



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES  
*Milwaukee County*

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ACTION REPORT

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TO: Chairman Theodore Lipscomb, Sr.

FROM: Teig Whaley-Smith, Director, Department of Administrative Services

RE: Request to Eliminate Pay-To-Park Policy

DATE: February 13, 2018

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**Background**

On November 6, 2017 the Milwaukee County Board passed the 2018 Operating Budget that set the policy that “[r]evenue of \$1.6 million dollars is included in the budget for the Milwaukee County Parks Department related to the institution of a pay-to-park program.”<sup>1</sup> Although the County Board voted 15-3 in favor of the budget that set this policy,<sup>2</sup> there does not appear to be public support for this policy. Several County Supervisors who voted for the policy in the budget have now indicated they will not vote to implement the policy.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, the County Executive is requesting that the County Board eliminate the Pay-To-Park Policy. This memo provides options for the County Board to consider as it creates a replacement policy. As the policy makers for Milwaukee County we are asking for policy direction on where the County Board would like to go with the funding of our Milwaukee

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<sup>1</sup> Milwaukee County 2018 Adopted Operating Budget, at p 422, available at <http://county.milwaukee.gov/ImageLibrary/Groups/cntyDAS/PSB/Budgets/2018-Budget/2018-Adopted-Budget/MilwaukeeCounty2018AdoptedBudgetFINALFORWEB.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Milwaukee County Board File 17-674, available at <https://milwaukeecounty.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3180277&GUID=FF599F65-8F15-47E4-8DF8-FAA7239F5521&Options=ID|Text|&Search=17-674>

<sup>3</sup> Stingl, Jim. “Welcome to your Milwaukee County parks – now cough up some money to park”, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (Feb. 8, 2018) (citing Supervisor Dimitrijevic’s opposition), available at <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/columnists/jim-stingl/2018/02/08/stingl-welcome-your-milwaukee-county-parks-now-cough-up-some-money-park/317632002/>; Cullerton, Brendan. “Unfortunate necessity: Many outraged over proposal to pay for parking at Milwaukee County parks (Feb 6, 2018) (Citing Supervisor Haas’s opposition), available at <http://www.cbs58.com/news/unfortunate-necessity-many-outraged-over-proposal-to-pay-for-parking-at-milwaukee-county-parks>.

County Parks. As a default, we have prepared a fund transfer from contingency that we request be immediately passed as the County Board considers its policy options for the remainder of 2018 and for the 2019 Budget.

**Options**

*Option 1: Parks Service Cuts*

One option to replace the \$1,662,000 in Pay-To-Park revenue would be to require service cuts in the Parks Department. Given the Board’s Policy not to cut services from Aquatic Facilities,<sup>4</sup> other core Parks areas would have to bear the brunt of the cuts should the County Board choose this option. If the Board decides to go this direction, it may decide to focus on those parks amenities that have the highest existing subsidy. Below is a list of the highest subsidized, non-aquatic facilities that would be equal to or greater than the \$1,662,000 in revenue reduction.

*Figure 2. Highest Subsidized Non-Aquatic Parks Facilities*

<b><u>Service</u></b>	<b><u>2018 Expected Tax Levy Subsidy</u></b>	<b><u>Est. 2017 Attendance</u></b>	<b><u>Subsidy/ Attendee</u></b>
Wehr Nature Center	\$460,291	99,652	\$4.62
Mitchell Parks Domes	\$437,090	183,067	\$2.39
Boerner Botanical Gardens	\$339,978	214,993	\$1.58
King Community Center	\$335,813	48,885	\$6.87
Kosciusko Community Center	\$161,112	84,638	\$1.90
Par 3 Golf Courses	\$93,826	17,289	\$5.43
<i>Total</i>	\$1,828,110	648,524	\$2.82

As a variation of Option 1, the County Board could also consider reducing CAMPAC funding which is currently \$394,825.

<sup>4</sup> Milwaukee County Board File 18-140, available at <https://milwaukeecounty.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3312398&GUID=BBA358FA-AD21-43F7-BB3C-0F8622CEE6BC&Options=ID|Text|&Search=18-140>

Option 2: Increase Other Parks Fees

In lieu of the Parks department cutting services, instead the Board could choose to increase parks fees. Parks fees are listed in the Operating Budget on pages 433 – 442. If the Board is able to identify which fees it would like to increase, DAS can prepare a fiscal analysis of how much fees would need to be increased to replace \$1,662,000 of revenue.

Option 3: Increase the Vehicle Registration Fee by \$5

Instead of service cuts in Parks or increase in Parks Fees, the County Board can raise the Vehicle Registration Fee (VRF) at any time. If the Board acted on a VRF prior to March 31, 2018, then a VRF increase of \$5 would be sufficient to replace the \$1,618,705.32 of lost revenue. It should be noted that statutorily VRF can only be used for transportation purposes. In this option the additional \$5 VRF would have to be used to fund Department of Transportation and other statutory purposes to free up \$1,662,000 of tax levy that could be moved to the Parks Department in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter.

Figure 2. Impact of an additional \$5 VRF

	<b>2018 VRF Projections</b>	
	<u>Existing \$30 VRF</u>	<u>Additional \$5 VRF</u>
<i>June</i>	\$1,493,058.34	\$248,843.06
<i>July</i>	\$1,559,255.40	\$259,875.90
<i>August</i>	\$1,575,348.38	\$262,558.06
<i>September</i>	\$1,348,940.53	\$224,823.42
<i>October</i>	\$1,423,197.00	\$237,199.50
<i>November</i>	\$1,252,032.45	\$208,672.08
<i>December</i>	\$1,060,399.84	\$176,733.31
<i>Total</i>	<u>\$9,712,231.94</u>	<u>\$1,618,705.32</u>

Option 4: Contingency Transfer

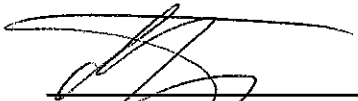
The final option is to transfer \$1,662,000 from Contingency into the Parks Department to replace the revenue lost. Unlike the other options, this option would only cover the 2018 revenue shortfall and the County Board would need to develop an alternative policy for 2019.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that Board abandon the Pay-to-Park policy and provide policy guidance to DAS on how it would like to replace the \$1.6 million in lost revenue. As a default, DAS has prepared a fund transfer for Option 4: Contingency Transfer. If the Board adopts a different policy, DAS can of course assist in preparing the analysis of the preferred policy.

Prepared by: Teig Whaley-Smith, Director, Department of Administrative Services

Approved By:



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