



Council Agenda Item

Meeting Date: January 21, 2025

Agenda Item: Discussion and Possible Action regarding the Approval of Proposed Scope of Services for the development of a new Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan with Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

Staff Contact (name, email, phone): Kevin Boehm, kboehm@whitewater-wi.gov, (262)473-0122

BACKGROUND

(Enter the who, what when, where, why)

The creation of a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) is a critical step for the City of Whitewater to ensure its parks, recreational facilities, and natural resources align with the needs of the community. The city has not had an updated CORP in decades, with the most recent reference dating back to the 1980s. This significant gap highlights the urgent need to reevaluate and modernize the approach to outdoor recreation planning to meet current and future demands.

A CORP provides a detailed inventory and assessment of all public recreation properties within Whitewater, including those managed by the city, state, federal agencies, and the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. This encompasses parks, open spaces, recreational facilities, trails, and natural resource features. The plan identifies community needs, describes planned actions, and makes data-driven recommendations based on current trends in recreation and urban development.

Participation in creating a CORP is essential because it empowers the community and stakeholders to shape the vision for Whitewater’s outdoor spaces. A well-crafted plan serves as a valuable tool for the Parks and Recreation Department and the Park and Recreation Board to make informed decisions about resource allocation, facility improvements, and future expansions. It also strengthens the city's ability to secure stewardship grants from state and federal governments, which are vital for funding park system growth and development.

Moreover, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources requires an updated CORP every five years as a prerequisite for receiving stewardship grant funding. This makes the creation and adoption of the plan not just beneficial but necessary for maintaining access to financial assistance for enhancing Whitewater’s recreational assets.

Public input is a cornerstone of this process, ensuring the plan reflects the community's diverse needs and aspirations. Collaboration with the Park and Recreation Board will further ensure the plan’s alignment with broader strategic goals for the city. By actively engaging in the CORP process, residents and stakeholders contribute to building a thriving, well-planned, and inclusive outdoor recreation system for current and future generations.

PREVIOUS ACTIONS – COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

(Dates, committees, action taken)

None

FINANCIAL IMPACT

(If none, state N/A)

The total cost of the plan is \$20,000, and this amount is in the 2025 budget Parkland Development 245 fund for this purpose. The plan is not expected to be completed until late 2026 or early 2027, the allocated funds will be held in the fund until the balance is due aligning with the project timeline.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION/SUGGESTED MOTION

Staff recommends that the Council approve the proposed Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) as a guiding document for the City of Whitewater's parks, recreation facilities, trails, and natural resource planning with Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

ATTACHMENT(S) INCLUDED

(If none, state N/A)

1. Proposal from Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
-