



Department of Public Works

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Commissioner of Public Works

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For Immediate Release

May 3, 2023

City of Milwaukee to Expand and Improve Melvina Park *Transformational project made possible by Quad and other donors*

The City of Milwaukee is beginning a major improvement and expansion of [Melvina Park](#), a city park at N. 29th Street and W. Melvina Street maintained by the Department of Public Works – MKE Parks program. The project began construction the week of May 1, 2023 and city officials and community partners gathered Wednesday for a ceremonial groundbreaking. This is the first substantial improvement of the park since the mid-1990s. Melvina Park serves the Century City Triangle Neighborhood, an area that once had a robust manufacturing base and thriving economy but has seen challenges from decades of disinvestment.

“Public spaces are important urban amenities that foster community interaction, and improving public spaces has been a priority,” said Mayor Cavalier Johnson. “I am particularly pleased the improvements here are the product of collaboration among neighborhood partners and donors. The Century City Triangle Park has so much to offer this part of Milwaukee, and I am very happy it is moving forward.”

The current park site is just under an acre and consists of a small playground, basketball courts, and a multi-use paved play area. By expanding to adjacent property, the park will be just under four acres. Additional amenities* featured in the community-driven design will include restoration of native plantings, storm water management, nature-based play, a multi-purpose court, field space and event space.

The \$2.3 million-dollar project includes immediate improvements and future community programming. It is made possible by city investment, grant dollars, and the generosity of community donors including Quad and Burke Foundation who each donated \$500,000.

“Quad is extremely proud to join the City of Milwaukee and other local partners to expand and improve Melvina Park,” said Joel Quadracci, Chairman, President & CEO of Quad. “This investment builds on our existing presence in—and commitment to—the neighborhood. Last year, we opened our own recruiting and training center in the Century City Office Tower. Through this center, we provide the tools, training and transportation necessary to attract talent from Milwaukee’s central city. We are proud to be a member of the community, and Melvina Park will be a tremendous asset – one that will be sustained for the enjoyment of future generations.”

Directly to the west of the existing park is a vacant lot that had once been overflow parking space for the A.O. Smith Corporation. The Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee (RACM) attained the property in 2009 as part of its acquisition of the former A.O. Smith complex, in the northern portion of the [30th Street Industrial Corridor](#). The Department of City Development and RACM have been working for several years to assess and remediate the site so it could be revitalized.

“The Melvina Park expansion is direct evidence of the City of Milwaukee’s commitment to the residents who live in and around the Century City Tri-Angle Neighborhood,” said Department of City Development Commissioner Lafayette Crump. “The Department of City Development and the Redevelopment Authority have been working for years with local residents, community partners, and our colleagues in municipal government to realize a positive future for the neighborhood. The Melvina Park expansion is setting the tone for more activity, investment and opportunity in the 30th Street Industrial Corridor and throughout Milwaukee, as we move our city forward.”





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In 2018, DCD and DPW and began the community engagement and planning process for an improved park space. A major stakeholder and influence on the planning process is Alderman Khalif Rainey whose district includes Melvina Park.

“Years ago I recognized the potential of the Melvina Park space, and how it could one day be transformed to provide a public greenspace that welcomes community gatherings, families, and even wildlife,” said Alderman Rainey. “The groundbreaking brings us one step closer to realizing that immense potential.”

Specific community-involved planning for the playground, fitness equipment and event space is part of the project development this spring and summer. Initial construction includes earthwork, stormwater, paving and landscaping. Installation of the playground will follow with an anticipated park re-opening in November 2023.

“This project is about creating a high-quality public space that is an authentic reflection of the needs, interests, and identities of the community it serves,” said Commissioner of the Department of Public Works Jerrel Kruschke. “With the generosity of private funders, we can maximize our city investment as we aim to revitalize and sustainably manage our 52 playgrounds in the MKE Parks system.

Funding partners include Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, Quad, Burke Foundation, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, US Environmental Protection Agency, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Greater Milwaukee Foundation.

*Additional amenities

- *Restoration/Preservation of Natural Resources* - Park redevelopment will focus on the use of native plantings to restore wildlife and pollinator habitat and where possible, existing mature trees will be preserved and protected.
- *Green Infrastructure/Stormwater Management* - The project is designed to minimize impervious surface area, reduce stormwater runoff from park features, and capture water from adjacent streets and alleys to allow for than 225,000 gallons to be managed on-site.
- *Nature-Based Play* - This approach to play design uses a palette of wood, stone, and plants to bring spaces to life with natural smells, textures, and sounds. This may include more traditional playground equipment designed to blend in with custom natural elements.
- *Multi-Purpose Court and Field Space* - Several potential partners, as well as local residents, have expressed an interest in flexible athletic field/court spaces to accommodate basketball, volleyball, futsal, soccer, rugby, lacrosse, etc.
- *Public Gathering/Event Space and Public Art* - The community has expressed interest in developing a robust programming schedule in the park and needs a flexible gathering space to accommodate picnics, concerts, pop-up markets, neighborhood meetings, etc.
- *Bike Amenities and Dog Exercise Area* - The current multi-use paved area is used primarily as a safe space for bicycle, scooter, and skateboard riding. The new design preserves this opportunity, and provides additional off-street pathways for safe bike use. A proposal includes a fenced-in space for off-leash dog activity.

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