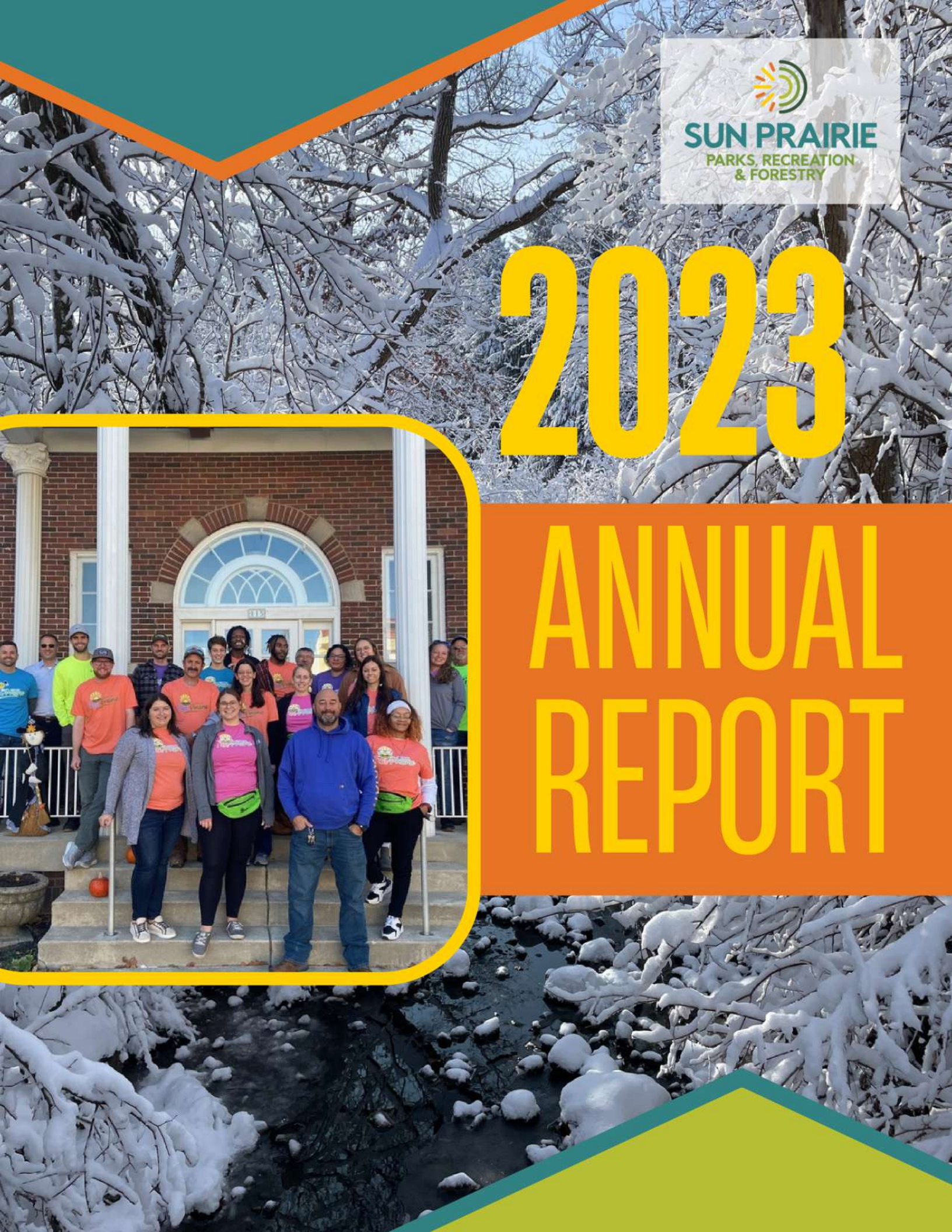




**SUN PRAIRIE**  
PARKS, RECREATION  
& FORESTRY

# 2023

# ANNUAL REPORT



# Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission

Kate Piela, Chair ● Kristen Newell, Vice Chair ● Beka Bartel ● Alder Brent Eisberner  
Jeremiah Holiday ● Adebowle Mofikoya ● Karyn Richmond

## Museum Board

Mayor Paul Esser, Chair ● Juanona Brewster ● Dan Callies ● Lorie Candelmo  
Alder Mike Jacobs ● Donna Mackey ● Kristin Pierre ● Andy Schoenherr ● Kyle Utech

## Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department Team

includes FT, PT, and year round LTE staff

Kristin Grissom, Director of Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department

Carrie Anderson, Business Services Specialist

Sunshine Anderson, Museum Programming & Design Coordinator

Andrew Buchheim, Office Assistant

Cindy Burtley, Parks & Forestry Director

Deb Dreyer, Payroll Specialist

Oscar Escamilla, Parks Maintenance Supervisor

Zachary Gundrum, Parks Maintenance Technician

Brandon Hellenbrand, City Forester

Becca Johnson, Events Assistant

Vernard Johnson, Neighborhood Navigator

Fred Kleinschmidt, Parks Maintenance Technician

Yamileth Lothe, Neighborhood Navigator

Barry Mahlum, Neighborhood Navigator

Alyse Peters, Community Events/Sponsorship Manager

Teran Peterson, Neighborhood Navigator Program Manager

Holly Pohl, Recreation Supervisor

Tiniki Powell, Neighborhood Navigator

Emily Rebarck, School-Based Program Coordinator

Joe Seltzner, Parks Crew Leader

Katie Scanlan, Museum Director

Chad Shelton, Recreation Director

Karl Spiekerman, Forestry Technician

Ryan Staeger, Parks Projects Technician

Darreon Steward, Community Health Worker

Dylan Tucker, Museum Assistant

Richard Vernig, Parks Maintenance Technician

Steve Vernig, Parks Maintenance Specialist

David Walden, Parks Maintenance Specialist



# ABOUT US

## OUR PURPOSE

To support the health, happiness, and wellbeing of our community.

## OUR VISION

Inspiring the health, wellness, and connectedness of all those who live, work, and play in the Sun Prairie community.

## OUR MISSION

To provide and maintain an accessible, equitable, and sustainable park system

To offer high quality recreational programming that is affordable and inclusive

To restore, manage, and protect a diverse urban forest

To promote and preserve open, natural spaces that provide local opportunities for exploration and connectedness to nature

To serve the community and provide programs and services that contribute to a high quality of life in Sun Prairie



## 2023 OVERARCHING GOALS

Improve operational efficiency and financial sustainability

Improve access to PRF programs, services, events, and facilities

Improve relevance and quality of PRF programs, services, events, and facilities

Grow and enhance environmental, cultural, and historical stewardship efforts

**THESE GOALS GUIDE THE DIRECTION AND DECISIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT. THEY ARE THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO.**

# IMPACT

The Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department is comprised of a team representing five divisions/functions: Events, Parks & Forestry, Recreation & Aquatics, Museum, and Neighborhood Navigators.

Below is a summary of the team's collective impact:

**\$288,274**

Alternative Revenue  
(donations, sponsorships,  
and grants)

47% increase from 2022!

**565**

Unduplicated individuals  
that utilized the  
"Recreation is for  
Everyone" Scholarship  
Program

**518**

Total programs and  
events offered

**\$48,205**

Wage savings from use of  
volunteers

**65**

Collaborative  
partnerships established

**39,783**

People engaged in PRF  
programs, events and  
services



# COLLABORATIONS

**SPPRF strives to collaborate and provide support for programs and projects for our internal and external partners.**

## INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

- **Administration**
  - Staffing and technical event assistance for Multicultural Fair
- **Business Improvement District**
  - Coordination and installation of City Hall Pollinator Garden project
  - Assistance with event and program setup
  - Landscaping and cleanup of downtown walkway
- **Building Inspection**
  - Provided Spanish translation services
- **City Attorney**
  - Conducted historical research
- **Engineering**
  - Assistance with street tree plantings for street reconstruction projects
- **Library**
  - Technical assistance with tree removal/transplanting for expansion project
  - Fire break prep for prairie burn
- **Media Center**
  - Technical assistance with cost recovery and fee structure development
- **Planning**
  - Technical assistance on landscaping plans for developments
- **Public Works**
  - Assistance with snow and ice removal operations
  - Assistance with GIS application for snow removal
- **Wastewater**
  - Assistance with right of way encroachment issue/clearing of right of way for sanitary sewer servicing
  - Assistance with development of seed mixes for dry basins and solar panels

## EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

- **Chamber of Commerce**
  - Event setup assistance and resource sharing for Cornfest
- **Dream Park**
  - Emerald Ash Borer tree treatment
  - Provided assistance with Arbor Day tree planting event
- **Groundswell Conservancy**
  - Conducted bird nest survey
  - Mowed Hanley property in Patrick Marsh
- **Sun Prairie Historical Society, Inc.**
  - Provided technical assistance for exhibits

# COLLABORATIONS

**SPPRF staff were encouraged to participate on project teams and committees throughout the year. PRF was represented on the following internal and external project teams:**

- BID Event Planning Committee
- Community Schools Executive Leadership Team
- Development Pattern and Green Infrastructure Team
- Dream Up Childcare Core Team
- Equity Audit Client Liaison Team
- Event Permitting Redesign workgroup
- Explore Children’s Museum Gus Macker Planning Committee
- Fire and Lights Event Committee
- GIS Parcel Map Workgroup
- GIS Snow Route Map Workgroup
- GIS Forestry Workorder System Workgroup
- Housing Coalition
- Housing Commission
- Juneteenth Celebration Planning Committee
- LGBTQ+ Resource Group
- Make Music Day Planning Committee
- Multicultural Fair Planning Committee
- Pridefest Planning Committee
- Sun Prairie Optimist Club
- Sun Prairie Wellness Coalition
- Tree Canopy Collaborative
- Youth & Families Commission

**SPPRF would also like to recognize the valuable partnerships and collaborations with other departments, businesses, and community organizations that help support our mission. It would be impossible to list all of the partners that support our mission, but a special thanks to:**



# MAJOR PROJECTS

## Q1: JANUARY - MARCH

- Initiated GIS Park Asset Inventory application project
- Updates to 2013 ADA Transition Plan approved and adopted

## Q2: APRIL - JUNE

- Launched new volunteer program - [www.VolunteerSunPrairie.com](http://www.VolunteerSunPrairie.com)
- Pheasant Run Park Rehabilitation - ADA access and playground replacement
- Revised Smith's Crossing Shelter/Restroom architectural and engineering drawings for rebidding
- Adoption and approval of Strategic Childcare Building Supply Plan
- Revamped and reinvigorated Summer Youth Mentorship Program

## Q3: JULY - SEPTEMBER

- Installed lighting at Wyndham Hills Pickleball Complex
- Replaced rubber mulch with engineered wood fiber at Stoneridge Estates Park
- Stonehaven Park Rehabilitation - ADA access and playground replacement
- Royal Oaks Park Rehabilitation - ADA access and playground replacement
- Broke ground on new Wetmore East park shelter
- Kicked off master planning process for Colorado Commons and Townhall Crossing Parks
- Received approval of concept and began construction of a gravel bed tree pilot program
- Museum began data migration to allow for public-facing collections access

## Q4: OCTOBER - DECEMBER

- Conceptual design for Family Aquatic Center renovation project completed and approved
- Urban Forestry Management Plan completed and adopted
- Completed GIS Forestry Application - work order system
- Developed a partnership proposal with Prairie Music & Arts to operationalize a mobile recreation trailer in 2024

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## CERTIFICATIONS

- Brandon Hellenbrand, City Forester, obtained the ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualification
- Kristin Grissom, Director of PRF, renewed the Certified Park & Recreation Professional certification
- Fred Kleinschmidt, Park Maintenance Technician, obtained a CDL-Class A
- Holly Pohl, Recreation Supervisor, obtained a Six-Sigma Green Belt certification
- Ryan Staeger, Park Project Technician, obtained the WDATCP Pesticide Applicator Certification
- Darreon Steward, Community Health Worker, obtained a Community Health Worker Certification
- Steve Vernig, Park Maintenance Specialist, was credentialed as a CDL Trainer

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Oscar Escamilla, Park Supervisor; Brandon Hellenbrand, City Forester; and David Walden, Park Maintenance Specialist, graduated from the Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association's Leadership Academy
- Carrie Anderson, PRF Business Services Specialist; Zach Gundrum, Park Maintenance Technician; and Teran Peterson, Neighborhood Navigator Program Manager, attended the the Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association's Leadership Academy as Year 1 students
- Cindy Burtley, Parks & Forestry Director; Kristin Grissom, Director of PRF; and Holly Pohl, Recreation Supervisor, attended the Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association's Leadership Academy as alumni graduates
- Cindy Burtley, Parks & Forestry Director graduated from the Community Tree Management Institute
- Sunshine Anderson, Museum Programming and Design Coordinator, attended the Wisconsin State Historical Society Conference
- Kristin Grissom, Director of PRF, participated in Leadership Sun Prairie
- Several staff attended the 2023 Wisconsin Park & Recreation Annual Conference
- Brandon Hellenbrand, City Forester, attended the Wisconsin Arborist Association's Annual Conference

## AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

- 2023 Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association Park Design Award for Haven Park
- 2023 Wisconsin Park and Recreation Association Silver Star Award for Neighborhood Navigators Scholarship Program Outreach

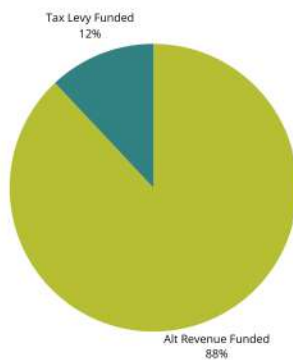
# FINANCIAL POSITION

SPPRF is committed to having the highest level of fiscal responsibility. It is part of our culture to find efficiencies, seek alternative revenue sources, and continuously evaluate programs services to ensure our resources are being allocated in alignment with community needs.

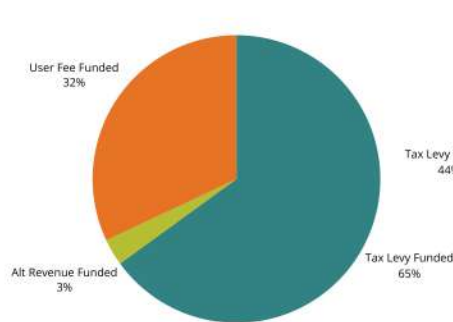
Read the Department's 2021-2023 Financial Sustainability Plan: [www.tinyurl.com/SPPRF-FSP](http://www.tinyurl.com/SPPRF-FSP)

## 2023 Year End Cost Recovery by Division (unreconciled)

### Community Events

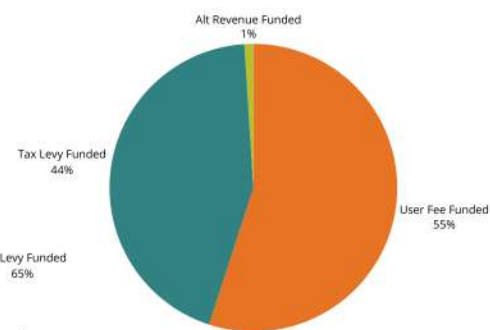


### Recreation\*

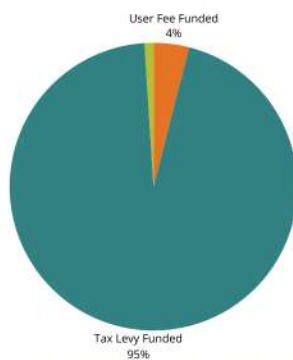


\*Cost recovery for all direct costs is 115%. Surplus funds indirect costs. PRF Director's salary and fringes are allocated 100% to recreation budget

### Family Aquatic Center

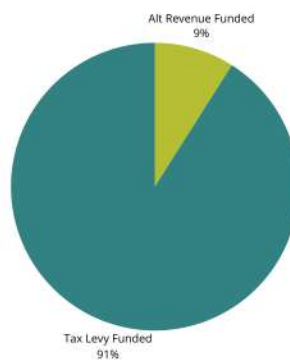


### Parks\*

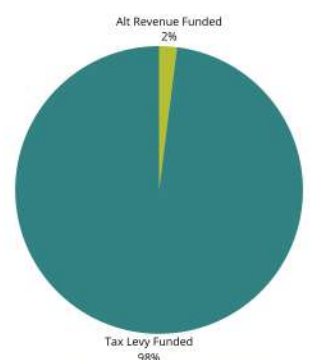


\*Operational budget only; Does not include capital budget

### Forestry

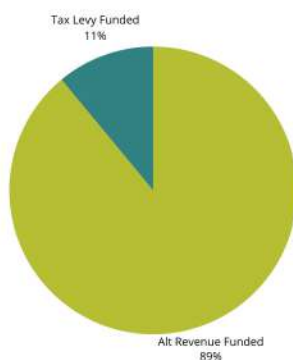


### Museum\*

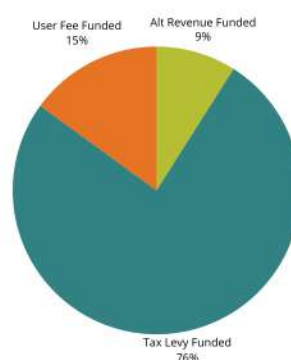


\*Museum operations rely heavily on volunteer work. Not reflected in this chart is \$25,875 of wage savings due to use of volunteers

### Navigators



### FULL DEPARTMENT



**For every \$0.76 that taxpayers invest in PRF programs and services, they receive \$1.00 of value!**  
*(24% of the total PRF budget is funded through non-tax levied sources)*

# DIVISION HIGHLIGHTS

## PARKS

- Restructured the Parks division, adding Park Supervisor position
- Revised and adopted Chapter 12.44 of the Sun Prairie Municipal Code of Ordinances - Park and Recreation Areas to allow dogs in parks on leash, with restrictions  
**LEARN MORE: [www.tinyurl.com/SPPRFParkRules](http://www.tinyurl.com/SPPRFParkRules)**
- 7 new pollinator gardens were installed throughout the city



## FORESTRY

- Completion and adoption of the Urban Forestry Management Plan  
**LEARN MORE: [www.tinyurl.com/SPPRF-UFMP](http://www.tinyurl.com/SPPRF-UFMP)**
- Awarded a \$25,000 Wisconsin DNR Urban Forestry Grant for the fourth year in a row
- Implemented in-house Emerald Ash Borer treatment program



# DIVISION HIGHLIGHTS

## RECREATION

- Expanded programming to meet community needs:
  - Partnered with Down Syndrome Association of Wisconsin for All Inclusive Teen Nights
  - Added an additional early childhood preschool program at Meadow View Elementary in partnership with SPASD
  - Added vendor programming to meet needs while supporting local businesses
- Hosted 1st Annual Fun Prairie Pickleball Open and the 40-40-40 Pickleball Challenge that received national attention
- Received approval to increase 0.725 FTE Recreation Coordinator position to 1.0 FTE



## AQUATICS

- Experienced a record-setting year for season pass sales (12% increase from 2022)
- Expanded special events and programming:
  - Aqua cycling
  - Hawaiian Luau
  - SPU Day
- Partnered with area businesses to provide sponsorships to help offset operational costs



# DIVISION HIGHLIGHTS

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

- Implemented two new community events:
  - Summer Beer Garden Series
  - Puzzle Contest
- Revamped Trunk or Treat to allow for better attendee experience and saw record setting attendance (66% increase from 2022)
- Experienced a record-setting year for event sponsorships (40% increase from 2022)



## HISTORICAL MUSEUM

- Completed behind-the-scenes work to officially launch public-facing collections access in January 2024  
**LEARN MORE:** <https://sunprairie.catalogaccess.com>
- Resumed 2nd grade student tours (first time since onset of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020)
- Increased programs, services, and engagement substantially from 2022:
  - 1,559 volunteer hours (50% increase)
  - 3,266 visitors (52% increase)
  - 93 research projects (57% increase)



## NEIGHBORHOOD NAVIGATORS

- Provided resource connection and service navigation services for 200 unduplicated adult clients and completed 238 total referrals
- Expanded Summer Youth Mentorship Program, adding fishing club, bicycle club, garden club, and tech club opportunities. The program saw record participation (75% increase from 2022)
- Implemented Family Friday Nights program in partnership with the McKenzie Family Boys & Girls Club



### More Noteworthy 2023 Department Metrics:

- Total FTE staff in PRF Department: **19.7**
- Total volunteers: **108**
- Total volunteer hours: **2,904**
- Trees removed: **122**
- Trees planted: **308**
- Total acres of parkland managed and maintained: **405.55**
- Total pool visitors: **21,998**
- Percentage of Museum collection inventory completed: **66.18%**
- Number of outreach events participated in: **24**
- Percentage of registrations that utilized scholarship program: **6%**
- Recreation program success rate: **84%**
- Number of schoolchildren that visited museum: **255**
- Average number of attendees for public input meetings: **8**



