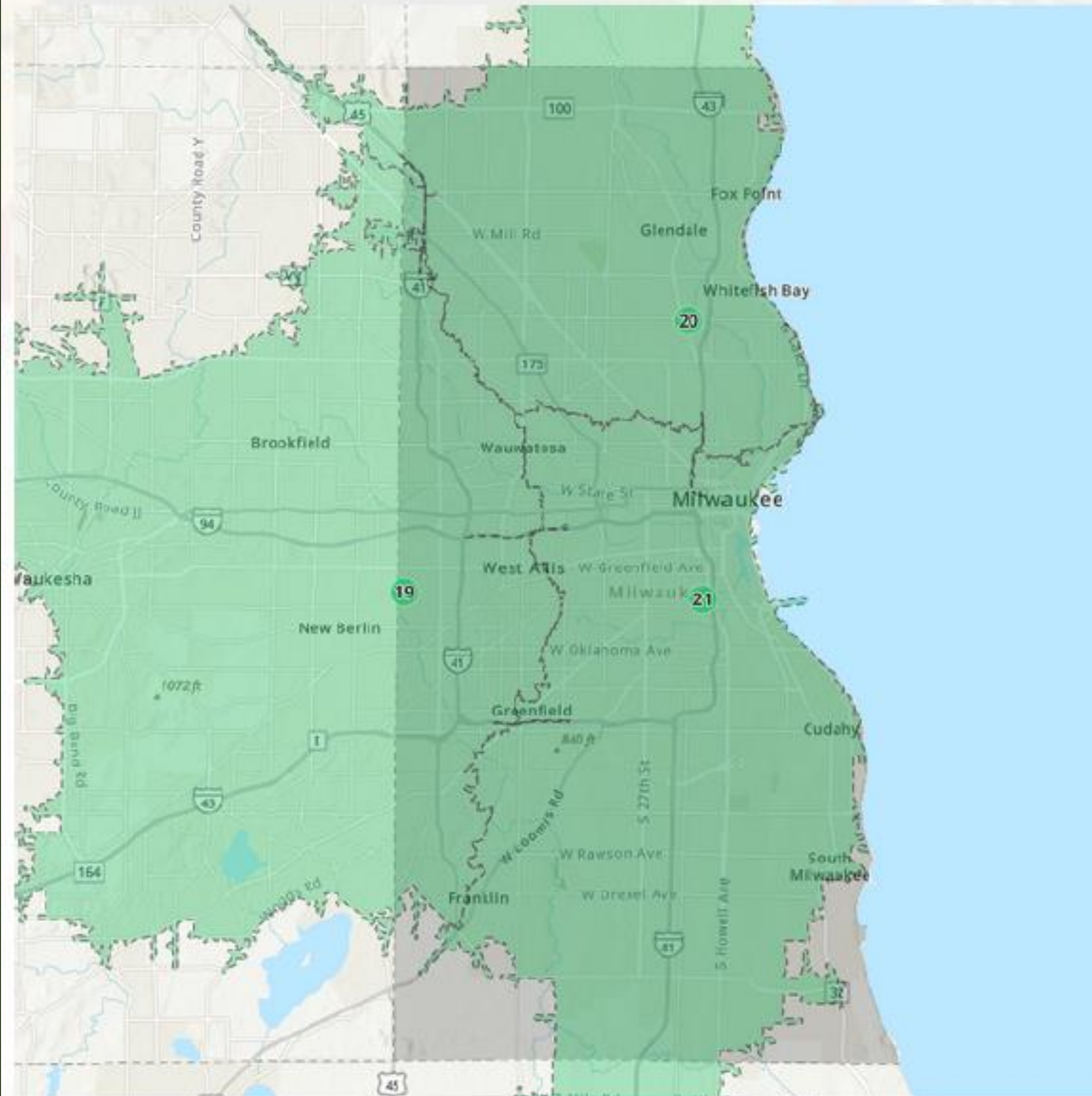




# Waterparks

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Milwaukee County Waterparks - 20-minute drive time service areas for each waterpark



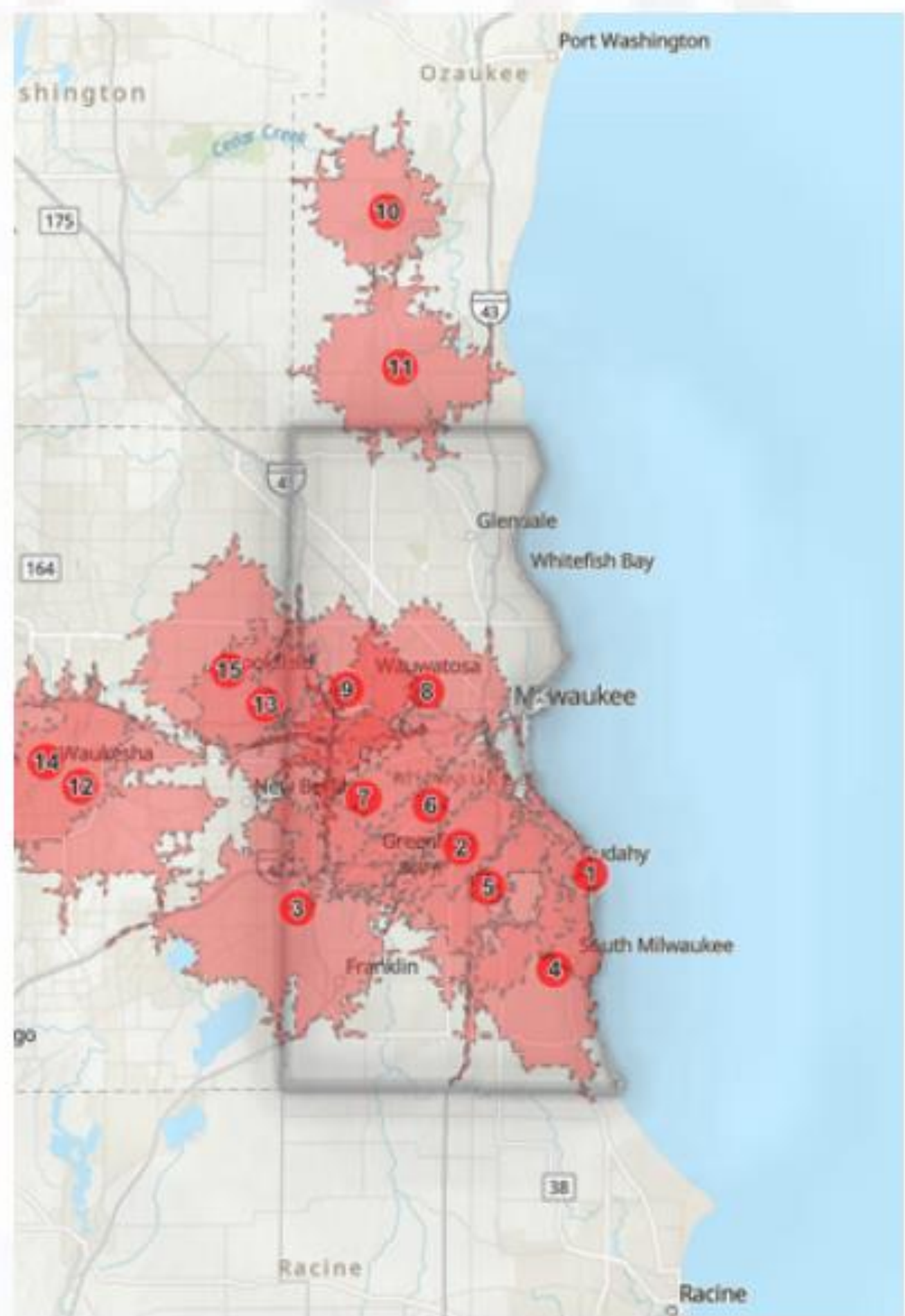
County Run Waterparks	
Name	Legend
Cool Waters Aquatic Park	19
Shultz Aquatic Park	20
Pelican Cove	21





# Outdoor Deep Well & Activity Pools

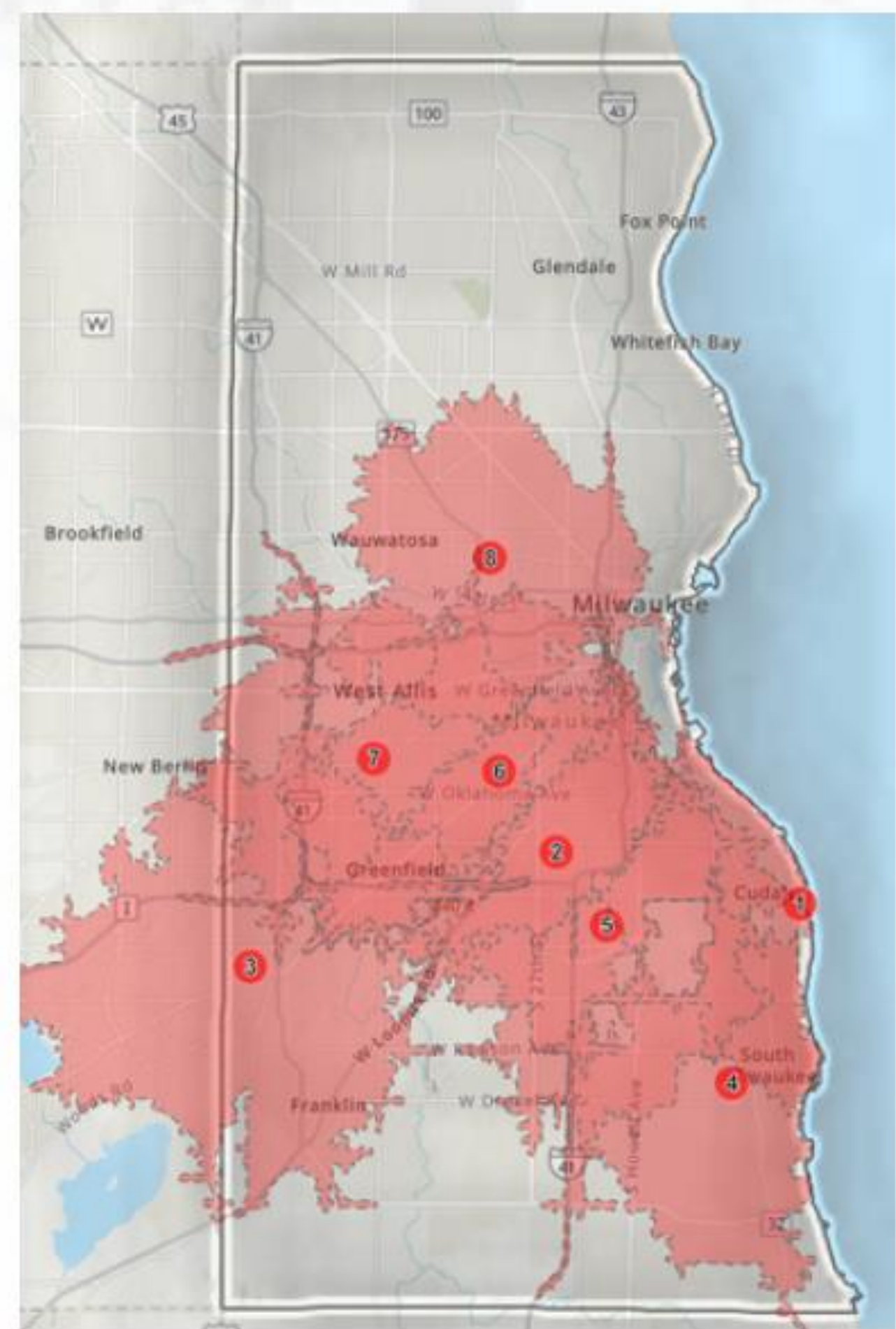
Non-Milwaukee County Pools - 10-minute drive time service areas for each swimming pool



County Run Outdoor Pools	
Name	Legend
Sheridan Park Pool	1
Wilson Park Pool	2
Hales Corners Pool	3
Grobschmidt Pool	4
Holler Pool	5
Jackson Pool	6
McCarty Pool	7
Washington Pool	8

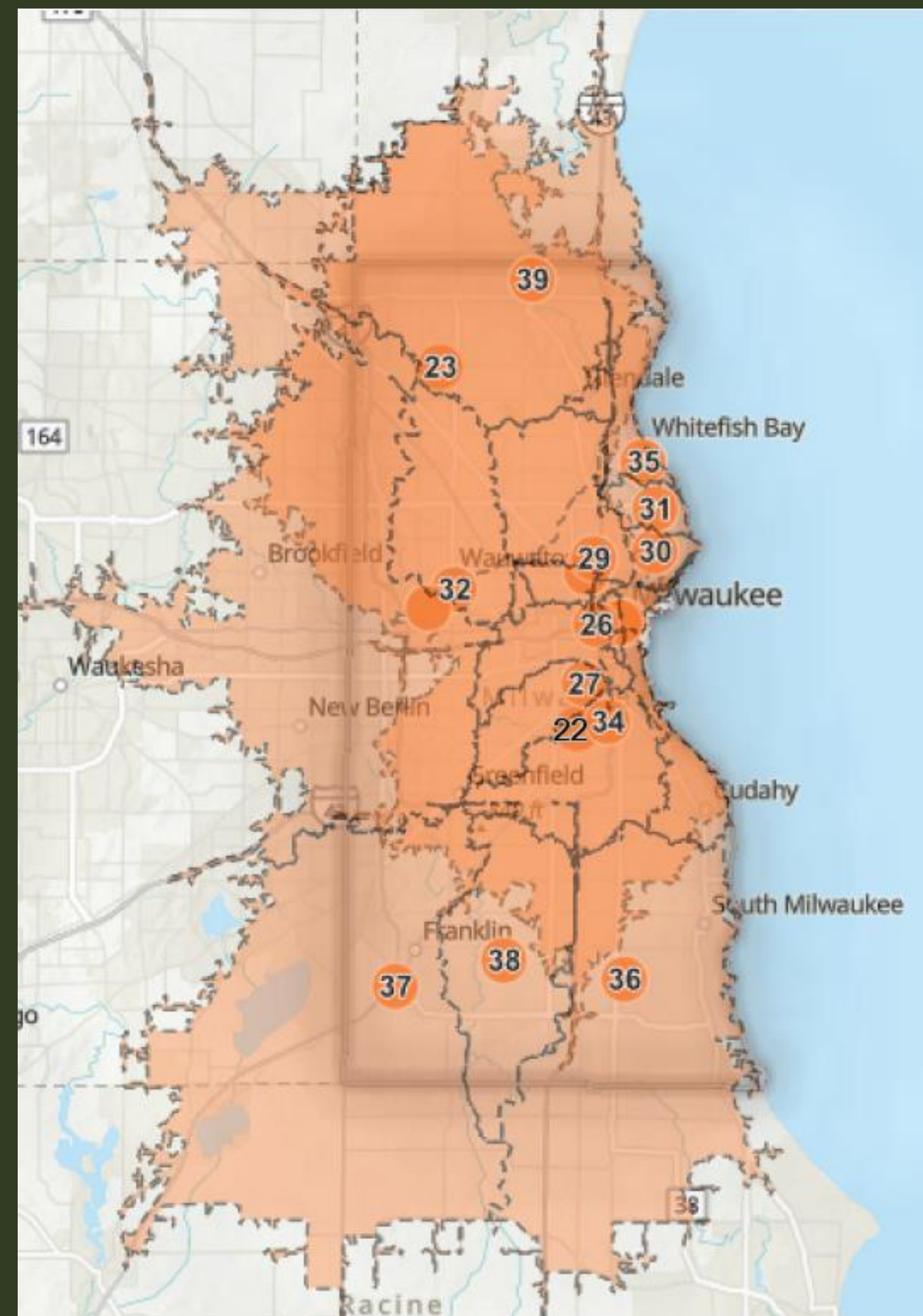
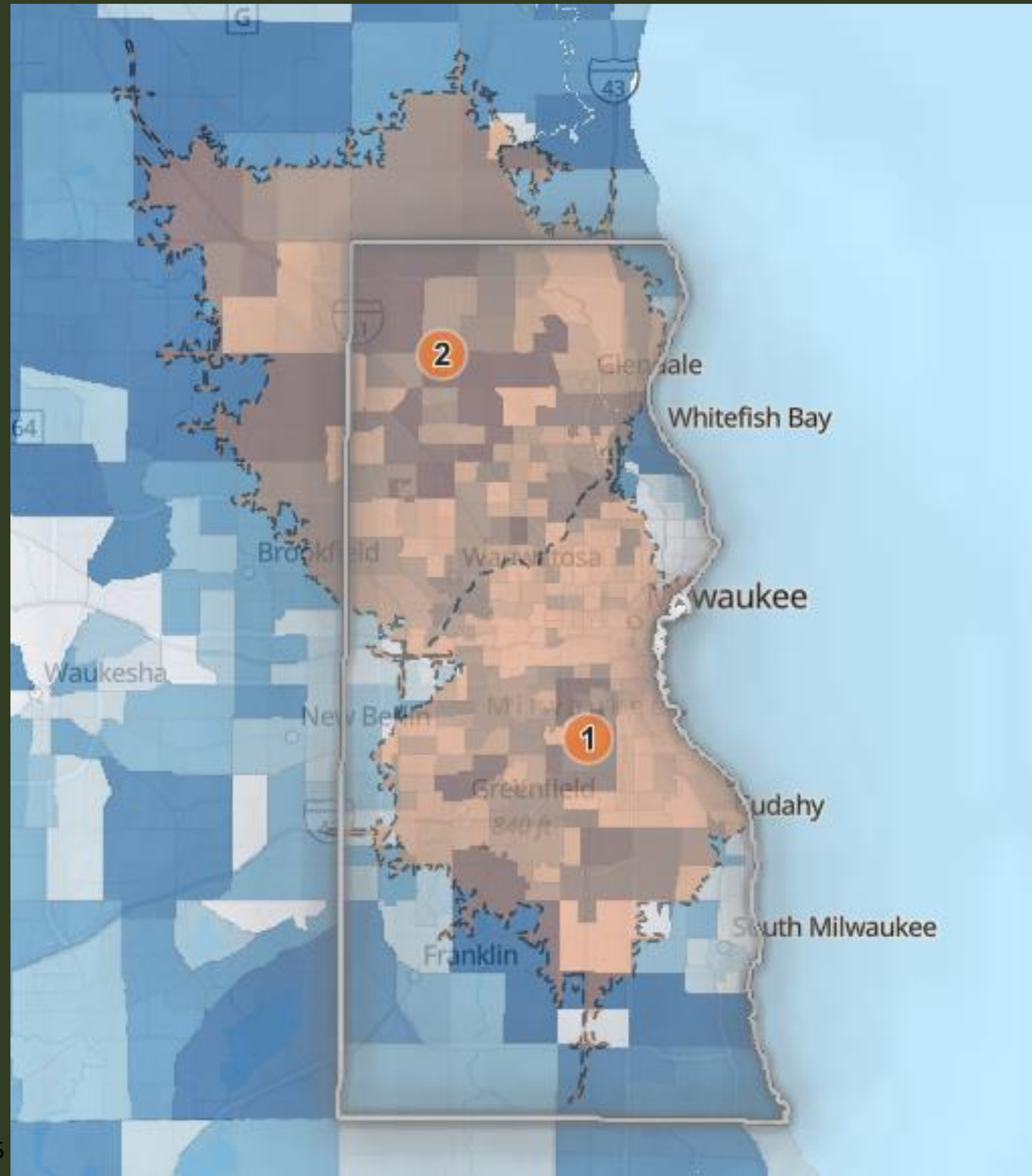
Additional Provider Outdoor Pools	
TOSA Pool at Hoyt Park	9
Cedarburg Pool	10
Mequon Community Pool	11
Buchner Pool	12
Elm Grove Village Park	13
Horeb Springs Aquatic Center	14
Wirth Park Aquatic Center	15
Veterans Memorial Park Aquatic Center	16

Milwaukee County Pools - 10-minute drive time service areas for each swimming pool





# Indoor Pools



County Run Indoor Pools	
Name	Legend
Pulaski Indoor Pool	22
Noyes Public Indoor Pool	23

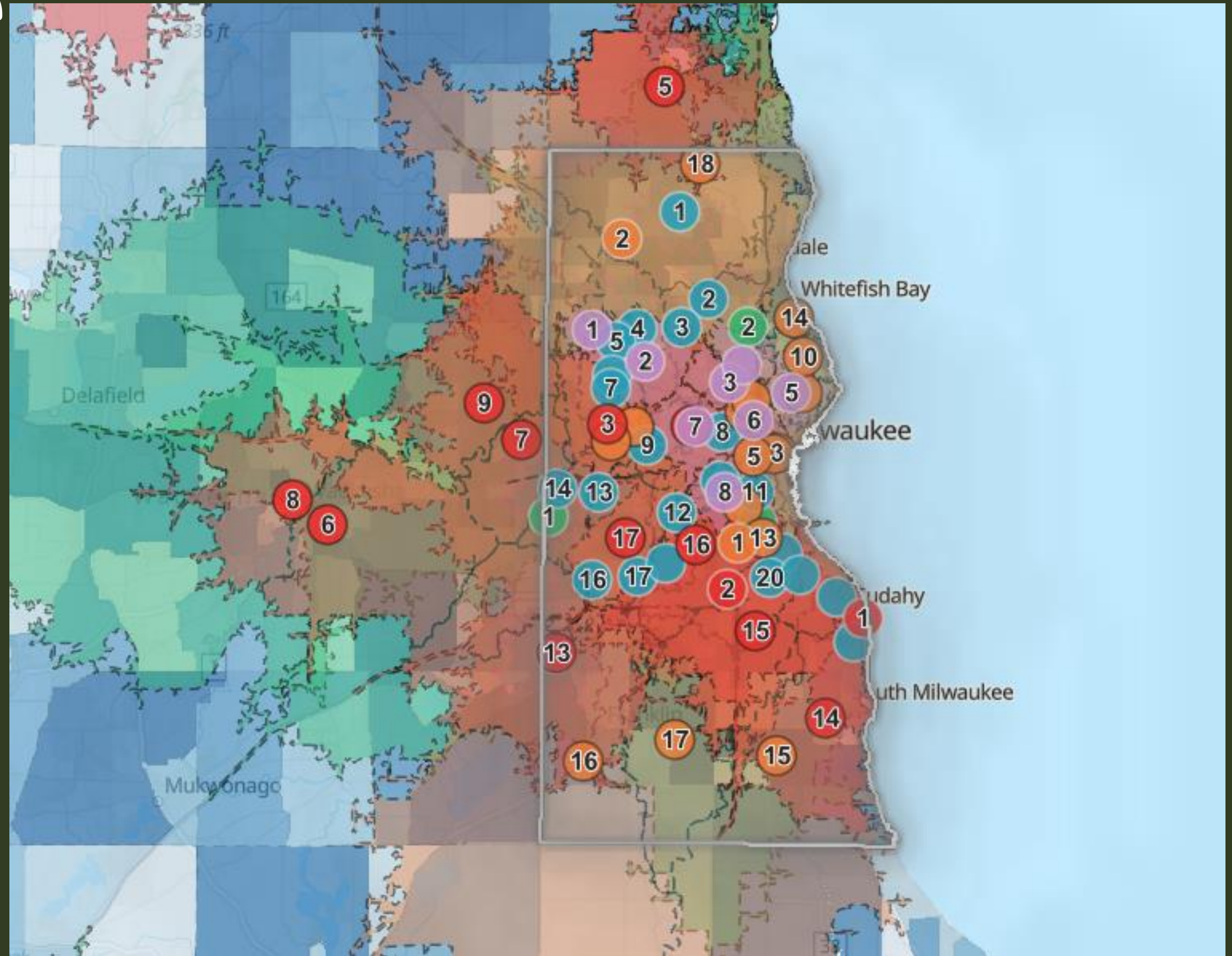
  

Additional Provider Indoor Pools	
Milwaukee Athletic Club	24
Gold's Gym	25
Marquette University RecPlex	26
Milwaukee South Division High School Pool	27
Northside YMCA	28
Milwaukee North Division High School Pool	29
Riverside High School	30
Shorewood High School	31
Wauwatosa East High School	32
Wisconsin Athletic Club	33
Ramirez Aquatic Center	34
Whitefish Bay High School	35
Oak Creek High School Swimming Pool	36
Innovative Health and Fitness	37
Franklin High School Pool	38
Walter Schroeder Aquatic Center	39



# Total Coverage

- High density in central Milwaukee County
- Overlapping service areas for splashpads and wading pools
- Non-county providers provide facilities in northern and southern Milwaukee County

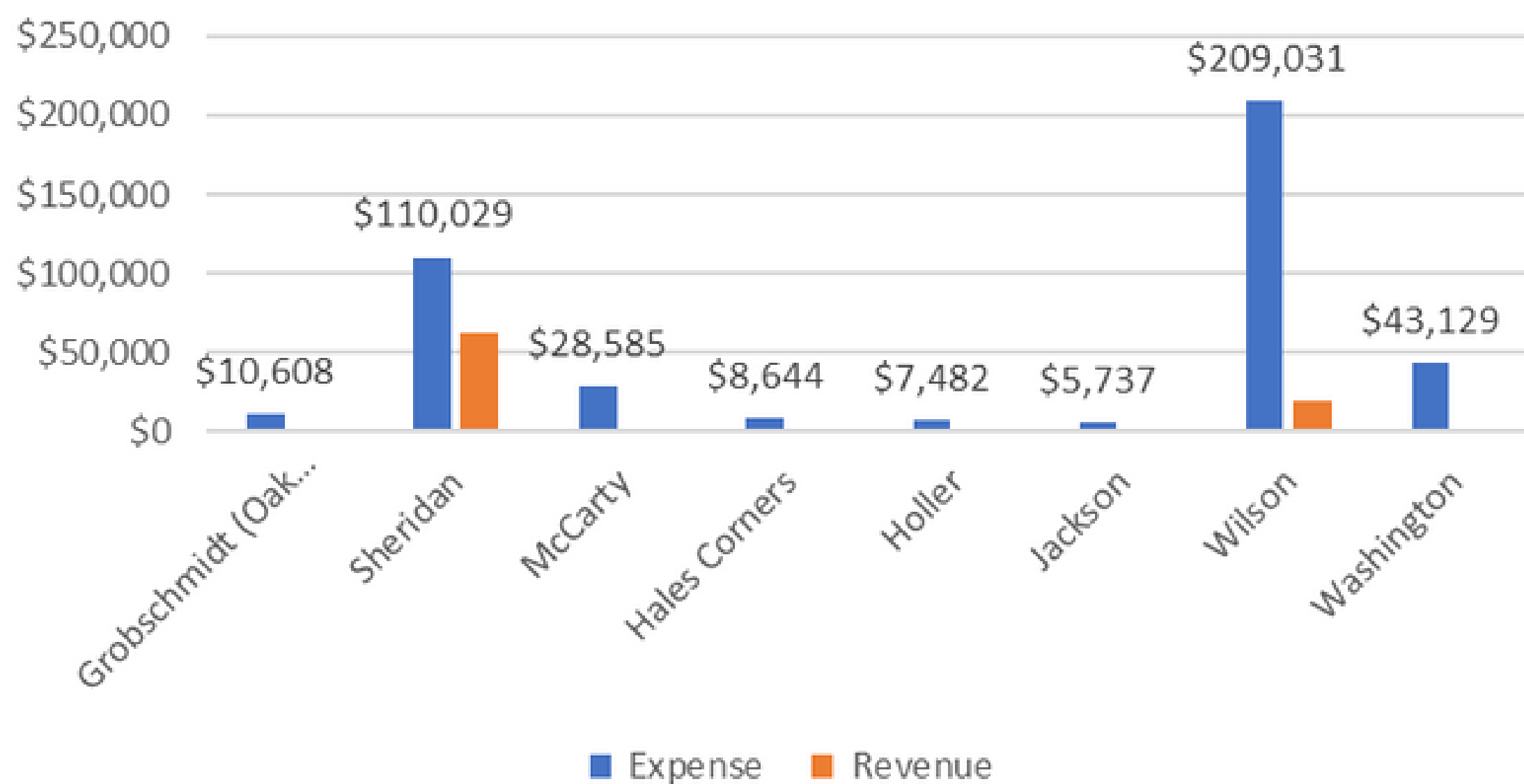




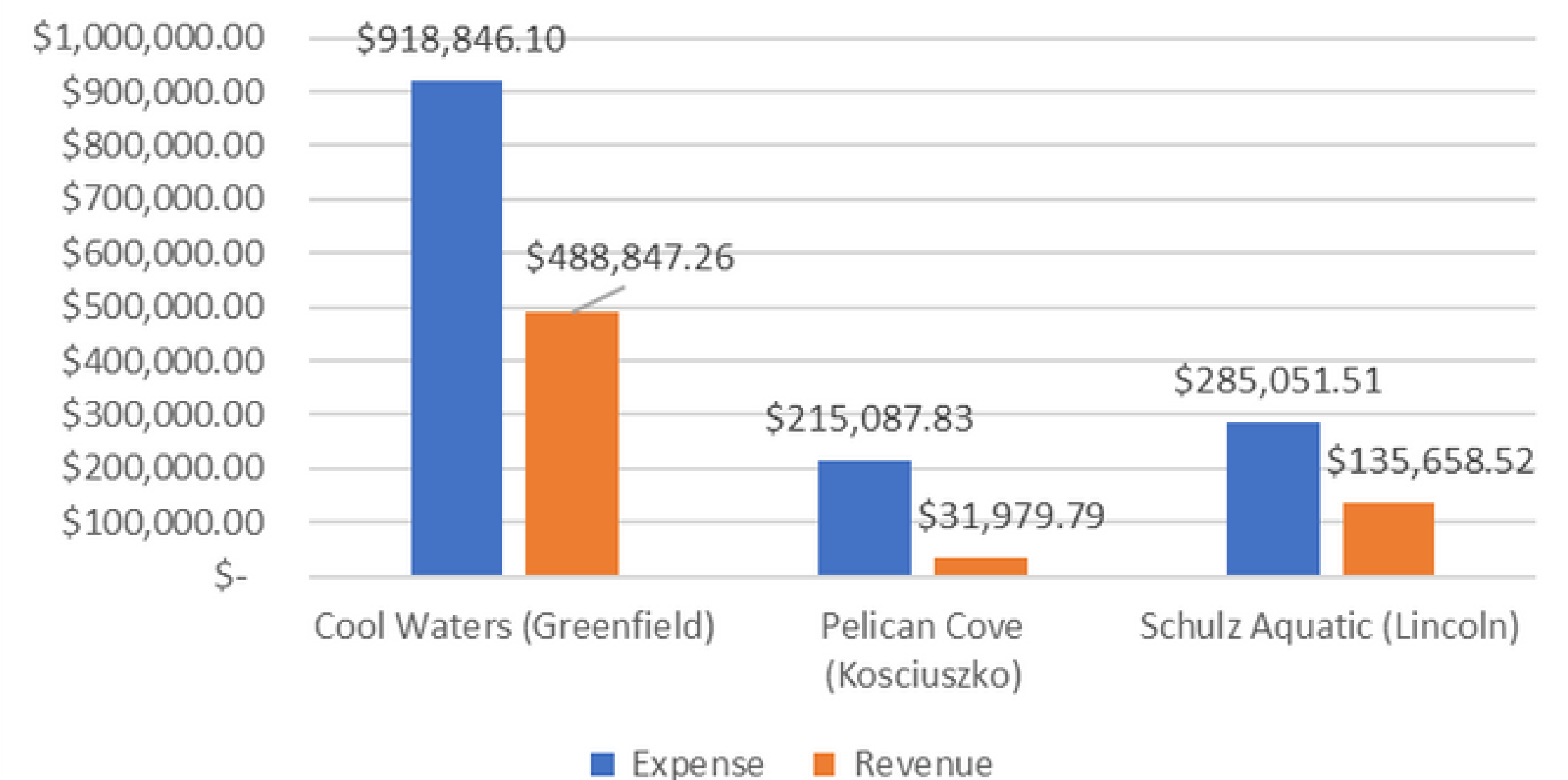
# Cost - Revenue

The average expense budget for an outdoor pool in Milwaukee County ranges from \$105,000 to \$150,000 annually, while the average revenue generated is \$33,000. This results in a cost recovery range of 11% to 31% from 2019 to 2024.

Outdoor Pools Revenue | Expense (2024)



Waterparks Revenue | Expense (2024)





# Pool Financials

Using 2023 as a representative year for the Milwaukee County aquatics system shows that total annual expenses were \$2.7M, revenue at \$783,000 with a total net operating subsidy of \$1.9M. **This equates to an approximate cost recovery of 29%.**

2024 Admission Fees			
Rates listed include tax			
General Admission with Deep-Well Season Pass: \$5.25			
Activity	Age	County Resident Rate	Non-Resident Rate
OPEN SWIM	3 to 11*	\$7.50	\$8.50
	12 to 59	\$8.50	\$10.50
	60 +	\$7.50	\$8.50
EVENING SWIM (General Admission)	ALL*	\$7	\$7
WATER EXERCISE & LAP SWIM	ALL*	\$5 (\$55 for 12)	\$5 (\$55 for 12)
Get UNLIMITED VISITS to BOTH Cool Waters Aquatic Center & David F. Schulz Aquatic Center!			

2024 "Deep-Well" Admission Fees	
Fees listed include tax	
OPEN SWIM	NIGHT SWIM
Age 12 to 59, \$5	General Admission,* \$3
Age 3 to 11* or 60 years +, \$3	
Age 0 to 2 years*, Free	

		2023		
Site		Total Expenditures	Total Revenue	Net Cost
<u>Outdoor Deepwell Pools</u>				
	Pool Name			
VG50	Grobschmidt (Oak Creek)	\$ 13,249.09		\$ 13,249.09
VG51	Sheridan	\$ 196,311.12	\$ (56,911.26)	\$ 139,399.86
VG52	McCarty	\$ 80,588.85		\$ 80,588.85
VN50	Hales Corners	\$ 19,869.42		\$ 19,869.42
VN51	Holler	\$ 2,526.58		\$ 2,526.58
VN52	Jackson	\$ 12,795.99		\$ 12,795.99
VR52	Wilson	\$ 390,268.55	\$ (35,220.34)	\$ 355,048.21
VW52	Washington	\$ 104,060.79		\$ 104,060.79
Total Deepwell Pools		\$ 819,670.39	\$ (92,131.60)	\$ 727,538.79
			-11.2%	
<u>Aquatic Centers</u>				
VR50	Cool Water (Greenfield)	\$ 873,301.54	\$ (439,648.22)	\$ 433,653.32
VR51	Pelican Cove (Kosciuszko)	\$ 13,724.00		\$ 13,724.00
VR56	Schultz Aquatic (Lincoln)	\$ 448,030.10	\$ (129,247.04)	\$ 318,783.06
Total Aquatic Centers		\$ 1,335,055.64	\$ (568,895.26)	\$ 766,160.38
			-42.6%	
<u>Indoor Pools</u>				
VR54	Noyes	\$ 241,824.43	\$ (22,512.61)	\$ 219,311.82
VR55	Pulaski	\$ 328,759.20	\$ (99,567.19)	\$ 229,192.01
Total Indoor Pools		\$ 570,583.63	\$ (122,079.80)	\$ 448,503.83
			-21.4%	
TOTAL POOLS		\$ 2,725,309.66	\$ (783,106.66)	\$ 1,942,203.00



# Survey Findings (2023)

## Key Findings:

- **High Usage of County Aquatic Facilities:** *79.3% of respondents have used County aquatic facilities in the past 5 years.*
- **Preference for Popular Facilities:** *Cool Waters, Tosa Pool, and Pulaski Indoor Pool are among the most popular choices.*
- **Convenience and Accessibility**
- **Positive Perception of Fees**
- **Strong Support for Investment**
- **Prioritization of Recreation and Cooling**
- **Importance of Water Safety**

## Areas for Improvement:

- **Address Overcrowding**
- **Expand Accessibility**
- **Enhance Amenities**
- **Improve Communication**



### **Milwaukee County Parks Aquatic Facilities Study** **Introduction**

Para responder la encuesta en español, haga clic en el siguiente enlace: [LINK](#)

Yog yuav teb qhov kev soj ntsuam no ua lus Hmoob thov nias rau [LINK](#) nram qab no.

Milwaukee County Parks currently owns and operates two (2) indoor deep-well pools, three (3) outdoor aquatic parks, eight (8) outdoor pools, one (1) privately operated outdoor pool, seven (7) splashpads, twenty-five (25) wading pools, and several beaches that have been historically used for swimming. The last Aquatic Facilities Study was adopted in 2002 and was intended to be a guide for Park's aquatics facilities to become operationally self-sustaining, and to progressively reduce the reliance on the tax levy by containing costs and increasing usage. Twenty years have passed since the last in-depth study and Parks has experienced a steady decline in funding and staffing, and an updated inventory and study is necessary for the department to plan for aquatic investments in the future. There have been advancements in recreational trends that need to be examined, and the County's continually reduced financial capacity, poses hard choices for Parks to consider.

The following survey questions are an opportunity for the community to provide input to guide the plan.

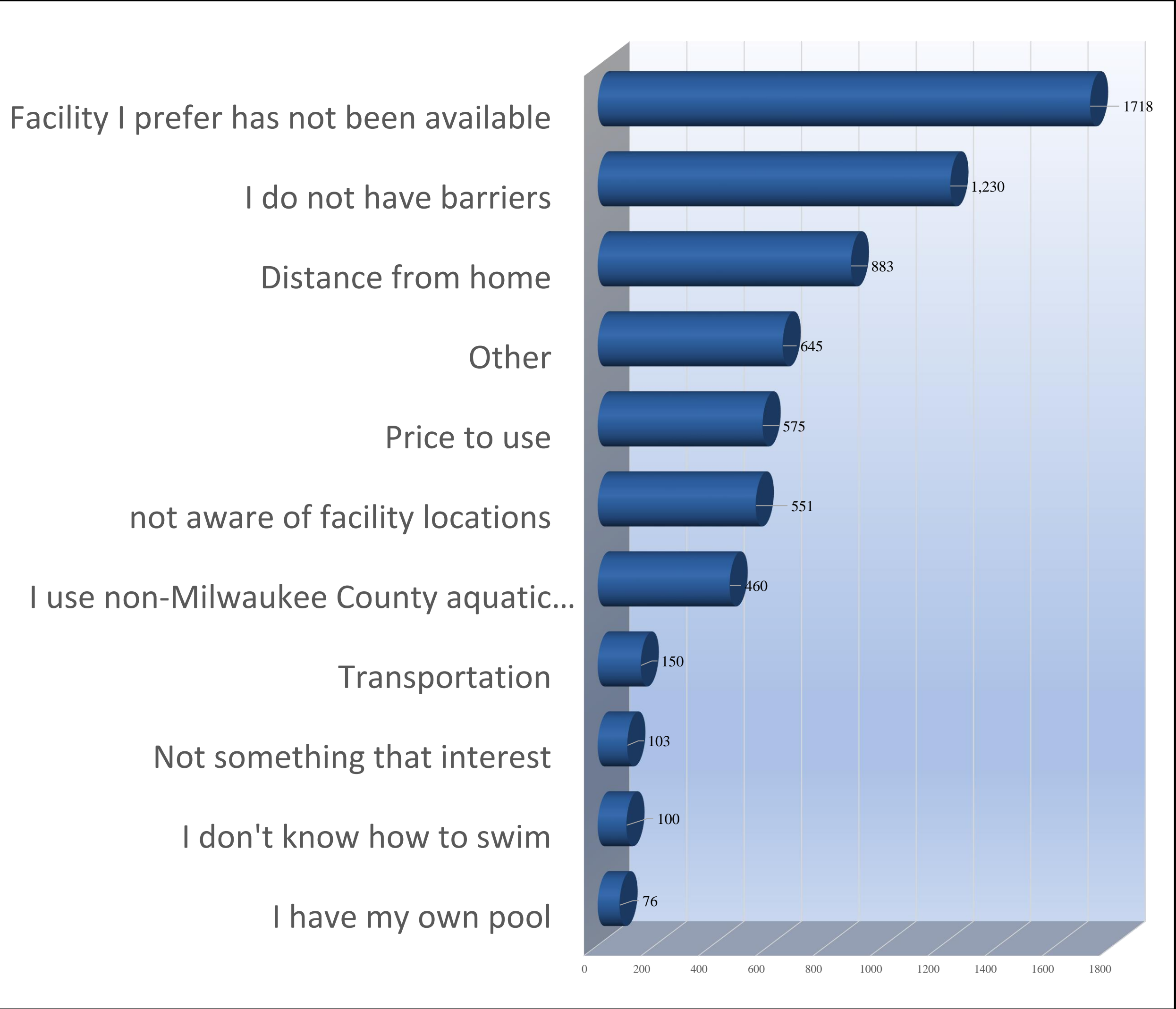
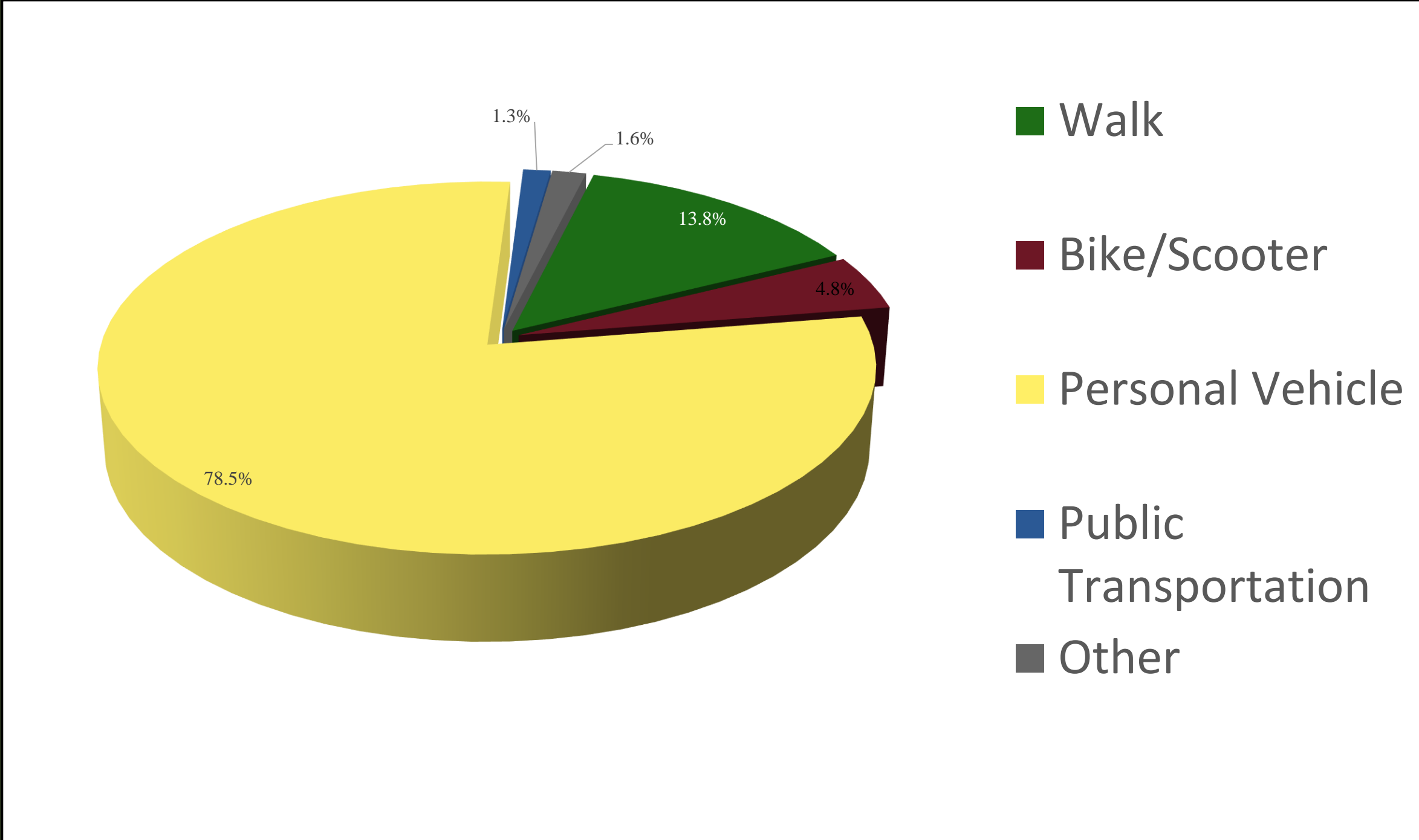
The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and all responses will remain anonymous.

There will be additional opportunity for public input at an open house:

- Tuesday, May 2, 4:00-7:00P (Kosciusko Community Center, 2201 S 7th St, Milwaukee, WI 53215)
- Wednesday, May 3, 4:00-7:00P (Lincoln Park, Blatz Pavilion)
- Thursday, May 4, 4:00-7:00P (Hales Corners Park)

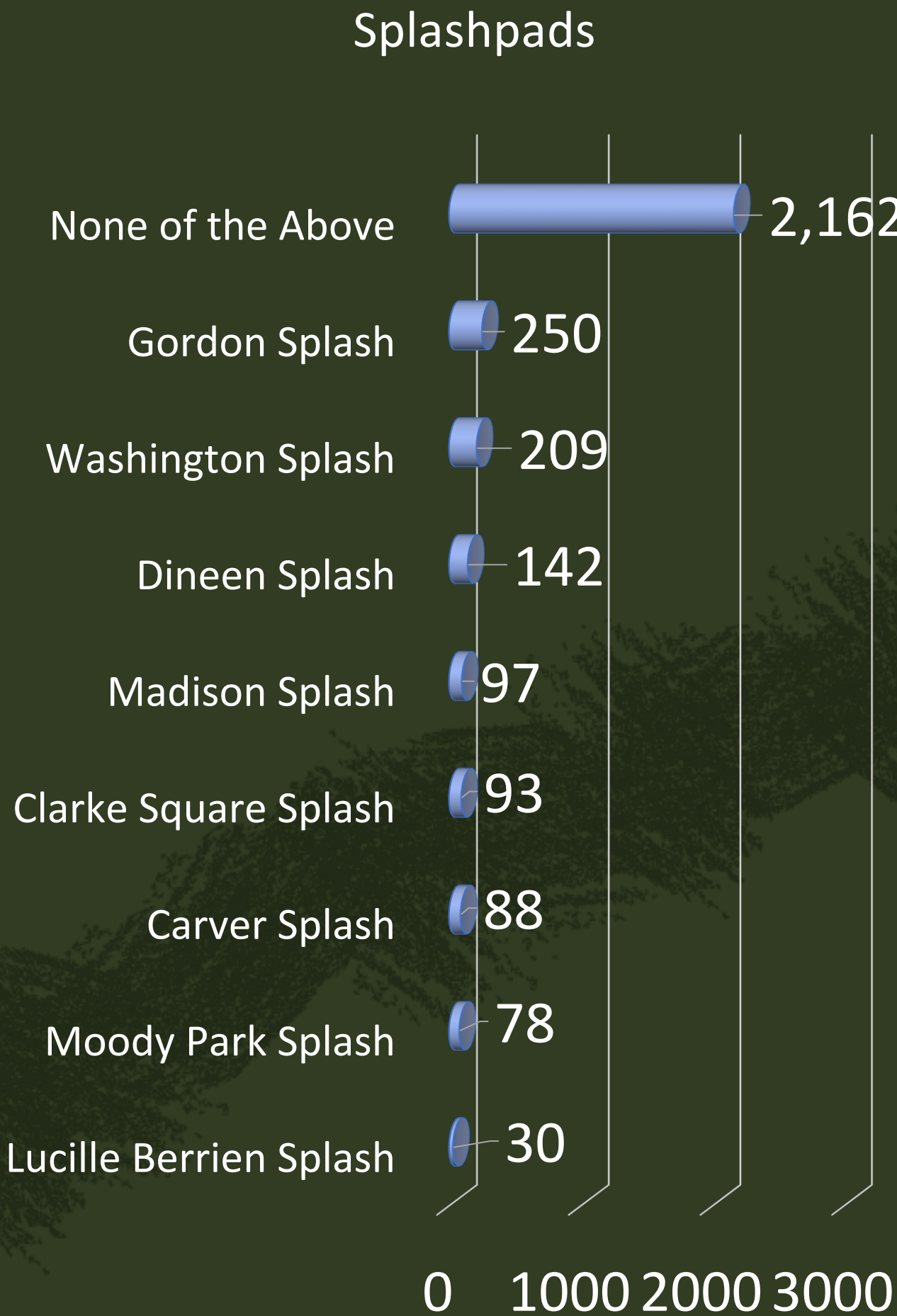
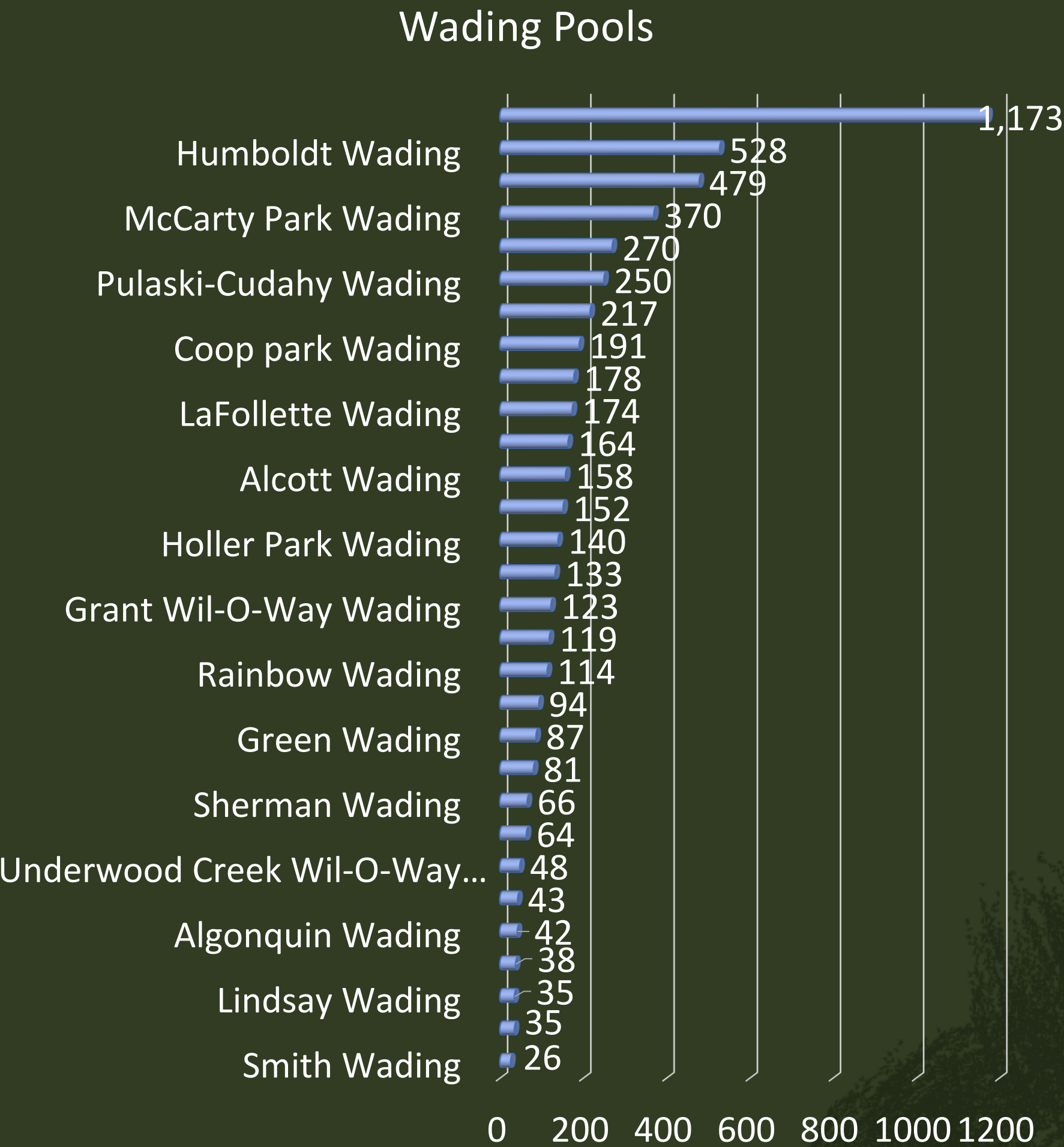
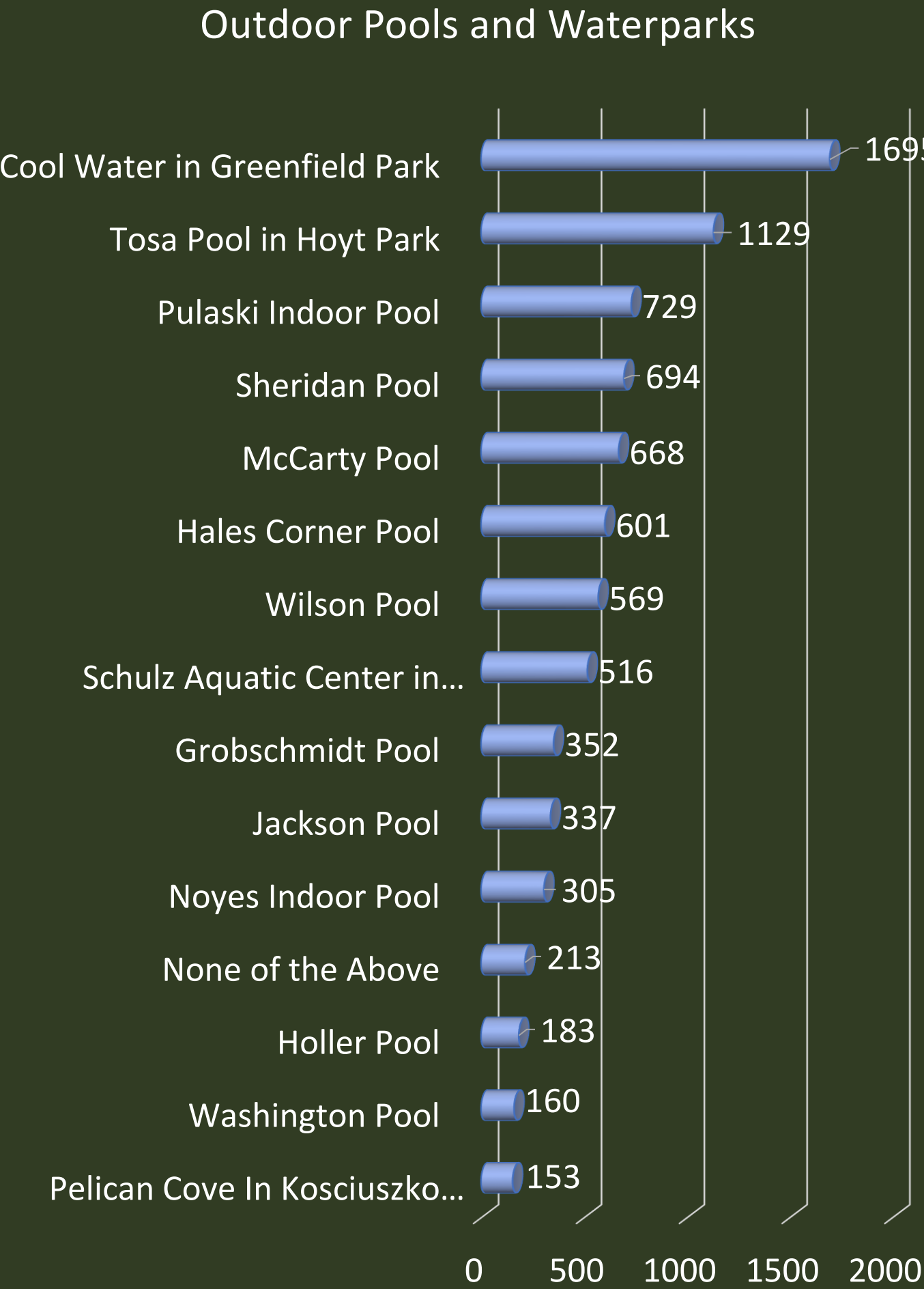


# Transportation Method | Barrier to Usage





# Facility Usage





# Wading Pool Utilization

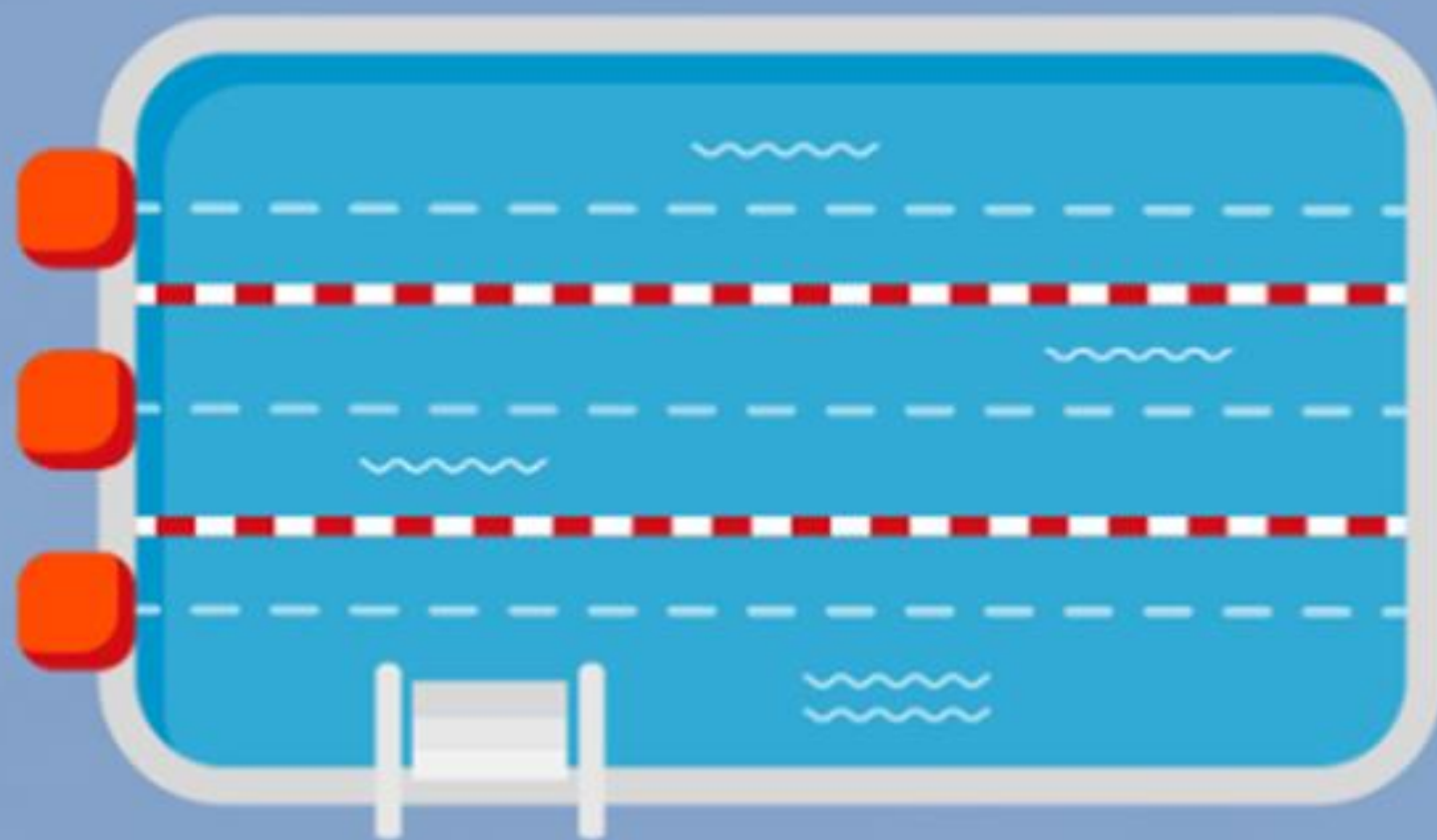
- Wading pool attendance under 2,000 visits per summer during 2024 at 15 wading pools (less than 25 people per day)
- Jacobus, Hales Corners, Alcott and Wedgwood are highest attended wading pools (over 2,000 visits per summer)
- Primary activity is heat relief
- Water depth does not allow for aquatic programs such as swim lessons
- Aging mechanical systems necessitate ultraviolet treatment systems
- Wading pools are not ADA accessible per 2010 swimming pool standards



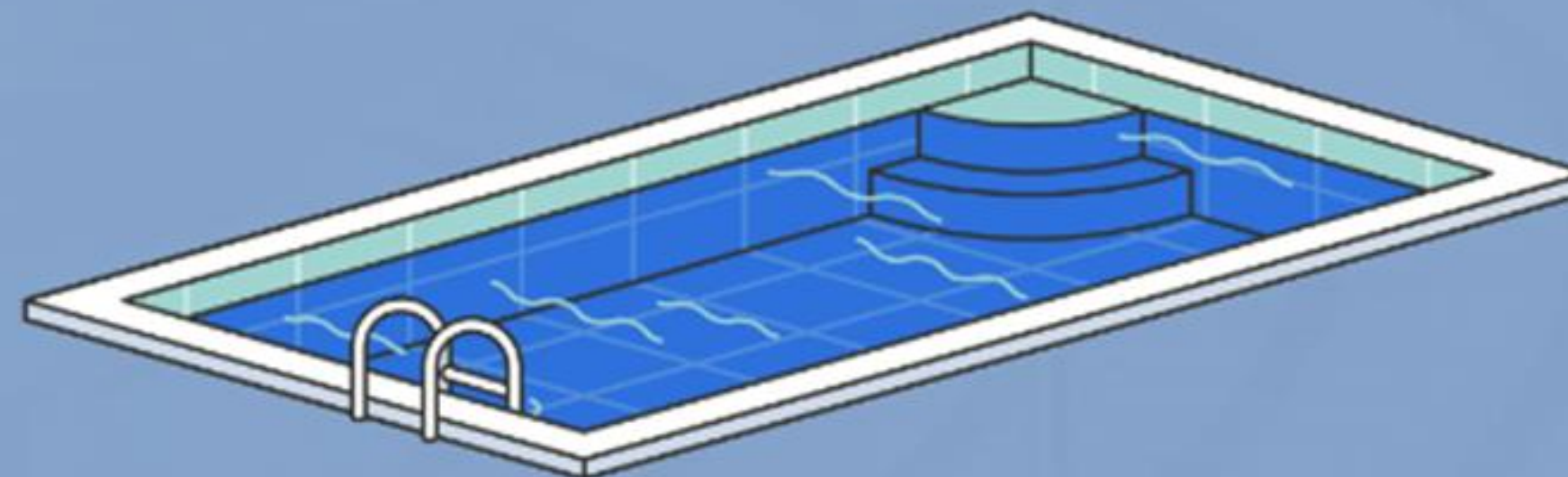


# Current Aquatic Trends

**One indoor/outdoor centralized mega recreation center with indoor competition and wellness pools for every 100,000 to 400,000 residents.**



**Provide one seasonal outdoor family aquatic center with recreational amenities (i.e., waterslides, lazy rivers, and children's play structures) plus lap lanes for every 50,000 to 100,000 residents.**





# Destination Splashpads



- Reduced staffing requirement
- Limited mechanical infrastructure
- Play value for various ages
- Capital and maintenance costs are less than deep well pools





# New Pool Facilities Planned by Other Providers



Broke ground on project for 1  
Community and 1 Competition Pool in  
July 2025



## Milwaukee Recreation Community Center & Browning Playfield

New recreation community center  
and aquatic facility at the former  
Browning School and Browning  
Playfield location (5575 N. 76th St.)  
near the intersection of N. 76th St.  
& W. Silver Spring Dr.



New aquatics facility, public-private  
financing in progress





# Recommendations

## Waterparks

- Continue operating Cool Waters and Schulz Aquatic Center
- Reinvest in Pelican Cove to increase amenities and utilization

## Swimming Pools

- Continue operating swimming pools with attendance over 7,500 per summer
- Close facilities with low utilization or transfer to private operator

## Wading Pools

- Identify budget threshold for capital investment for renovations
- Continue operating wading pools that have been renovated within the past 5 years
- Phase out wading pools with low utilization

## Splashpads

- Continue operating existing splashpads
- Determine areas of the County to build new in underserved areas or replacement of aging wading pools
- Expand category offering to include large destination splashpads, standard splashpads, and smaller spraygrounds at playgrounds



# Future State Snapshot



Reinvestment in  
Existing Water  
Parks

Fewer Deep Well  
Pools

Fewer Wading  
Pools

More Splashpads,  
with additional  
amenities

Programming of  
Existing Indoor  
Pools



# Capital Outlay

## 2026

COOL WATERS HEATERS (construction) - \$954,420

Schulz Aquatic Center (construction) – Pool Grating - \$443,940

Jackson Park Pool Renewal (planning) - \$180,000

Washington Park Aquatics (planning) - \$180,000

Parks Wading Pool Conversion (planning and demo) - \$545,000

## 2027

Wading Pool and Sprayground Conversions (planning, design, demo, and construction) - \$460,000

McGovern Park Destination Splashpad (planning and design) - \$180,000

McCarty Park Pool Reinvestment (planning and design) - \$375,000

Park Splashpads Modernization (planning and design) - \$100,000

## 2028

Wading Pool and Sprayground Conversions (planning, design, demo, and construction) - \$460,000

Wilson Park Pool Reinvestment (planning and design) - \$741,750

-Indoor/outdoor new facility

## 2029

Wading Pool and Sprayground Conversions (planning, design, demo, and construction) - \$460,000

McGovern Park Destination Splashpad (construction) - \$1,200,000

McCarty Park Pool Reinvestment (construction) - \$2,500,000

Park Splashpads Modernization (construction) - \$400,000

## 2030

Wading Pool and Sprayground Conversions (planning, design, demo, and construction) - \$460,000

Wilson Park Pool Reinvestment (construction) - \$14,835,000

Cool Waters Waterpark Renewal (planning and design) - \$412,000





Thank You!