

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

May 8, 2018

Ald. Michael J. Murphy
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City partners with UW-Milwaukee on two initiatives

Builds on existing success and collaboration

Today the **Common Council** approved a partnership between the City of Milwaukee and the **Lubar School of Business Executive MBA program at UW-Milwaukee**. The partnership will allow these students, professionals from a variety of industries, to apply their skills toward two programs: a five-year financial plan to address the City's fiscal challenges and a marketing and growth strategy for MKE Plays, a public/private initiative that revitalizes neighborhood parks.

Five-year financial plan

"As the largest city in Wisconsin, it is critical for the success and stability of Milwaukee to utilize best financial practices," said **Alderman Michael J. Murphy**, who spearheaded the partnership. "In order for the City of Milwaukee to grow and continue to be the economic engine of the State of Wisconsin, the city needs to produce a long-term strategic fiscal roadmap. Stable and predictable public finances will be the foundation of any future success."

Alderman Murphy cites quality research done by the Public Policy Forum regarding the City's revenue structure and budgetary impacts, but says there remains a need for a comprehensive strategy to address the next five years. Cities such as Baltimore, Pittsburgh and Toronto have implemented these first-of-its-kind, long-term financial strategies to ensure communities are successful.

"This project would reflect the philosophy of the Wisconsin Idea, which values the impact that our universities can have on the welfare of our communities," said Alderman Murphy.

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Marketing and Growth Strategy for MKE Plays

Created in 2015, MKE Plays was developed as a way to reprioritize parks for local government while soliciting additional help from private-sector partners. MKE Plays set out to transform the city's most deteriorated playgrounds over a three-year period and has raised more than \$1.575 million in private contribution, which will support reconstruction at 14 sites by the summer of 2018. The restoration of Milwaukee's playgrounds will bring much-needed improvement to many of the city's poorest neighborhoods by creating safe and attractive places for families to play while encouraging activity, in a time when close to 35% of Milwaukee high school students are either overweight or obese.

Central to the program has been a philosophy of community involvement. Community members had a voice in designing their neighborhood parks. And in collaboration with Milwaukee Public Schools, MKE Plays will work to provide older youth with summer job opportunities as "play leaders" trained to help younger children engage in safe, organized games and other play at the playgrounds.

"The MKE Plays initiative continues to have a major impact in the everyday lives of citizens, and continues to grow a substantial rate," said Alderman Murphy. "As a result of this growth, the MKE Plays team needs additional capacity to create a sustainable growth plan and marketing initiative to continue to encourage investment into the community."

Previous success

The two programs build on the **Lubar** EMBA program's previous partnership with the **City**, in which its students were crucial in helping build the software/data components of the Milwaukee Health Department's food grading for licensed food establishments, according to Alderman Murphy, lead sponsor of the Common Council resolution that created the system.