



March 13, 2020

Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 N. 9th St.
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Re: Support for Kinnickinnic River Watercourse Restoration and Flood Management in Jackson Park

Dear County Supervisors,

On behalf of Milwaukee Riverkeeper, we are writing to support the Kinnickinnic River Watercourse Restoration and Flood Management Project in Jackson Park, and to urge you to approve it at the upcoming Finance and Audit Committee, and at subsequent Parks, Energy, and Environment Committee and County Board meetings scheduled in upcoming weeks. The proposed project will be largely funded by MMSD and ratepayers, and will reduce flood risk, naturalize the Kinnickinnic River, and improve vital park amenities in Jackson Park.

Milwaukee Riverkeeper has been involved in several advisory committees pertaining to this project as well as the larger flood management efforts throughout the Kinnickinnic River Watershed over the last 15 years. The Kinnickinnic River Watercourse Management Plan (KKRWMP) would reduce flood risk for approximately 330 structures along the Kinnickinnic River mainstem. The Jackson Park project is a vital piece of this larger puzzle to mitigate flooding, improve water quality and wildlife habitat, and convert the Kinnickinnic River from an eyesore and safety risk to a community asset.

The Jackson Park project would provide more flood storage in Jackson Park and on the adjacent Dion-Simon Landscaping parcel, as well as remove 1,400 feet of concrete-lined channel, and replace 700 feet of underground metal culvert with a naturalized stream channel. This project will have direct impacts on Jackson Park and its facilities, and MMSD has entered into an intergovernmental cooperation agreement (ICA) with Milwaukee County Parks to ensure that all park amenities that are impacted will be replaced and improved.

Beyond just restoring impacted areas during construction, this ICA would: replace two pedestrian bridges, four recreational courts (e.g. tennis & basketball), two soccer fields, walking and bicycle trails, and picnic areas; construct a new pedestrian bridge, playground, and two picnic shelters; replace KK River Parkway from W. Forest Home Avenue to S. 43rd Street, including pedestrian improvements, traffic calming elements, and new parking areas; replace and relocate the County Park's service yard and related maintenance buildings to another location within the park; put in over \$750,000 in improvements to the Jackson Park Boathouse; dredge the lagoon and restore the banks with native vegetation and improved pedestrian access including four fishing/viewing piers and stepped stone access points at up to 10 locations; place \$2,750,000 in an escrow account for the County to use toward improvements to or replacement of the current pool facility; pay the County for trees removed within the project area in an amount not to exceed \$835,000; and other park improvements.

We believe that this project will result in significant positive improvements to Jackson Park. If we do not grasp this opportunity and move forward, we will lose out on an important opportunity to improve the



water quality and wildlife habitat of the Kinnickinnic River, and to improve the natural areas and recreational amenities of Jackson Park. These park benefits will allow us to better connect Milwaukee County residents to Jackson Park and the Kinnickinnic River, and allow for more community members to recreate in and enjoy our parks and rivers. In conclusion, we urge you to support the Kinnickinnic River Watercourse Restoration and Flood Management Project in Jackson Park.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cheryl Nenn", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Cheryl Nenn
Riverkeeper

Cc: Jennifer Bolger Breceda, Executive Director
Kevin Shafer, Executive Director, MMSD
Guy Smith, Director, Milwaukee County Parks