



1. Describe the proposed ordinance or resolution. File number: _____

Between the general fund and the annual award contract with the Wisconsin DNR under the guidance of the EPA Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coast Health (BEACH) Act of 2000, the City of Milwaukee Health Department operates a beach monitoring program. Wis. s.s. requires the monitoring of beaches for human health hazards which include water quality and surf conditions such as riptides, waves and currents. Beach monitoring includes water sampling and laboratory analysis during the 15 week beach season between Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends. The beaches include Bradford, McKinley and Rocky (new South Shore). Additional recreation events include USA Triathlon and the Dragon Boat Race in the Lakeshore State Park. Beach water quality and/or riptides/currents/waves may require closure under the authority of the Milwaukee Health 

2. Identify the anticipated equity impacts, if any, of this proposal.

The addition of beach water monitoring for surf conditions (riptides/current/waves) will impact all beach-goers, swimmers, bathers, divers and surfers. 2024 saw one drowning and two rescues at Bender Park beach in Milwaukee County. 2020 saw four drownings at McKinley Beach in the City of Milwaukee. These instances were all related to riptide/current/wave conditions. A May 2021 County Parks hearing discussed "unwritten rules of segregation, people of color consider McKinley more welcoming than Bradford," and "national statistics show Black and Hispanic youth typically receive less swimming instruction and drown far more often than their white counterparts." Additionally, it was noted that "racial disparity relegates the least skilled swimmers to the most dangerous beach: at least three of McKinley's 2020 victims were Black." 

3. Identify which minority groups, if any, may be negatively or positively impacted by the proposal.

Positive impacts of the beach sign postings for both water quality and surf conditions will give a better change for beach-goers, swimmers, bathers, divers and surfers to make better decisions when entering the water. Especially for those that may not have strong basic swimming skills such as the ability to float, tread water, perform the sidestroke or exhibit breath control while in the water.



4. Describe any engagement efforts with minority communities potentially impacted by the proposal.

Engagement efforts currently are the signs themselves, as well as the addition of a "risk" sign to be posted for the first time in 2025. This risk sign will be adjacent to the Open for Swimming/Advisory/Closed sign and indicate when the beach is monitored, what it is monitored for (water quality and surf conditions), as well as a declaration of "swim at your own risk" with a note about swimming ability.

5. Describe how any anticipated equity impacts of the proposal will be documented or evaluated.

Public feedback on social media as well as beach surveillance will aid in assessing the impact of the new signage. Additionally, public health surveillance of ED visits for near drownings and/or fatalities will give a better understanding to impact and whether additional warning methods are needed, which may include bright electronic lighting and signage.

6. Describe strategies that will be used, if any, to mitigate any anticipated equity impacts.

Beach lifeguards are under the purview of the Milwaukee County Parks and this will be the second year of no active lifeguarding on our lakeshore. This absence will hinder assessments, however, we will rely on surveillance data and social media feedback.

Name: **Christine Westrich**

Signature: **Christine Westrich**

Digitally signed by Christine Westrich
Date: 2025.02.24 11:26:38 -06'00'

Date: **2.24.2025**