

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

HPC Meeting Date: 07-06-2020
Ald. District 1, 2, and 7
Staff Reviewer: Carlen Hatala

PROPERTY
Lincoln Creek Parkway
Located between West Lincoln Creek Drive at West Hampton Avenue and Meaux Park
Milwaukee, WI 53209, 53216, 53218

OWNER/APPLICANT
Milwaukee County Parks Department
City of Milwaukee Canal
City of Milwaukee
Milwaukee County/Register of Deeds
Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District
Soo Line Railroad Company, c/o Real Estate
WisDOT c/o Railroads and HARBO

CONSULTANT
Angela Hronek and Emily Pettis
Cultural Resource Specialists
Mead & Hunt, Inc.
2440 Deming Way
Middleton, WI 53562

PROPOSAL
Certified Local Government Review of the National Register Nomination for the Lincoln Creek Parkway

STAFF COMMENTS
The Milwaukee County Park System Multiple Property Documentation was prepared in 2008 and identified nine parkways as significant within the contexts of Community Planning and Development in Milwaukee County, Federal Work Relief Programs in Milwaukee County, and Landscape Architecture in the Milwaukee County Parkway System. Separate nominations have been and will be prepared for each of the parkways. Previously listed parkways in the city of Milwaukee include the Milwaukee River Parkway and the Kinnickinnic River Parkway.

Lincoln Creek Parkway is significant under Community Planning and Development and the period of significance begins in 1935 with the implementation of the Parkway Plan and lasts through 1971 to include improvements made in the late 1960s and early 1970s that include the addition of 16 acres and the 1971 construction of a comfort station in Meaux Park.

Lincoln Creek Parkway is not significant under Landscape Architecture due to changes to original plans, alterations made between 1935 and 1971 and replacement of several bridges. It does not fully convey its original design intention but is still largely intact and retains enough integrity to convey its significance to community planning.

Lincoln Creek was originally known as Mud Creek and old photos show that people used the creek to dump their refuse. Charles B. Whitnall first included "Mud Creek Parkway" in 1924 in his original plan for the Parkway System and the plans were included in the first annual report of the of Milwaukee County Regional Planning Department of 1924. The area was known for flooding and flooding continued to be a problem throughout the later decades. Despite that fact, once the parkway plan was revealed, land along it from Lincoln Park to

Fond du Lac / West Hampton Avenue was promoted by realtors who played up its natural beauty.

By the early 1930s no work had begun on the parkway, the Great Depression hampered finances and Milwaukee City Engineer Joseph P. Schwada came up with a revised plan approved by the Public Land Commission in 1931. Debate over the changes followed until a severe spring flood in 1935 led to consensus to remove a 1.5 mile bend in the creek.

In November 1935 the WPA and City of Milwaukee approved a project to improve the parkway using New Deal funding and federal work-relief labor. Much effort was made in the area between North 47th Street and N. Teutonia Avenue from 1936 to 1942 to make the creek wider, straighter, and deeper with masonry walls and storm sewers. The original course of the waterway was filled in and graded.

Despite the fact that a number of the parks and parkways were transferred from the city to Milwaukee County, Lincoln Creek Parkway remained under city jurisdiction until 1945. The complexity of land ownership and acquisition is addressed more fully in the National Register nomination.

Scenic parkway and recreational facilities were the focus of efforts after World War II. The western portion of today's Meaux Park, north of West Villard Avenue between North 23rd Street and North Green Bay Avenue was undertaken in 1958. The parkway drives were essentially completed by 1972. Flooding has continued to be a problem and beginning in 1998 efforts were made by the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District to naturalize Lincoln Creek and reduce flood risks and improve water quality and wildlife habitat.

Today, the vehicular drives are discontinuous consisting of three unconnected segments. The Parkway is narrower than planned and tree plantings and vegetation is more dispersed. It does not display the same level of skilled craftsmanship or rustic styling as originally planned. Despite the changes Lincoln Parkway contributes to the park landscape and circulation system of the overall parkway system plan. To quote from the National Register nomination, "The Parkway reflects the aims of the Milwaukee County park commissioners who advocated developing a parkway system to relieve urban congestion, provide a hygienic landscape, provide outdoor recreational spaces, increase adjacent property values, and control flood-prone watersheds...[I]t is not necessary for an eligible parkway to look exactly like its original design as long as it retains a significant amount of its characteristic features to make its historic character clearly recognizable."

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Recommend that HPC support the nomination.

Lincoln Creek Parkway resources (west to east)

Resource name*	Construction date**	Contributing status
Lincoln Creek Parkway	1935	Contributing Site
Bridge P-40-0854	1958	Contributing Structure
W. Lincoln Creek Drive	1935	Contributing Structure
W. Parkway Drive	1935	Contributing Structure
Pedestrian Bridge	c.2000	Noncontributing Structure
Bridge B-40-0923	2017	Noncontributing Structure
WPA Memorial	c.1940	Contributing Object
Pedestrian Bridge	c.2000	Noncontributing Structure
Culvert	1936	Contributing Structure
Pedestrian Bridge	c.2000	Noncontributing Structure
Bridge B-40-0415	2001	Noncontributing Structure
Pedestrian Bridge B-40-0908	2001	Noncontributing Structure
Bridge P-40-0850	1937	Contributing Structure
Bridge B-40-0701	2003	Noncontributing Structure
Culvert	c.2000	Noncontributing Structure
Bridge B-40-0545	1985	Noncontributing Structure
Bridge P-40-0801	1961/2010	Noncontributing Structure
Utility Building	c.2010	Noncontributing Building
Railroad Bridge	c.1930	Contributing Structure
Bridge P-40-0636	1961	Contributing Structure
W. Lincoln Creek Parkway	1956	Contributing Structure
Bridge P-40-0823	1936	Contributing Structure
Culvert B-40-0703	2002	Noncontributing Structure
Pedestrian Bridge	c.2000	Noncontributing Structure
Bridge P-40-0894	1956	Contributing Structure
Meaux Park	1915	Contributing Site
Soccer Field	c.1970	Contributing Structure
Ball Diamonds	c.1965	Contributing Structure
Basketball Courts	c.1980	Noncontributing Structure
Bridge B-40-0651	1941	Contributing Structure
Service Building	1926	Contributing Building
Comfort Station	1971	Contributing Building

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title			
organization	Milwaukee County Parks Department	date	2018
street & number	9480 Watertown Plank Road	telephone	(414) 257-7275
city or town	Wauwatosa	state	WI
		zip code	53226
name/title			
organization	City of Milwaukee Canal	date	2018
street & number	Box 2079	telephone	
city or town	Milwaukee	state	WI
		zip code	53233
name/title			
organization	City of Milwaukee	date	2018
street & number	809 N. Broadway	telephone	
city or town	Milwaukee	state	WI
		zip code	53202
name/title			
organization	Milwaukee County/Register of Deeds	date	2018
street & number	901 N. 9 th Street	telephone	
city or town	Milwaukee	state	WI
		zip code	53233
name/title			
organization	Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District	date	2018
street & number	260 W. Seeboth Street/P.O. Box 3049	telephone	(414) 272-5100
city or town	Milwaukee	state	WI
		zip code	53204
name/title			
organization	Soo Line Railroad Company, c/o Real Estate	date	2018
street & number	501 Marquette Avenue Suite 1525	telephone	
city or town	Minneapolis	state	MN
		zip code	55402
name/title			
organization	WisDOT c/o Railroads and HARBO	date	2018
street & number	4802 Sheboygan Avenue	telephone	
city or town	Madison	state	WI
		zip code	53707

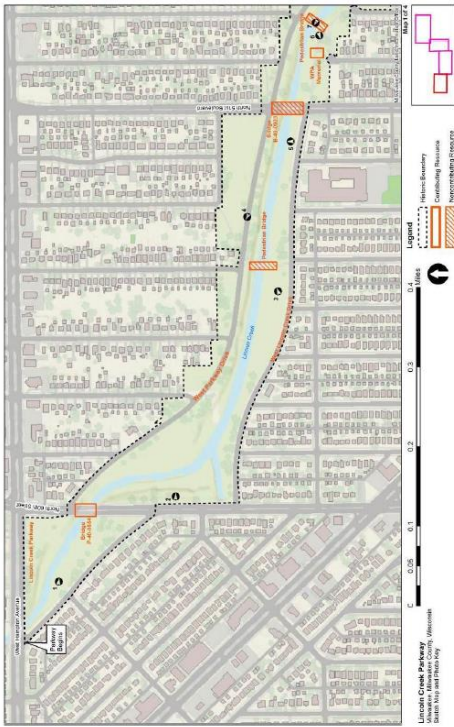


Figure 1. Lincoln Creek Parkway Boundary Map and Photo Key, map 1 of 4.

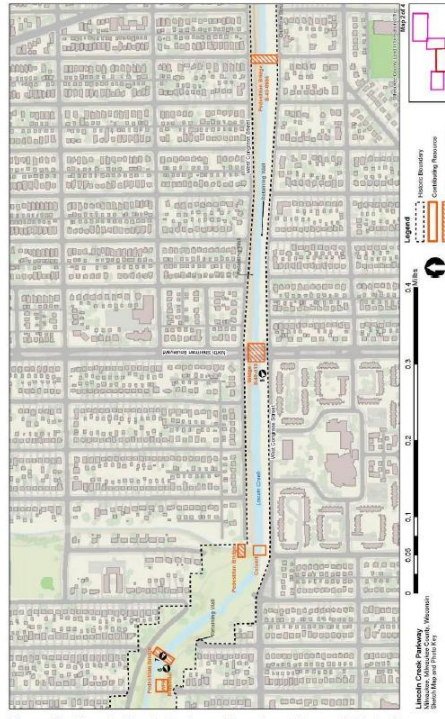


Figure 2. Lincoln Creek Parkway Boundary Map and Photo Key, map 2 of 4.

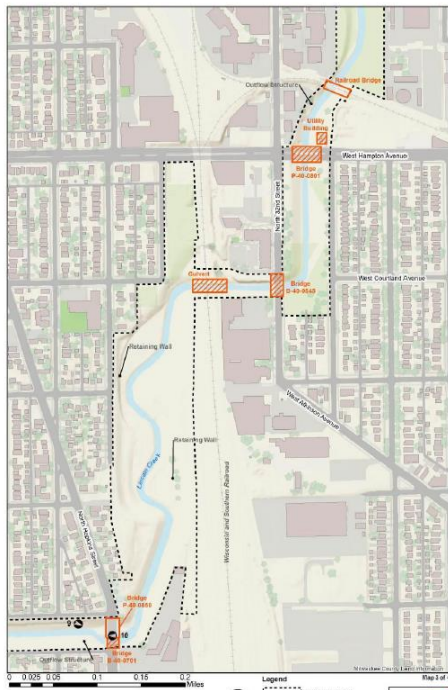


Figure 3. Lincoln Creek Parkway Boundary Map and Photo Key, map 3 of 4.



Figure 4. Lincoln Creek Parkway Boundary Map and Photo Key, map 4 of 4.

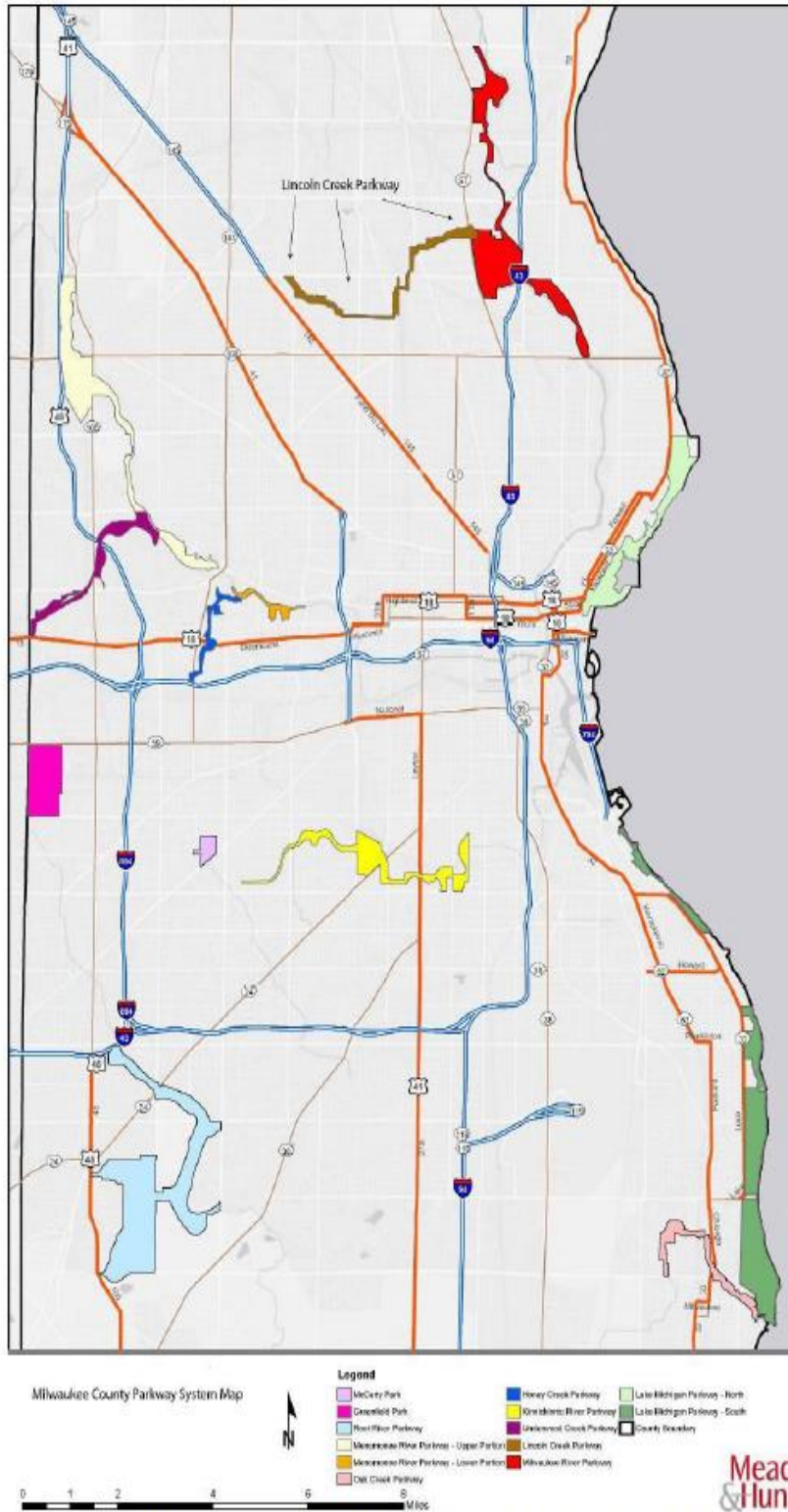


Figure 5. Milwaukee County Parkway System Map. The Lincoln Creek Parkway is labeled near the top.