

Benchmarking Park Spending and Investment

The analysis below attempts to benchmark Fond du Lac’s park spending and investment to other cities in Wisconsin and throughout the nation. Be careful about drawing direct conclusions from the data as there can be many factors impacting comparisons and financial reporting might not perfectly align from one community to another. Therefore, the analysis is intended to provide a directional perspective on how park spending and investment in Fond du Lac compares to other cities.

Fond du Lac Park Spending and Investment

Below are figures from Fond du Lac’s proposed 2015 Operating Budget and proposed 2015 to 2019 Capital Investment Plan. Fond du Lac Parks and Recreation includes parks, pools, and the senior center.

Parks and Recreation operating expenditures = \$1,808,754

Total FDL City operating expenditures = \$31,023,858

Parks and Recreation proposed capital investment 2015 to 2019 = \$2,279,000

Total FDL City proposed capital investment 2015 to 2019 = \$65,317,700

FDL % Spending and Investment on Parks and Recreation of Total = 4.2%

Benchmarking Fond du Lac Park Spending and Investment

Based on research from the Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), the average for all Wisconsin municipalities for spending and investment on parks and recreation was 6.88% in 2008. Per the two tables below, Fond du Lac would be part of Peer Group 2 based on its population. Spending and investment on parks and recreation in Peer Group 2 was 6.95% of total budget and capital in 2008. Therefore, Fond du Lac’s percent spending and investment on Parks and Recreation of 4.2% in 2015 lags its peer group and the all municipality average from 2008. To be precise, Fond du Lac’s current budgeted allocation to Parks and Recreation as a percent of total city budget is about 40% less than the allocation of its peer group and the average Wisconsin municipality from 2008.

Wisconsin Peer Group Summary for % of Operating and Capital Expenditures Spent on Parks and Rec in 2008:

N = Number of Municipalities by Peer Group	Peer 1 (N=12)	Peer 2 (N=19)	Peer 3 (N=28)	Peer 4 (N=85)	Average Municipalities*
Operating and Capital Expenditure Spent on Parks and Recreation	5.58%	6.95%	8.51%	6.83%	7.06% (Peer Groups) 6.88% (ALL)

*Note: Only 144 out of 163 Wisconsin municipalities are categorized into peer groups; this is either due to missing data from some municipalities or unique cases like Madison and Milwaukee.

Wisconsin Urban Peer Group Criteria:

Peer Group	Population Threshold	Number of Municipalities
1	45,000 to 150,000	12
2	20,000 to 45,000	19
3	10,000 to 20,000	28
4	1,000 to 10,000	86
Total		145

Source: Department of Administration. There were 17 municipalities omitted from the peer group analysis due to missing data. Madison and Milwaukee were excluded as unique cases and were compared to similar-sized American cities as noted in the text.

Source: SCORP Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2011–2016

Fond du Lac Park Operating Budget per Capita

Fond du Lac Parks and Recreation operating expenditures = \$1,808,754

Fond du Lac Population = 43,021

Parks and Recreation Operating budget per Capita = \$42.04

Benchmarking Park Operating Budget per Capita

The table below from SCORP research shows operating budgets per capita for larger cities around the U.S. The spending per capita varies widely from city to city and the average spending per capita is \$69.90 compared to \$42.04 in Fond du Lac.

City	Parks & Recreation Budget (2008 USD)	Population	Investment per Capita (2008 USD)
Madison, WI	\$14,806,922	235,626	\$62.84
Lincoln, NE	\$13,775,752	251,624	\$54.75
Durham, NC	\$10,300,000	223,284	\$46.13
Boise, ID	\$21,540,000	202,832	\$106.20
Des Moines, IA	\$15,798,586	198,460	\$79.61
Mean	\$15,244,252	222,365	\$69.90
Median	\$14,806,922	223,284	\$62.84

Source: SCORP Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2011–2016

The table below shows Parks and Forestry operating budgets per capita for Fond du Lac, La Crosse, and Oshkosh. La Crosse and Oshkosh report Parks and Forestry together, therefore Forestry has also been included for Fond du Lac to make the figures more comparable. As shown in the table, Fond du Lac spends \$53.9 per capita when including Forestry compared to \$57.3 for La Crosse and \$30 for Oshkosh.

Parks and Forestry Operating Budgets per Capita

City	Population	Operating Budget	Operating Budget per Capita
Fond du Lac	43,021	\$ 2,320,931	\$ 53.9
La Crosse	51,320	\$ 2,943,161	\$ 57.3
Oshkosh	66,083	\$ 1,985,300	\$ 30.0

Case Study: Hubbard Park Beer Garden

Project Summary

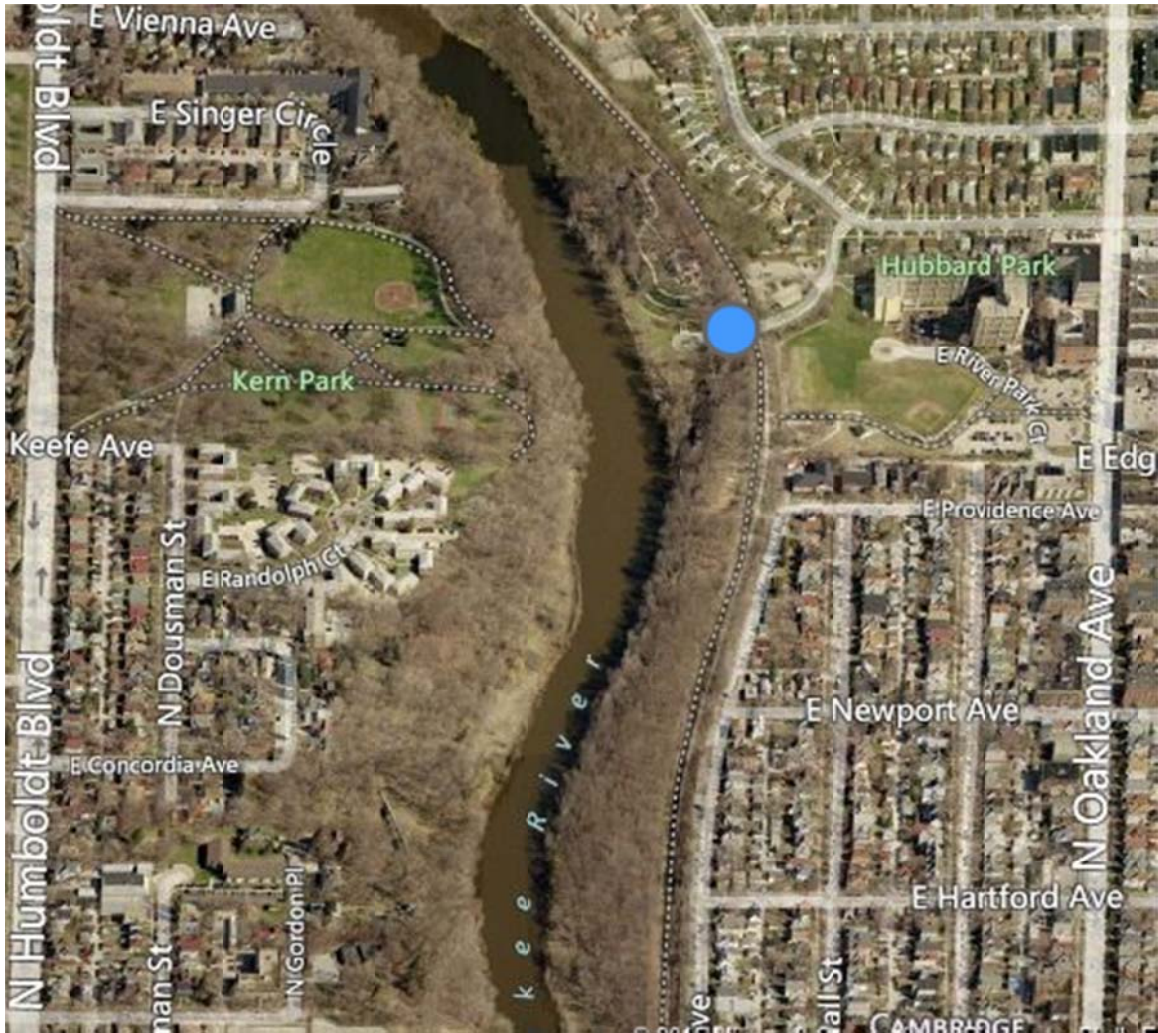
The Village of Shorewood partnered with a private vendor in 2010 to upgrade a facility and grounds in Hubbard Park to provide patrons with tap beer, wine, and food. The beer garden has limited indoor space, but many outdoor picnic tables overlooking the Milwaukee River. The beer garden is open May to September and the hours are 3:00pm to 10:00pm on weekdays and 12:00pm to 10:00pm on weekends.

Project Details

Location

The beer garden is located in Hubbard Park in Shorewood, Wisconsin. Shorewood is a northern suburb of Milwaukee with about 13,200 people. However, being close to Milwaukee (5 miles), many residents of Milwaukee make the park and beer garden a destination. Hubbard Park specifically is located at 3565 N Morris Street; two maps of the park are below. In the second map below, notice the dotted line to the east (right) of the park; this is the Oak Leaf Trail, a running and biking trail along the Milwaukee River that runs all the way to the north end of Milwaukee. Vehicle parking is limited at the park, so most park goers and beer garden patrons ride into the park via bicycle. There is extensive bike racks at the beer garden to support this bike traffic. Also notice the park's proximity to the Milwaukee River to the West, which provides picturesque views to beer garden patrons.





Private – Public Partnership

The Village of Shorewood and Vecchio Entertainment Group entered a 10 year lease agreement in 2009 with the option to extend the lease if both parties agree. Vecchio agreed to make \$100,000 of capital improvements to the facility over 10 years and pays rent of \$12,000 per year, which increases each year until the max of \$30,000 in the 6th year or 4% of gross revenue, whichever is greater. As part of the \$100,000 in capital improvements, Vecchio initially added coolers, taps, and built a bar area. As a requirement, the Village of Shorewood was involved in the process from design to review. Vecchio is responsible for operational expenses (utilities, waste removal, recycling services, etc.), janitorial services for the building and public restrooms, and property taxes, and insurance coverage. To celebrate Milwaukee's strong German heritage, the beer garden was designed to look like a traditional Bavarian beer garden from Southern Germany; three images of the beer garden are included below.



Beer Garden Menu

Beer

Spaten Oktoberfest
Point Oktoberfest
Hacker-Pschorr Oktoberfest
Hacker-Pschorr Weissbier
New Glarus Spotted Cow
Central Waters Hop Rise
Sprecher Black Bavarian
Cider Boys-Gluten Free Cider
Miller Lite
Point Root Beer

Wines

Wollersheim Praire Fume
Bota White Riesling
Bota Pinot Grigo
Bota Malbec

Specialty Drinks

Lodge Bloody Mary
Jagermeister

Soft Drinks

Pepsi
Diet Pepsi
Sierra Mist
Aquafina Water

Food

Usinger Beer Soaked Brat
Usinger Bavarian Hot Dog
Chicken and Apple Sausage
Giant Old World Pretzel - Served with beer cheese and stone ground mustard
Wisconsin Cheese Platter

Project Results

The facility receives heavy bike traffic due to the proximity to the highly utilized bike path, so the beer garden has been good at getting people off the bike path and into the park. Many park goers enjoy the beer garden, but Chris Schwartz, Village Board Manager, doesn't feel things are going as well as initial projections which he thought were fairly aggressive. This is only his assumption as Shorewood will not know results

until 2015 as this is when the beer garden will report out and share revenue with the Village of Shorewood.

Other Information

Chris's recommendation for any city entering a public/private partnership is to make sure there is a clear and transparent contract written and make sure there is extensive due diligence done on the vendor. Make sure to look at the vendor's past successes and failures (Vehicco operates four other similar establishments successfully).

Chris also mentioned that the beer garden does not create an environment of over-served patrons and alcohol abuse, although this is always a risk anywhere alcoholic beverages are served. To this point, the beer garden has not had a problem with this. He believes this is a result of it being outdoors with limited hours into the night.

Lakeside Park Exploratory Committee: Case Study



City: La Crosse, Wisconsin

Population: 51,647

Contact person: Steve Carlyon, City of La Crosse Parks & Recreation Director

Parks and Recreation Department: Oversees the operation of 45 parks covering over 1400 acres in the City of La Crosse

Mission Statement: The City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation, Forestry Department's mission is to enrich our community through stewardship of the environment and through provision of quality recreation, facilities and fun.

Riverside Park is located in downtown La Crosse along the Mississippi River. It is immediately adjacent to the downtown business area of La Crosse which features a convention center, four hotels, and many shops and restaurants which are all within walking distance of the park. Currently, construction of three more hotels in the downtown area near Riverside Park is underway representing an estimated ninety million dollars in development.

Riverside Park offers many different recreational opportunities including walking, running, and biking on paved trails along the water's edge. The park offers many areas to sit and take in the scenery of the river, as well as a fountain, band shell, and meditation garden. There are seven zones or shelters available for rent at the park at an hourly or daily rental rate. Several of these areas are regularly used for weddings which can accommodate groups of up to 300 people. Riverside Park also hosts weekly summer concert events as well as several jazz concerts throughout the year. Finally, the park is host to several yearly large events such as Riverfest, the 4th of July Fireworks, and the holiday light show Rotary Lights.

Although Riverside Park does not operate any type of vending at the park, it does play host to two boats which take visitors on various trips on the Mississippi River. The Mississippi Queen and the Julia Bell Swain both dock at Riverside Park and provide different types of tours for groups to see the river. Both operations contract with the City of La Crosse for the opportunity to dock at Riverside Park and pay either a flat fee or a percentage of their gross profits for the season.

Riverside Park is the venue for many weddings every year and during the summer months, several per day. There are several different areas and shelters which can be rented for weddings and can accommodate small groups as well as groups up to three hundred people. These areas are available for rent at an hourly rate as well as being available for a daily rental. Fees are structured for two groups; city resident and non-resident, with the non-resident fee being approximately twice the resident rate.

Riverside Park is just beginning a major park project to improve the infrastructure of the park as well as other design changes. The project will begin in 2015 and has a projected cost of upwards of 12 million dollars which may be scaled back as the design process is completed. The initial portion of the project will occur underground with replacement and upgrading of all of the electrical services to the park. Next, an existing band shell which was originally constructed in the 1930's will be renovated and restored to its original condition. A new band shell and large outdoor performance center will then be built which will accommodate weekly summer performances and festivals. A large fountain in the park will be renovated along with updates to landscaping throughout the park. A good portion of the funding for the park improvement

projects is coming from donations from citizens and through endowments set aside for Riverside Park.

Although Riverside Park does not offer a boat launch, the City of La Crosse Parks and Recreation Department does offer boat launches at other parks to access the Mississippi River. Several years ago the Department instituted a fee for use of the boat launch. The daily launch fee is \$3.00 for residents or \$5.00 for non-residents and a yearly pass is also available. All proceeds from the launch fee are directed solely back to improvements to the boat launch and immediate area around the launch. This launch fee was initially met with resistance from the users of the launches and boat slips. The funds generated from the launch fees were then used for improvements directly to the boat launches and the users could immediately see where and how their fees were being used to better the facilities.

The La Crosse Parks and Recreation department is in charge of overseeing forty five parks covering over 1400 acres in the City of La Crosse. Along with the staff of the Parks and Recreation department, a Board of Park Commissioners exists to assist in planning and operation of the parks. The Commission consists of seven citizens each serving five year terms and two aldermen who serve two year terms. They are regarded as a critical tool for the development, planning, and continuous upgrades and projects for the City's parks. The Commission meets monthly and provides an opportunity for the public to express their opinions and input for future projects and improvements to the parks. As a commission, they have the ability to buy and sell property and are involved in all projects from planning to completion. They are the link from the general public to the Parks and Recreation Department and the rest of the City Government.

La Crosse Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department 2015 budget: \$2,943,161.00

Projected revenue: \$420,332.00.

Capital Improvement budget: \$2,000,000.00

CIP budget for 2015-2019: \$12,043,000

City of Fond du Lac Parks Department 2015 budget: \$1,250,769.00*

Projected revenue: \$44,100.00

Pools budget: \$323,528.00

Pools projected revenue: \$189,500.00

Capital Improvement budget: \$585,000.00

*City of Fond du Lac Parks Department does not include the Recreation Department. The Fond du Lac Recreation Department is run by the school district.

