

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: March 17, 2023

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

From: Sarah Toomsen, Planning Manager, Milwaukee County Parks

Subject: Adoption of Northwest Side Trails Connection Plan

File Type: Resolution

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**REQUEST**

Milwaukee County Parks requests that the Board of Supervisors adopt the Northwest Side Trails Connection Plan as an amendment to the Park and Open Space Plan, file 22-132, intended to serve as a guide for decision making and fulfill the County's grant eligibility for a variety of State and Federal programs.

**POLICY**

State grant eligibility dependent on application(s) consistency with local planning.

Wisconsin State Statutes:	<a href="#">NR 51.904(4)</a>
Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	
Specific Adopted Budget:	
Specific Adopted Budget Amendment:	
Specific Adopted Capital Project:	

**BACKGROUND**

To address racial disparities in trail access, Milwaukee County Parks developed The Northwest Side Trail Connections Plan. Initial research and public input compiled during the planning process was previously brought before the Parks Committee on 1/25/22 (file 22-131). More than 1000 people, 600 of whom live in the study area, provided input to the plan. One hundred percent of the people surveyed, and who live in the study area, expressed support for the development of trails on the northwest side of Milwaukee County. The Plan includes a map of specific corridors for potential trail development that, if built, would give all people in the study area access to a trail within 1.5 miles of their residence. Currently, only 30% of Black residents have direct access to a trail. The Plan also includes the following four over-arching goals based on community and stakeholder input:

1. Keep Trail Users Safe From Traffic
2. Maximize Trail Joy for All
3. Explore Creative Funding Opportunities

#### 4. Revitalize Neighborhoods without Resident Displacement

The Milwaukee County Park System is one of Wisconsin's crown jewels, with the 135-mile Oak Leaf Trail the nexus of the parks, neighborhoods and municipalities throughout the County. Supplemented by local municipal trails like the City of Milwaukee's Beerline, the trail network is heavily used, with over two million trips per year. However, many neighborhoods, particularly majority-Black neighborhoods, are not directly connected to the trail network. As a result, many of these residents cannot easily and safely access the trails or enjoy the benefits of trails and the amenities they connect to.

The Northwest Side Trail Connections Plan encompasses the area from Bluemound Road on the south, County Line Road on the north, Green Bay Road on the east, and the Menomonee River on the west. The Plan – developed with strong engagement with residents and stakeholders – presents a vision for walk and bike connectivity in northwest Milwaukee and the surrounding area and prioritizes specific projects for implementation based on equity considerations, public input, and feasibility.

Related File No's:	22-132; 22-131; 21-933; 20-874
Associated File No's (Including Transfer Packets):	
Previous Action Date(s):	

#### **ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

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

#### **FISCAL EFFECT**

This project was previously budgeted for, and no additional costs are anticipated other than internal staff time.

#### **TERMS**

Long-term advisory document

#### **VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

Sarah Toomsen – [sarah.toomsen@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:sarah.toomsen@milwaukeecountywi.gov)

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#### **PREPARED BY:**

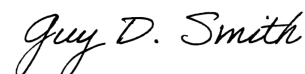
Sarah Toomsen, Parks Manager of Planning and Development

Jessica Wineberg, Parks Trails Coordinator

Therese Gripentrog, Parks Landscape Architect

#### **APPROVED BY:**

Guy Smith, Executive Director Milwaukee County Parks



**ATTACHMENTS:**

Resolution  
Fiscal Note  
PowerPoint Presentation

CC:

David Crowley, County Executive  
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office  
Sheldon Wasserman, Supervisor District 3, PC Chair  
Steven Shea, Supervisor District 8, PC Vice Chair  
Felicia Martin, Supervisor District 7, PC Member  
Juan Miguel Martinez, Supervisor District 12, PC Member  
Steve Taylor, Supervisor District 17, PC 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  
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