

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: April 21, 2023  
To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
From: Guy Smith, Executive Director  
Subject: Milwaukee County Parks 2022 Annual Report  
File Type: Informational Report

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This informational report provides a report on how the Milwaukee County Parks Department set and achieved its 2022 goals.

**POLICY**

This report aligns to Chapter 108: Achieving Racial Equity & Health.

Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	<a href="#">Chapter 108: Achieving Racial Equity &amp; Health</a>
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**BACKGROUND**

[File 22-104](#) amends Chapter 108 to require that “annually, by April 30 of each year or sooner, each Milwaukee County department leader and/or their designee(s) shall provide a written and oral report outlining their year-end results to a Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors committee. The reports shall, at a minimum:

- (a) Indicate the year-end goals the department set in the prior year
- (b) Share the rationale and relevance of the department’s performance metrics (i.e. explaining why they are “SMART” goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely, and extending) and how they align to the county’s racial equity strategy, if applicable)
- (c) Report the department’s year-end results relating to the goals it had set, and
- (d) Provide a thorough analysis clearly articulating why goals were significantly exceeded, met, or not met.
- (e) Explain the department’s progress in creating a departmental-level strategic plan that aligns to the countywide strategic plan and provide an update about future plans to revise and enhance the departmental-level plan in the year ahead.”

**ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

- 1A: Reflect the full diversity of the County at every level of County government
- 1B: Create and nurture an inclusive culture across County government
- 1C: Increase the number of County contracts awarded to minority and women-owned businesses
- 2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity
- 2B: Break down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered
- 2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions
- 3A: Invest “upstream” to address root causes of health disparities
- 3B: Enhance the County’s fiscal health and sustainability
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities

Alignment to the above strategic objectives is articulated in response to the questions below.

## **BODY**

1. What were the top 3 goals of your department/office 2022? Please explain why they are “SMARTIE” goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely, inclusive, and equitable) and how they align to the county’s racial equity strategy.
  - Goal 1: Earned Revenue: The Parks Department will reach its earned revenue goal of \$23,246,763 by the end of 2022. Each year the Parks Department sustains the operations of services that are not fully funded by tax levy support so that they are accessible to the public. Valuable services such as the community centers and pools require the support of revenue earned elsewhere in the department to sustain operations throughout the year. These non-revenue producing services align with the County’s vision as they advance health equity and are an upstream investment in addressing health disparities.
  - Goal 2: Environmental Sustainability: The Parks Department will reduce paved areas by 10,000 square feet (1/4 acre) by the end of 2022. The Milwaukee County Parks system has 611 acres (26 million square feet) of paved assets including roads, parking lots, trails, and athletic courts. Paved areas (asphalt and concrete) contribute to pollution by exposing water to surface pollutants and runoff. Paved areas also contribute to global warming by creating their own emissions and exacerbating urban heat island effects. The reduction of paved areas directly supports the County’s vision as addressing a root cause of health disparities.
  - Goal 3: Deferred Maintenance: The Parks Department will reduce its deferred maintenance backlog by \$1,000,000 by the end of 2022. The condition of parks buildings and facilities is translated to a dollar value by estimating the cost to restore these assets to a “like new” condition. The ability to maintain our assets ensures that services will continue to be provided to the public including those services that support the County’s vision.

2. To what extent were these goals accomplished in 2022? Please explain.

- a. Goal 1: Earned Revenue: The Parks Department achieved its earned revenue goal of \$23,246,763 by generating \$24,899,149 in earned revenue by the end of 2022.
- b. Goal 2: Environmental Sustainability: The Parks Department did not achieve its goal of reducing 10,000 square feet of paved areas by the end of 2022. The Department completed construction on two road reconstruction projects in 2022 – the parkway through Brown Deer Park and a section of the Root River Parkway near the Whitnall Park Beer Garden. The Brown Deer project increased paved area by 1.61 acres in total. The Root River Parkway project increased paved area by 1.32 acres in total.
- c. Goal 3: Deferred Maintenance: The Parks Department achieved its goal of addressing \$1,000,000 worth of deferred maintenance by addressing at least \$1,155,000 worth of deferred maintenance by the end of 2022. This amount is calculated from the Parks' major maintenance budget. Deferred maintenance is addressed in many ways and repairs are not always tracked in terms of dollars saved, often maintenance is provided by a person working who does not code their time as specifically addressing deferred maintenance.

3. What factors *enabled* progress toward accomplishing these goals?

Earned revenue goal: 2022 was another successful year for revenue generating areas within the department. One key factor in the performance of entirely outdoor revenue generating activities is weather which is impossible to predict when establishing the annual revenue target in the budget. Contributing to the successful attainment of this goal were areas that significantly exceeded their revenue goals including Food and Beverage sales (\$470,895 over budget in 2022), Golf course revenue (\$1,059,428 over budget), commissions on sales from leased partners (\$630,335 over budget), room rentals (\$101,932 over budget) and McKinley Marina slip rentals and commodity sales (\$235,600 and \$253,998 over budget respectively).

Environmental sustainability goal: Parks did not achieve its goal to reduce pavement by 10,000 sf, but it should be noted that adding off-street bicycle trails in both Brown Deer Park and the Root River Parkway contributed to this. The new 10'-wide off-street bike trail in Brown Deer Park in particular is quite extensive and while it presents a benefit to trail users in terms of safety, access, and enjoyment, its creation did reduce green space and added paved area to the park. In addition, permeable paved areas count towards the total paved area though they are different from typical asphalt or concrete in that they mitigate stormwater runoff damage as well as other installations like bio-infiltration basins (bio-swales) and stormwater trees. The total area of permeable pavement in these two projects was 0.58 acres.

Deferred maintenance goal: Parks spent \$1,155,104 of its \$1,407,359 major maintenance funding in 2022. The difference of \$252,255 was spent on necessary improvements such as new safety fencing, traffic control measures like bollard installation, speed bumps, and upgrades to recreational amenities like sport court resurfacing. Other deferred maintenance was also

addressed through ongoing and completed capital projects. In the future, completed capital projects will be used to calculate the amount of deferred maintenance that was addressed through their completion. In addition, Parks uses the asset management software Cityworks which allows for reporting on work orders that have been addressed and closed out. Not all work orders are associated with deferred maintenance repairs, for example trimming tree limbs or removing graffiti are two tasks that are tracked in Cityworks and their work orders are tracked similar to a task that does address deferred maintenance such as replacing a faulty light fixture. In the future, Parks will attempt to track progress made towards addressing deferred maintenance through Cityworks reporting.

4. What factors *hindered* progress toward accomplishing these goals?

Earned revenue goal: While the Department overall did achieve its earned revenue goal in 2022 that was due to the areas mentioned above over-performing their budgeted revenue targets while some areas did not achieve their budgeted revenue targets. Athletic field rentals were about \$45,000 below revenue target, and admission revenue from aquatic facilities was almost \$170,000 below the revenue target.

Environmental sustainability goal: Parks did not achieve its goal to reduce pavement by 10,000 sf in 2022 through the Brown Deer Park and Root River Parkway projects as each project attempted to meet existing parking requirements. Separation of the bicycle trail to off street from what was previously a shared parkway between cars and bikes did add pavement but there are many other benefits to this separation not accounted for in the goal itself.

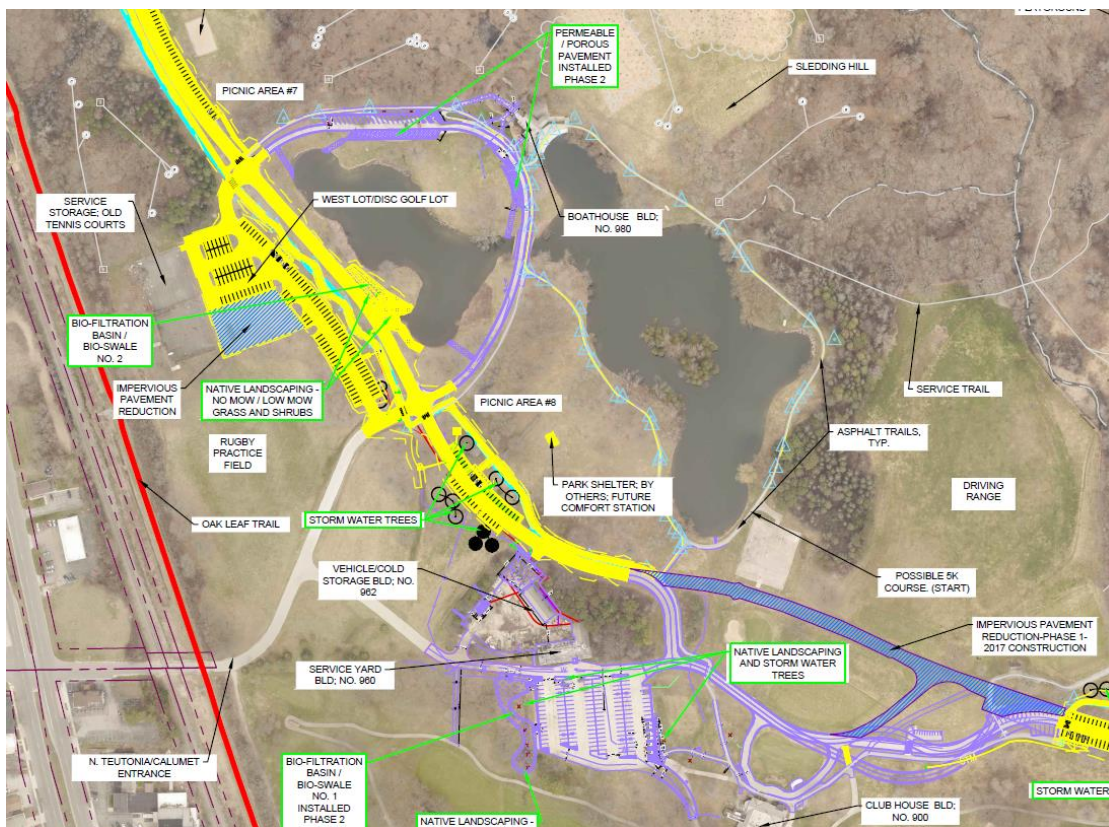


Image: Northwest section of Brown Deer Parkway plans, pavement removed highlighted in blue; permeable drive access to Boathouse highlighted in purple.

Deferred maintenance goal: Parks has established a manageable goal for addressing deferred maintenance within the parameters of its annual budget, but this amount is approximately 1/500th (0.2%) of the total amount of deferred maintenance that exists in Parks' facilities. Real progress in addressing deferred maintenance requires more resources allocated to the building and construction trades in order to properly maintain assets, more capital projects to replace aged assets, demolition and removal of certain assets that are no longer in service, and progress needs to be made on large scale initiatives for signature facilities that contribute to deferred maintenance such as the Mitchell Park Domes and Kosciuszko Community Center. In addition, the need to spend over \$250,000 of the major maintenance budget on items that are needed but not addressing deferred maintenance shows the need for investment in new improvements while the maintenance burden is already significant. Traffic control and pedestrian safety improvements have been funded from the major maintenance budget.

5. Aside from financial resources, what help does your department/office need in identifying and achieving your strategic goals?

Parks continues to exceed its revenue expectations because of the growth in activities that are fee-based like golfing and boating.

Pavement reduction will require difficult conversations in the future regarding the need for additional parking and may result in challenging community discussions around the value of green space as opposed to automobile parking needs.

One of the most impactful actions that could be taken to drive down the total deferred maintenance backlog of the Parks Department would be the demolition of vacant or underutilized assets. The removal of facilities within the Parks may encounter pushback from park users, at which time the education and support of County leaders to consistently highlight the need to support the County's fiscal health will be essential. While the County as a whole has reduced its building footprint by millions of square feet, and in turn reduced the cost to operate the building portfolio significantly, the same cannot be said of Parks buildings. A coordinated effort to better manage the Parks' portfolio of buildings to include the removal or redevelopment of some buildings that are the least efficient to operate should be considered.

6. What is the status of your department/office in developing its strategic plan?

Parks is currently engaged with a consultant to produce a strategic plan. The planning process is expected to conclude in summer 2023 and a report will be generated in Fall 2023.

### **FISCAL EFFECT**

The report is informational only and there is no fiscal impact.

### **VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

### **PREPARED BY:**

Jim Tarantino, Deputy Director

**APPROVED BY:**

Guy Smith, Executive Director *Guy Smith*

**ATTACHMENTS:**

cc: David Crowley, County Executive  
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office  
Committee on Parks and Culture Members  
Committee on Health Equity, Human Needs and Strategic Planning Members  
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Mgr, Office of the County Clerk