

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: 4/12/2023

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

From: Amos Morris, Executive Zoo Director, Zoological Department

Subject: From the Executive Zoo Director submitting the Milwaukee County Zoo's 2022 Annual Report

File Type: Informational Report

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This informational report provides a report on how the Milwaukee County Zoo 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 “SMARTIE” goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely, inclusive, and equitable) 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**

The Zoo aligns to the County’s vision by providing a solid, strong cultural institution, which is vital to a vibrant, healthy, and thriving community. We serve as an educational facility for the public and school children, provide an economic boost for the local community and care for animal species and their habitats to save endangered animals from extinction. In a non-COVID year, the Zoo on average serves over 1.2 million guests.

With strategic planning in progress and not finalized, Zoo management established Zoo-wide priorities centered around Animal Welfare and Conservation, Fiscal Responsibility and Customer Service/Experience. These priorities are now used in the development of staff performance evaluation goals. Division and employee goals are developed in harmony with the County’s values of Inclusion, Influence, and Integrity. Management overlays these values, so that all employee goals not only align to a priority but also positively impact the County’s values.

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: Animal Welfare and Conservation – Optimal animal welfare links directly to our mission and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) accreditation standards. It is measured by animal health and behavior welfare assessments, as well as through public perception. Positive welfare is achieved through an environment that promotes natural behaviors and social groupings, opportunities for choice and control, training and enrichment, habitat complexity, nutrition, and health care.

Measures can be enhanced through formal evaluation of health and behavior, implementation of advancements in the field and public promotion of these activities.

The County's values of Inclusion, Influence, and Integrity were intertwined using the strategic focus areas of Creating Intentional Inclusion, Bridging the Gap, and Investing in Equity. By doing this, we inspire empathy for animals and wildlife in all visitors and program participants, promote conservation by mission, vision, and example, and make animal welfare the hallmark of the Zoo's operations. Additionally, this work fulfills AZA accreditation standards and abides by the AZA's code of ethics.

- Goal 2: Fiscal Responsibility – Fiscal health is critical to our operations and can be achieved multiple ways including increases in revenue, partnerships, expense savings, and efficiencies that increase productivity.

The County's values of Inclusion, Influence, and Integrity were intertwined using the strategic focus areas of Creating Intentional Inclusion, Bridging the Gap, and Investing in Equity were incorporated to broaden accessibility opportunities for all in MCZ's admissions and Zoological Society of Milwaukee (ZSM) programs and memberships. The practice of sound fiscal responsibility is part of every fiscal decision.

- Goal 3: Customer Service/Experience – Zoo guests are clearly our customers, but our definition of customer is: EVERYONE you encounter every day. Strong partnerships across divisions and within teams contribute positively to the experience for both internal and external customers. Activities that align to this priority include the following: reviewing guest feedback for quality control; proactively engaging guests in a positive way; creating inspirational experiences and environments; considering the impact of daily decisions on the guest experience; and implementing innovative programs that continue to engage our community, supporters and visitors and attract new interest from these groups.

The County's values of Inclusion, Influence, and Integrity were intertwined using the strategic focus areas of Creating Intentional Inclusion, Bridging the Gap, and Investing in Equity and were linked to a customer service policy that welcomes all and focuses on inclusion as an integral part of the Zoo's Guest Experience Committee.

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

- *Goal 1: Animal Welfare and Conservation*
  - i. Maintained AZA Accreditation and USDA Standards: Every five years, AZA evaluates the Zoo to make sure it meets AZA standards for animal welfare, care and management, including living environments, social grouping, health and nutrition. Every animal at AZA-accredited institutions undergoes a thorough welfare assessment at least once a year. Animals are provided with enrichment, which stimulates each animal's natural behavior and provides variety in their daily routine. The Accreditation Commission also evaluates the veterinary program, involvement in conservation and research, education programs, safety policies and procedures, security, physical facilities, guest services, and the capacity of the institutions' staff.
  - ii. Animal Species – Milwaukee County Zoo is home to more than 2,100 animals representing 314 species (see table below). The Zoo serves wildlife and their habitats by working to conserve animals and providing them with exceptional professional care. In 2022, animal staff participated in all Species Survival Plans® (SSPs) and Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs) that manage these animal populations in professional care.

On Zoo Grounds	Species	Specimens
Mammals	72	326
Birds	90	333
Reptiles	40	80
Amphibians	10	32
Fish	70	1,178
Invertebrates	32	231
Total	314	2,180

The animals owned by the Zoo and on loan to other zoological institutions included:

Out on Loan	Species	Specimens
Mammals	9	28
Birds	1	2
Reptiles	6	7

- iii. Conservation Breeding Births & Hatchings: In 2022, the Zoo had significant animal births/hatchings for wildlife listed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species:
1. Critically Endangered Laysan Teal: one female and one male (January)
  2. Endangered Red Panda: one female (June)
  3. Endangered Reticulated Giraffes: one female (May) and one male (August)
  4. Vulnerable Rhinoceros Vipers: two males and eight females (November)

In addition, in 2022 the Zoo also hosted the births/hatchings of North American River Otters, a Gentoo Penguin, Poison Dart Frogs, a Harbor Seal, Inca Terns, Japanese Macaques, a Boat-Billed Heron, Prehensile-tailed Porcupines, a Sunbittern, White-rumped Shama Thrushes, Desert Grassland Whiptails, Nigerian Dwarf Goats, cows (a Jersey and a Red-and-White Holstein) and Cichlids.

- iv. Wildlife Conservation: Animal care professionals at MCZ contribute to a diverse portfolio of conservation, research and conservation breeding programs at local, national and international levels. Our collaborations with other conservation-focused organizations are of significance. They bring strength and stability to the programs, as well as to the conservation community. The following projects were supported by staff involvement and/or funding in 2022, from the Milwaukee County Zoo in collaboration with the Zoological Society of Milwaukee:
1. AZA Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake SSP
  2. AZA Florida Reef Tract Rescue Project
  3. AZA Orangutan SAFE

4. AZA Panamanian Golden Frog SSP/Project Golden Frog
5. AZA Reproductive Management Center
6. AZA Tiger Conservation Campaign
7. AZA Wildlife Trafficking Alliance
8. Bat Conservation International
9. Berggorilla and Regenwald Direkthilfe
10. Borneo Nature Foundation
11. Cheetah Conservation Botswana
12. Community Conservation, Inc.
13. Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International
14. Elephants for Africa
15. Giraffe Conservation Foundation
16. Hornbill Research Foundation Nest Adoption
17. International Elephant Foundation
18. International Iguana Foundation
19. International Rhino Foundation
20. IUCN Conservation Planning Specialist Group
21. IUCN Species Survival Commission Office of Strategic Partnerships
22. IUCN Tapir Specialist Group Baird's Tapir Project
23. Kibale Fuel Wood Project
24. Lola Ya Bonobo
25. Madagascar Fauna & Flora Group
26. Maryland DNR Black Bear Den Surveys
27. NPS Santa Monica Mountains Predator-Prey Study
28. Orangutan Outreach
29. Pat Gives Back
30. Polar Bears International
31. Proyecto Tití
32. Punta San Juan Program
33. Red Siskin Initiative
34. Rock Iguana: Grand Cayman Blue Iguana
35. Ruaha Carnivore Project
36. Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association
37. Sahara Conservation Fund North African Ostrich Project
38. Sahara Conservation Fund North Scimitar-horned Oryx Project
39. Save the Elephants
40. Save the Golden Lion Tamarin
41. Snow Leopard Trust
42. The Trumpeter Swan Society
43. Turtle Survival Alliance
44. Uganda Conservation Foundation

- 45. WI Bureau of Endangered Resources (General)
- 46. WI Bureau of Endangered Resources Herp Fund
- 47. Wild Animal Health Fund
- 48. Wild Camel Protection Foundation
- 49. Wildlife SOS
- 50. Ya'axche Conservation Trust

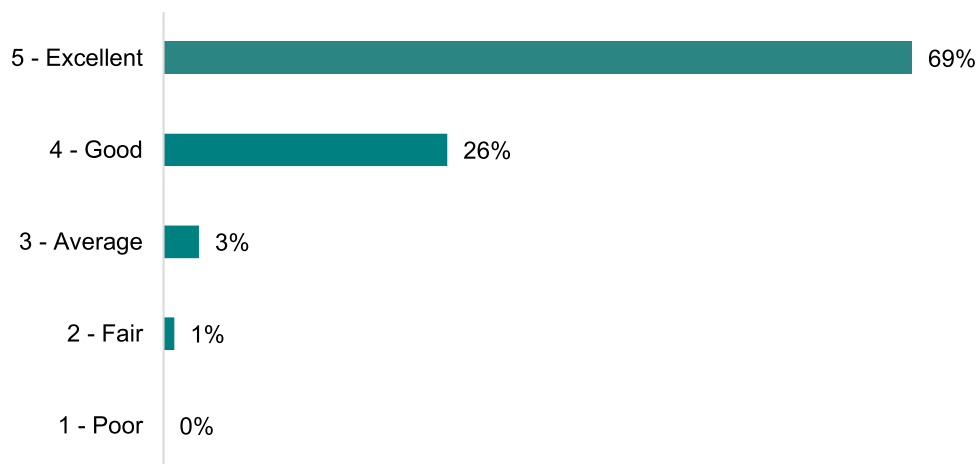
v. 2022 Research Supported by the Milwaukee County Zoo: Below are approved studies that were supported by providing biological samples, hosting researchers for observational studies, and/or direct staff involvement.

- 1. Assessing population structure and genetic diversity of the Eastern Mountain Bongo in North American captive populations using genomic data.
- 2. Assessment of Acute Phase Proteins (APP) in captive gibbon species (*Hylobates* spp.).
- 3. Characterization of squamate microbiomes.
- 4. Continuing work of the Great Ape Heart Project; including Milwaukee-based Great Ape ultrasound and cardiovascular disease studies.
- 5. Evaluation of serum and liver copper concentrations and association with dietary factors in captive Baird's tapirs (*Tapirus bairdii*).
- 6. Functional genomics of African swine fever virus infections - an effective system to identify pro-tolerance and resilience pathways in pigs.
- 7. Identifying the molecular and genetic basis for coat color adaptation in the polar bear.
- 8. River hippo molecular genetic population evaluation.
- 9. SARS CoV-2 vaccination response trial in non-domestic felids.
- 10. Submission of tissue biopsy to culture cell lines at San Diego Wildlife Alliance Frozen Zoo.
- 11. Wounding in captive bonobos.

vi. Family Farm Internship Program: In 2022, the Animal Division continued the Family Farm Internship Program in partnership with Vincent High School to provide opportunities for job training and create interest in zoo careers. The Zoo again hosted two agriculture interns for the 2022 summer season and is exploring ways to address barriers to expansion of the program in 2023.

- vii. Finance Youth Apprenticeship Program: The Zoo partnered with Milwaukee Public Schools on a youth apprenticeship through the State of Wisconsin, Department of Workforce Development. A high school student was hired into the role to assist the accounting department and earned high school credits while obtaining on-the-job training. We look forward to expanding the youth apprenticeship program in 2023.
- viii. Exit Survey Results – Animal Care: The annual exit survey includes a very important question of “How would you rate the overall quality of animal care at the MCZ?” The question was added to the survey in 2019 as part of the strategic plan for AZA’s Animal Welfare Committee is to gain a better understanding of visitor perceptions of animal welfare at AZA facilities. Survey results showed 95% of respondents gave the top two ratings and the average rating was 4.6/5 (see table below). This is a 1% increase from our last report. Studies have shown there is a relationship between perceptions of animal welfare and overall visit satisfaction. Our results showed the respondents who gave the top rating of Excellent or 5 for overall quality of animal care were significantly more likely to report being extremely satisfied with their overall zoo visit. The higher animal care is perceived by the guest, the higher they rate their overall experience.

### Overall Quality of Animal Care Ratings





- *Goal 2: Fiscal Responsibility:* Below is a table showing the Zoo's revenue categories, expenditure savings, net surplus (deficit) and attendance performance for 2022.

Account Groupings	2022 Adjusted Budget	2022 Actuals	Variance
General Visit Revenues	\$ 10,225,899	\$ 9,844,724	\$ (381,175)
Events	\$ 2,641,185	\$ 1,504,782	\$ (1,136,403)
Group Sales	\$ 2,047,142	\$ 1,644,801	\$ (402,341)
Society Funding	\$ 3,426,413	\$ 3,385,567	\$ (40,846)
Sponsorships	\$ 450,000	\$ 395,645	\$ (54,355)
Exclusivity Donations	\$ 160,000	\$ 135,000	\$ (25,000)
Miscellaneous	\$ 453,450	\$ 403,151	\$ (50,299)
Total Revenues	\$ 19,404,089	\$ 17,313,670	\$ (2,090,419)
Expenditures	\$ 25,878,829	\$ 21,223,079	\$ 4,655,750
Net Surplus (Deficit)			\$ 2,565,331
Attendance	1,351,500	1,130,515	(220,985)

Year 2022 ended with a surplus of \$2.5M. Revenues were \$2M behind budget but expenditure savings totaled \$4.6M allowing the Zoo to carryover \$2.5M in major maintenance funds into 2023 to continue addressing deferred maintenance and prepare for the 2024 AZA accreditation inspection. With the carryover of funds, the Zoo budget will have a zero net tax levy impact.

Even with the lingering pandemic impact that continued into 2022, the Zoo generated \$2,175,735 more revenues or a 14.4% increase over 2021 (see table below). This could not have been accomplished without the hard work and dedication of all Zoo staff.

Account Groupings	2021 Actuals	2022 Actuals	Variance
General Visit Revenues	\$ 9,587,267	\$ 9,844,724	\$ 257,457
Events	\$ 621,416	\$ 1,504,782	\$ 883,366
Group Sales	\$ 1,002,751	\$ 1,644,801	\$ 642,050
Society Funding	\$ 3,309,922	\$ 3,385,567	\$ 75,645
Sponsorships	\$ 229,099	\$ 395,645	\$ 166,546
Exclusivity Donations	\$ 135,000	\$ 135,000	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$ 252,480	\$ 403,151	\$ 150,671
Total Revenues	\$ 15,137,935	\$ 17,313,670	\$ 2,175,735

The table below shows 2022 results compared to pre-COVID 2019, 2020 and 2021 for revenues and attendance. 2022 revenues exceeded 2019 revenues by 15.6%, 2020 by 2694.8% and 2021 by 14.3%. Attendance in 2022 exceeded 2020 and 2021.

2022 Data	2019 Comparison	2020 Comparison	2021 Comparison
2022 Revenues	115.61%	2694.83%	114.33%
2022 Attendance	91.01%	217.56%	103.52%

Despite the pandemic, the Zoo pivoted to find ways to enhance revenue opportunities, program changes and expenditure savings. Some program highlights that supported the budget are as follows:

i. Programming & Revenue highlights:

1. Revenues that exceeded budget included parking fees, picnic permits, giraffe feedings, stroller rentals, carousel ride, skyride and general admission.
2. The Zoo hosted its first-ever Celebrate Diversity Day, June 11, 2022. "Diversity is nature's greatest strength. It should be ours too". Activities included a Biodiversity Guessing Game, a Cultural Icons Scavenger Hunt, and a Sustainability Market, celebrating the diversity in our community and supporting local groups and artisans. The event was a success, with over 8,000 guests enjoying the activities. We are excited to host the event in 2023.

3. The Zoo unveiled a new website in September. Averaging over 100,000 visitors a month, the website features a modern design, increased and more intuitive navigation for users, and an interactive map. The website also serves as the Zoo's App, resulting in a cost saving.
4. In 2020, the Zoo had planned to launch a new and improved Boo at the Zoo. Due to COVID restrictions in 2020 and 2021, the Zoo pivoted to a very successful drive-thru event. In 2022 Boo at the Zoo was held as an in-person, family event that included trick or treating, Mad Science activities, Halloween displays and entertainment. The event sold out and exceeded expectations with 19,348 in attendance over the four-day event and generated \$301,909 in revenues.
5. Milwaukee A la Carte, one of the Zoo's largest events, returned in 2022. Due to limited vendor availability as well as staffing challenges, hours were shortened, and some modifications were made. Even with these changes, the event was a success and exceeded budget projections by 38%.
6. Wild Lights: Now in its second year, the event was held over 25 nights in December. Based on a three-year plan, the second year included doubling the number of lights and light displays, adding a second night for our 21+ visitors and welcoming Santa and Mrs. Claus. The weather was a challenge, as two nights were cancelled due to severe cold. Customer satisfaction was high, and 2022 attendance increased 32% from 2021.
7. Gorilla Trek Experience: The Zoo entered into a contract with Immotion in 2022 for a virtual reality theater that combines educational VR experiences with state-of-the-art motion-platform technology for an immersive educational experience to engage visitors and increase revenues. Immotion Group, a leading provider of location-based VR edutainment, has won the 2023 Lumiere Award in the Best Use of VR category for its ground-breaking GORILLA TREK documentary experience. For Immotion, this achievement highlights its successful collaboration with the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund. Led by the Fossey Fund's CEO and Chief Science Officer, Dr. Tara Stoinski, Immotion's VR team

spent six-months planning the two-week excursion into the Virunga Mountains of Rwanda. There, they visited daily with a family of mountain gorillas, documenting their intricate social and family dynamics. The result is Immotion's 7-minute motion-based VR experience, GORILLA TREK, which transports viewers to the mountains of Rwanda where they trek alongside the renowned primatologist, becoming almost a member of the gorilla family (Cision PR Newswire, n.d.). Below are some guest comments.

- a. *"My favorite part was where that little gorilla walks up, reaches out, and it's almost like it's touching your face. And I thought that was really cool."*
- b. *"I would say this is a 'ten.' This is a 'ten' experience, and I've been coming to the Zoo for 65 years – and I've never experienced anything like this. It was cool, a cool experience."*

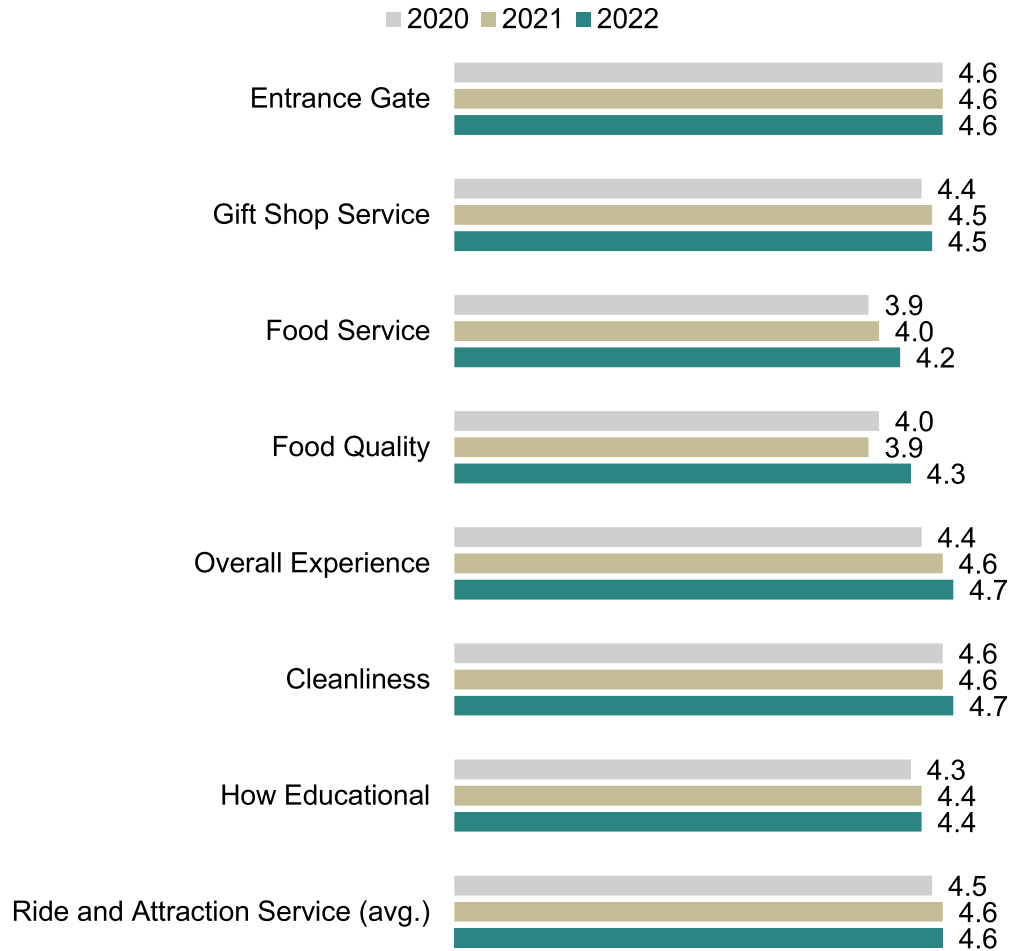
8. Giraffe Experience: The Zoo has offered guests a chance to feed giraffes since 2006 but completely reworked the program in 2022. Additional staff support allowed for nearly 43,800 people to participate in 2022 and generated \$213,700 in revenue for an increase of \$178,225 over 2021.

- ii. Efficiencies/Process Improvements: Through the use of technology, the Zoo is able to continue automating manual processes. One of the automation projects was our Special Needs reservation system. The new special needs application process started in 2021, but electronic reservations began for the first time in 2022. We created a "Zoo Buzz" staff communications and appreciation Teams site to recognize and engage employees. The Zoo moved to new digital signage software in the US Bank Gathering Place that allows instant and efficient communication updates to our guests as to what is going on within the Zoo on any given day. Also new in 2022, using a QR code and Smartsheet, seasonal staff can easily request to be added to the Zoo's emergency alert system. A Smartsheet form was created for our Zoo Partners to utilize when on- and offboarding staff members to bridge any communications gaps. Lastly, with the use of new IMSD Outlook Groups technology, we created one "Zoo Partner" email list which now encompasses all Zoo Partners and includes them in pertinent communications.

- iii. Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG): In August 2021, the Zoo was awarded \$6.8M in SVOG funds from the U.S. Small Business Administration. The grant guidelines allowed the Zoo to apply 2020 personnel costs to meet the expenditure requirements thus freeing up the dollars to benefit the Zoo. The majority of the funds were carried over into 2022 and \$3.7M was used for deferred maintenance and preparations for the 2024 accreditation inspection. A carryover of \$2.5M was granted in 2023 to continue tackling deferred maintenance.
- *Goal 3: Customer Service/Experience*: Below are the various ways we measured the Zoo's success in this area.
  - i. Annual Exit Survey Service Results: Yearly, the Zoo performs an annual survey to receive guest's feedback regarding their visit and the data is used to better understand guest experience and determine whether service performance goals are being met. Despite staffing difficulties and the impact of the pandemic, most customer service performance metrics met or even exceeded goals. The chart below shows the average rating trends from 2020-2022. The rating scale is 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest rating.

**Customer Service Performance Metrics****Average Ratings\***

(\*Scale of 1-5, with 5 as the highest possible)



The average ratings for all the performance metrics either remained high or improved this year, with all of them falling between good (4) or excellent (5) for the first time since 2018.

- ii. **Social Media Reach:** The Zoo continued to see significant increase in social media impressions (number of times a post was seen) in 2022. Impressions increased from 119 million to 388 million, reaching 229 million people. Engagement also increased significantly in 2022 going from 19.8 million to 29 million. We had 33 viral videos. The giraffe birth was posted and received 91,744,210 Facebook impressions which was the highest for the year.

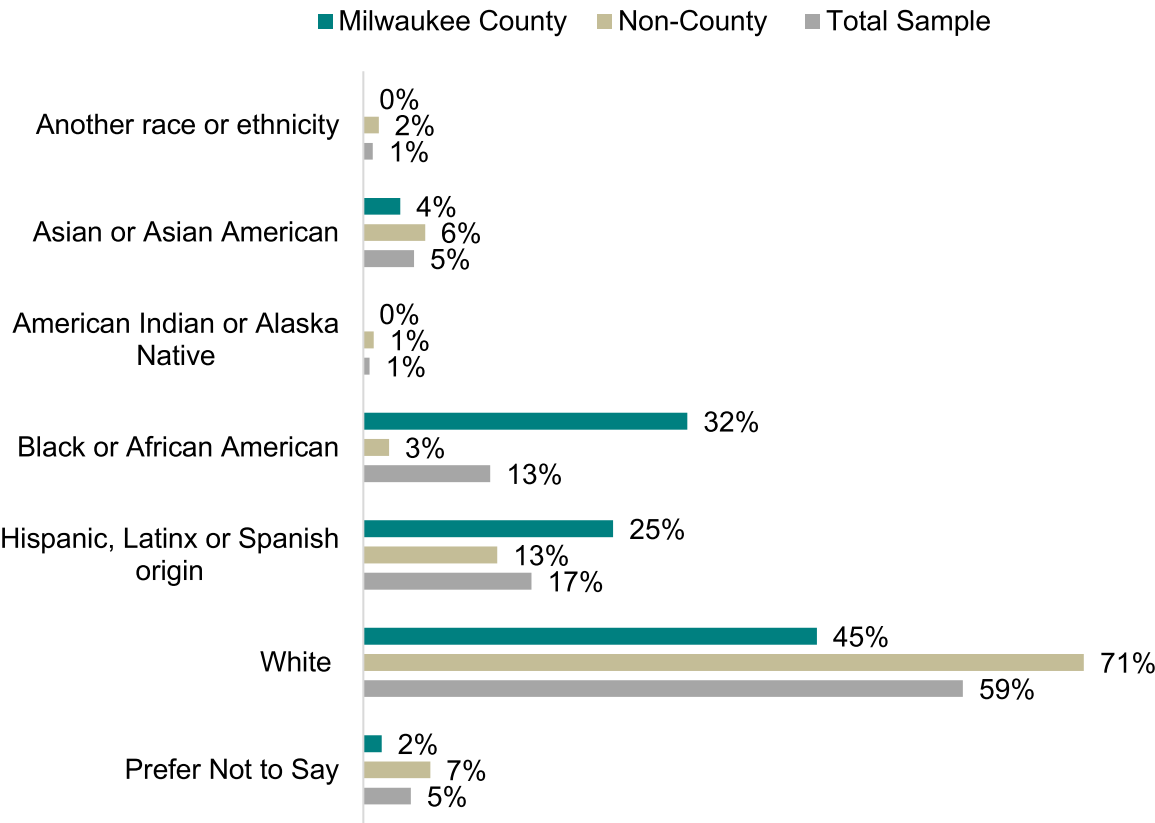
- iii. Attendance at Summer Animals in Action and Farm Animal Encounter talks in 2022: These talks are free with Zoo admission between Memorial Day and Labor Day and were offered for the first time since 2019.

Talk	Estimated 2022 Audience
Elephants (daily)	10,849
Camel (daily)	3,625
Harbor Seal (daily)	1,607
Aquatic & Reptile Center (weekends only)	1,766
Medical Mondays (weekly)	1,952
Farm Animal Encounters (up to 4/day)	7,714

- iv. Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI): The Zoo promotes diversity, equity, access and inclusion. Our programs are proactive and transparent, with measurable goals for assessing progress. Here are some of the ways we measure our progress.
1. Annual Exit Survey Demographics: The exit survey includes demographic questions that help us understand who we are serving and identify any gaps if they exist. Thirty-eight percent of the survey respondents that shared their zip code reported visiting from Milwaukee County. The average overall experience rating for this subsample was 4.9 out of 5, which is higher than last year (4.5 in 2021). Survey respondents were also asked their race/ethnicity. The percentage of each race/ethnicity reported by the Milwaukee County subsample (teal) is compared to both the non-County subsample (gold) and total sample (gray) in the chart below. The Milwaukee County subsample is more diverse than the subsample of visitors from outside the County. It is also more closely aligned with actual populations in Milwaukee County.

Race/Ethnicity Breakdown by Subsample \*

*\*Question format was multi-select. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and Middle Eastern were also offered as choices but were omitted from the graph since they were not selected by any respondents.*

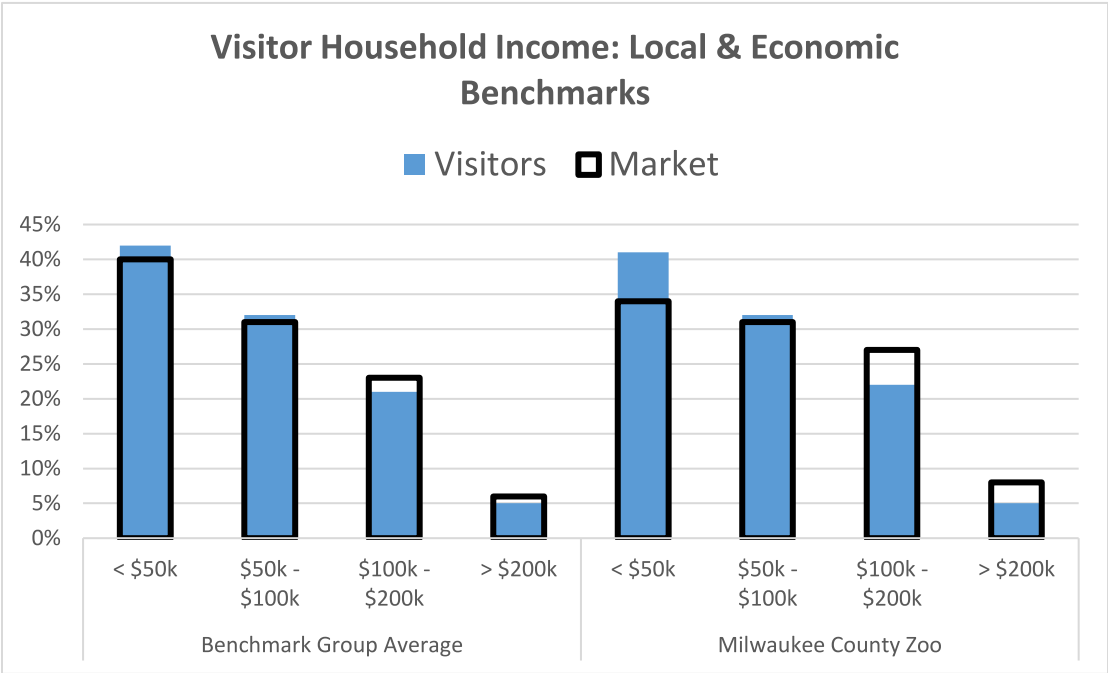


*Note: Attendance demographics closely matches Milwaukee County’s demographics.*

2. Market Penetration Analysis (see table below): The Milwaukee County and the ZSM have partnered with Canopy Strategic Partners on an integrated strategic and business planning effort. During one of the business plan workshops, Canopy shared an analysis on the difference between the composition of Zoo visitors’ household income versus the makeup of the market region at large. Visitor demographics were gathered via mobile device data and compared with Census information from the surrounding area (a 90-minute



drivetime radius). This analysis showed that Zoo visitation overrepresents lower-earning households by a significant margin: about 34% of market residents earn less than \$50,000 per year, while 41% of Zoo visitors are represented in this income bracket.



- 3. Accessibility Programs: The Zoo and the Society participate in many programs to broaden Zoo access. These address financial and other barriers to attendance and ways to make the Zoo experience more inclusive. In 2022, we increased our offerings with 35 accessibility programs available. For a breakdown of all the accessibility programs, see attachment #1.
- 4. Zoo’s Guest Experience Committee (GEC): The GEC brings together employees from all departments at the Zoo, Society and the SSA. The members of the GEC share information, collaborate and identify ways to improve guest experience, with a special singular commitment to diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion for all Zoo visitors. Accomplishments in 2022 include: Recertified KultureCity Sensory Inclusion Certification (created a social story for Wild Lights event), exit survey translation into Spanish and

updates to the language in Zoo signage (e.g., removing the word “handicapped” from the changing station sign).

5. Community Events: The Zoo is proud to partner with Milwaukee County in Community Events, celebrating Juneteenth Day annually and participating in the First Annual Sherman Park Harvest Fest in October 2022. It is an honor and privilege to represent the Milwaukee County Zoo with a resource table while engaging with residents from surrounding areas as we bring communities together.
6. 2022 Marketing Strategy: In 2022, the Zoo earmarked 20% of its advertising budget to outlets that are most used by underserved communities. In addition to these targeted efforts, the Zoo’s radio, pre-roll, and digital ads were translated into Spanish. We continue to include images in our advertising that represent the diversity of visitors.
7. Universal Changing Station: In 2022, as the result of guest feedback, the Zoo added a universal changing station to provide inclusive access for adults and children.

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

- The ability of the Zoo to stay open all year despite the pandemic was critical to the success of the organization.
- Dedicated Zoo employees who stepped up to cover staff shortages and vacancies in essential roles.
- The rental of the Zoo’s picnic areas, animal buildings and rental facilities began to rebound in 2022. The Zoofari Conference Center was returned to a Zoo rental facility. Picnic rentals increased from 88 in 2021 to 154 in 2022 and large-scale evening Zoo rentals increased from 36 to 47. With some COVID restrictions still in place for indoor facilities in early 2022, the Zoo was still able to host over 315 private rental events.
- The Zoo’s strong partnerships with the Society, SSA and revenue share partners.

- Expanded our busy season offerings to more closely mirror pre-pandemic offerings, with Animals in Action talks and Family Farm Encounters happening for the first time since 2019. Estimated attendance in 2022 was over 27,500 guests.
- The inclusiveness of our Strategic/Master/Business planning process begun in Q3 of 2022 helped galvanize Zoo and Society staff in frank discussions around our shared missions and visions. Even though this process is not complete, we are already seeing dividends in staff engagement (see #5 below for more information on our Strategic Planning process).

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

- The pandemic and County COVID Administrative Orders in the beginning of 2022 had a negative impact on group sales and revenue generating partners and programs.
- The fiscal health of our partners during the pandemic affected our revenue budget and operations.
- Balancing revenue generation and the safety of guests during a pandemic.
- The impacts of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza on wild bird populations. To keep our susceptible bird population safe, the Zoo closed the Aviary and moved some birds indoors, limiting their visibility and affecting the guest experience.
- Turnover and staffing shortages in both seasonal and full-time positions for the Zoo and its partners, tied to changing labor force, a competitive job market, and burnout/stress on teams who manage a 365-day-per-year operation.
- Rebuilding rentals such as weddings takes time. The Zoo likely won't see a complete rebound in these type of rentals for at least two more years. The Zoofari was not available for rent until summer of 2022. Also, some large clients such as Children's Hospital were still not ready to hold large events in 2022.
- The Zoo's east entrance is no longer an efficient way to process guests entering the Zoo. The current admission process occurs from the guest's vehicle before they enter the parking lot, often causing traffic to back up,

unsafe delays on surrounding roads and wait times of up to an hour or more to enter the Zoo. This system causes lost revenue-generating opportunities, and we lose customers who are not willing to wait in long lines. The Zoo will ask for design funds in the 2024 Capital Budget to redesign the entry to allow traffic to flow into our parking lots and have ticketing take place after cars have parked.

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

Significant progress has been made to develop an enterprise-wide strategic plan for the Zoo in partnership with the Zoological Society. The enterprise-wide plan includes a strategic plan, a refresh of our master plan (facilities plan) along with a business plan. Work began in earnest early last fall following the hiring of Canopy Strategic Partners to help guide our efforts. As of this writing, we estimate we are approximately 65-70% through the process and anticipate completing the project this spring/early summer. Progress includes developing a shared vision, mission and key commitments along with updated values for the strategic plan. We also developed initial recommendations regarding facility improvements to consider over the next 7-10 years as part of the master plan refresh. Additionally, we have done a preliminary financial review of revenue generating opportunities at the Zoo and Society. These and other findings will be compiled into a final report when the project is complete.

**FISCAL EFFECT**

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

**VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

[Amos.Morris@Milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:Amos.Morris@Milwaukeecountywi.gov), [Vera.Westphal@Milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:Vera.Westphal@Milwaukeecountywi.gov),  
[Laura.Pedriani@Milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:Laura.Pedriani@Milwaukeecountywi.gov), [Matthew.Haseman@Milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:Matthew.Haseman@Milwaukeecountywi.gov),  
[Andrew.Stockel@Milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:Andrew.Stockel@Milwaukeecountywi.gov), [Kari.Williams@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:Kari.Williams@milwaukeecountywi.gov)

**PREPARED BY:**

Vera Westphal, Deputy Zoo Director

**APPROVED BY:**

Amos Morris, Executive Zoo Director

*Amos D Morris, Jr.*

**ATTACHMENTS:** Milwaukee County Zoo 2022 Accessibility Programs (PDF)

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Steve Cady, Research and Policy Director, Comptroller's Office  
Ciara Miller, Research Analyst, Comptroller's Office  
Anthony Rux, Budget and Management Analyst, PSB  
Vera Westphal, Deputy Zoo Director  
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#### **Required hardware and software**

Operating Systems:	Windows2000? or WindowsXP?
Browsers (for SENDERS):	Internet Explorer 6.0? or above
Browsers (for SIGNERS):	Internet Explorer 6.0?, Mozilla FireFox 1.0, NetScape 7.2 (or above)
Email:	Access to a valid email account
Screen Resolution:	800 x 600 minimum
Enabled Security Settings:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allow per session cookies</li><li>• Users accessing the internet behind a Proxy Server must enable HTTP</li></ul>

	1.1 settings via proxy connection
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\*\* These minimum requirements are subject to change. If these requirements change, we will provide you with an email message at the email address we have on file for you at that time providing you with the revised hardware and software requirements, at which time you will have the right to withdraw your consent.

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