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CHRIS ABELE, MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
JOHN DARGLE, JR., DIRECTOR OF PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE

Date: April 24, 2017

To: Jason Haas, Chair, Parks, Energy and Environment Committee

From: John Dargle, Jr., CPRP, Director, Milwaukee County Parks

**Subject: Report on the City of Wauwatosa's Life Sciences District Master Plan (INFORMATION)**

**ISSUE**

An informational report on the City of Wauwatosa's Life Sciences District Master Plan (formerly known as the Wauwatosa Quadrant Plan) in accordance with File 16-532.

**BACKGROUND**

At the October 2016 Parks, Energy, and Environment Committee, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors requested that Parks collaborate with the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee and the Friends of the Monarch Trail (hereafter referred to as the Collaboration) to assess and submit an informational report on the environmental impacts of constructing a newly proposed parkway on Milwaukee County Grounds.

Some of the findings of this collaborative effort include:

- The Milwaukee County Grounds contains several verified populations of sensitive wildlife species and critical habitat features that meet the criteria for consideration as Beneficial Use Impairments under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Area of Concern program including snake denning areas, grassland nesting bird habitat, forested roosting and foraging habitat, and an ephemeral wetland.
- The Wauwatosa Life Sciences District: 2016 Master Plan does not specify how the storm water will be managed. The proposed development could result in an increase in storm water runoff volume depending on the level of building sizes and amount of surface parking. Total suspended solids levels with storm water management could increase even with storm water treatment practices in compliance with Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 151.
- The plan should address the social and biological constraints of the area and develop a balanced plan that serves the community as a whole. There is a suggestion that the City of Wauwatosa utilize data and methodology from the

Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern studies, and from MMSD and SEWRPC studies, to inform planning, and to engage the public in the decision-making processes.

In addition to this assessment, the County Board requested answers to the following questions.

- Is the construction of the proposed Emerald Parkway<sup>1</sup> consistent with the UWM Innovation Campus/Milwaukee County (the County) Grounds existing or future Master Plan?

**Collaboration response:** The reports and attachments herein conclude that the construction of the Emerald Parkway (Scenic Parkway) would be inconsistent with the existing UWM Innovation Campus Master Plan in that the Life Sciences District Plan changes significant infrastructure designs identified as being important to the overall UWM design plan and particularly to features incorporated for sustainability required in the approval process. Among the identified contradictions are changes that would affect the UWM plan are structural revisions required by the proposed Emerald Parkway (Scenic Parkway); disregard of the Habitat Restoration Landscape Plan adopted for the entire Northeast Quadrant, potentially disturbing and destabilizing habitat for species throughout the area; and changes to requirements in the UWM Plan limiting density, scale and type of use (focused on technology and research) to allow high-density, high-scale, mixed-use commercial development inconsistent with permitted uses approved by the Milwaukee County Board and the City of Wauwatosa.

- What would be the impact to the effectiveness of the existing storm water management system and natural species habitats if Emerald Parkway is constructed?

**Collaboration response:** The reports and attachments conclude that inadequate infrastructure exists to accommodate increased storm water volume and runoff, that inadequate space likely exists in the subject area to accommodate it, possibly leading to local flooding and pollution of local waterways. Also, the Collaboration finds that the Life Sciences District Plan fails to provide adequate information and documentation of storm water volume and system capacity as required in the GRAEF contract. Likewise, this report concludes that the Scenic Parkway would have a serious adverse effect on natural species habitats including those of a number of species of special concern which occupy the area because of specific habitat needs, and, similarly, the Life Sciences District Plan contains no provisions for environmental impact assessment nor a conservation plan that would address protecting biodiversity and species habitats. As a result, County Grounds Park, as an adjacent natural

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<sup>1</sup> The roadway is not referred to as Emerald Parkway in the most recent versions of Wauwatosa's draft land use plan

area, could and likely would suffer adverse effects from both increased storm water runoff and loss of natural species habitat.

It is suggested that the proposed Emerald Parkway and adjacent residential development be delineated on a more detailed plan that would show the extent of required topographic changes, storm water management areas, and an overlay indicating existing mapped primary and secondary environmental corridor, isolated natural resources areas, critical species habitat, wetlands, etc. There are significant elevation changes and drainageways along the proposed route, and the impacted footprint would likely extend well into the County Grounds Park and other natural areas. Understanding these impacts would help in planning to minimize both economic and environmental costs. Additionally, the concept plan for the proposed parkway appears to show both extension of a public road as well as storm water management facilities on County Grounds Park.

- What would be the impact to the City of Wauwatosa's (the City) current Tax Incremental Financing mechanism? Will it expand to allow for the construction of the proposed parkway? How would it affect the County?

**City of Wauwatosa response:** Currently there is not an existing tax incremental finance district in the area described as "County Grounds." However, there is an existing district at UWM Innovation Campus (TID #6.) That district is functioning financially above expectations. If and when financing is needed for proposed public improvements, such as the scenic parkway proposed in the draft master plan, whether that district is expanded or a new one is created, would be determined through solid financial planning with ultimate approval by the City's Common Council and Joint Review Board. The County has a voting seat on the City's Joint Review Board. If a district is created, Milwaukee County would be impacted in a positive manner through increases in jobs and property tax revenues, as all other districts in Wauwatosa have provided in the past to Milwaukee County.

- Has the City completed the rezoning of parkland areas within the County Grounds? What is the municipal zoning status of the land on the County Grounds?

**City of Wauwatosa response:** Milwaukee County Park is zoned Special Purpose - Conservation. The remainder of the area that appears to be in question is zoned Special Purpose – Medical Center (SP-MED.) See attached zoning map.

**Collaboration response:** Per a May 2016 action, the City completed a text amendment to their code to state that "Any property owned by Milwaukee County in the SP-CON district is considered to be zoned as "Parks" for purposes of Wisconsin Statutes Section 59.17(2)(b)(3)."

**RECOMMENDATION**

No action requested. Informational item unless further action required.

**Approved by:**



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John Dargle, Jr., CPRP, Director

**Attachments:**

- Attachment 1 – Proposed Wauwatosa Parkway Map
- Attachment 2 – Partial City of Wauwatosa Zoning Map
- Attachment 3 – Parcel Maps with Ownership Info

**Copy:**

- Chris Abele, County Executive
- Raisa Koltun, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
- Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman, County Board of Supervisors
- Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board of Supervisors
- Marcelia Nicholson, Vice-Chair, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee
- James Luigi Schmitt, Supervisor District 6
- Eddie Cullen, Supervisor District 15
- John Weishan, Jr., Supervisor District 16
- James Tarantino, Director, Economic Development
- Allyson Smith, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk
- Jessica Janz-McKnight, Research & Policy Analyst, Office of the Comptroller
- Jeremy Lucas, Fiscal Mgt. Analyst, Admin & Fiscal Affairs/DAS