



# MILWAUKEE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

## Supervisor Peter Burgelis – Supervisor Juan Miguel Martinez

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Wednesday, February 7, 2024  
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### **Supervisors Unite Against Jackson Park Drive Design, Advocating for Real Community Input and Compromise**

MILWAUKEE – Milwaukee County Supervisors Peter Burgelis and Juan Miguel Martinez are taking a strong stance against the County Parks final design of the Kinnickinnic River Parkway - Jackson Park Drive to trail conversion project. Both Supervisors expressed their opposition to the project in its current form, underscoring the need for adjustments in response to community concerns. Following three community meetings, the Administration and Parks Department confirmed that they will be proceeding with their original design.

While multiple design alternatives were presented to the public at the October 2023 project meeting, the Parks Department confirmed this week that they will stay with their original design, which was created and developed without any public input or comment. This project aims to convert a section of Jackson Park Drive into a pedestrian bike trail along Kinnickinnic River Parkway. On the western portion of the project, 18 homes will lose road access to their homes from Jackson Park Dr. The plan has faced significant resistance from residents who feel their voices have not been considered in the design process.

Supervisor Burgelis, a resident of Jackson Park Drive and a passionate advocate for his constituents, commented:

*“The Burgelis compromise Option C, which converts a portion of the road to a trail while maintaining street access to the 18 affected homes, is not just a suggestion; it’s a practical solution and design compromise. Removing access to people’s front doors and potentially decreasing property values is a political non-starter. Residents should not lose access to their homes because of a trail conversion project. This is an alternative that satisfies County environmental and maintenance goals, and also doesn’t negatively impact adjacent homeowners. Not including neighbors in the design process was a mistake. Not addressing their concerns is a waste of taxpayer resources and an insult to residents.”*

Supervisor Juan Miguel Martinez, representing the eastern portion of the project area, emphasized the importance of community engagement, stating:

*“Real change is possible when residents voice their concerns. As elected officials, our responsibility is to listen and act in the best interests of our community. The final solution should align with the genuine needs of the residents.”*

Supervisor Wasserman, Chairman of the County Board Committee on Parks and Culture, has requested to hear from residents at the next committee meeting scheduled for March 12, 2024, and issued the following statement:

*“Projects should align with the vision and needs of the people they intend to serve. We hope to use a balanced solution that is sustainable and benefits everyone. I look forward to hearing from the Administration and neighbors at our next meeting.”*

Funds to design the project were approved in November 2019 as part of the 2020 Capital Budget. The first public engagement meeting was held in an elementary school library in November 2022 where, according to Supervisors, residents overflowed the room and voiced strong objections to the design. Supervisors Burgelis and Martinez hosted another well-attended neighborhood forum in a school gymnasium in February of 2023 where Parks Committee Chairman Sheldon Wasserman and representatives from the County Executive’s office and Parks Department heard from dozens of residents. A follow up meeting was held in October of 2023, in the Jackson Park Boathouse, where final design options were discussed.

An open records request located an email indicating that the Parks Department is moving forward with the original design for the project in the 2025 Capital Budget. This was confirmed in a meeting with Supervisors on Feb 5, 2024.

The current proposal, if implemented, could impede emergency vehicle access, decrease property values, increase traffic on adjacent roads, include potential address changes for residents, create challenges in waste disposal.

The proposed closure could also lead to issues with ADA accessibility by affecting residents' ability to make necessary accommodations to their homes.

For more information, visit the project website: [Kinnickinnic River Parkway - Jackson Park Drive | Milwaukee County, WI \(mkecountyparks.org\)](https://www.milwaukee.gov/Projects/Projects-Details/Kinnickinnic-River-Parkway-Jackson-Park-Drive-Milwaukee-County-WI)

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