



CHRIS ABELE, MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
JAMES KEEGAN, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE

Contact:  
Jeff Baudry  
(414) 257-4575  
[jbaudry@milwcnty.com](mailto:jbaudry@milwcnty.com)

For Immediate Release

## **Washington Park Wins MANDI Award** *2013 Recipient of the Brewers Community Foundation Public Space Award*

Milwaukee, WI (March 15, 2013) Milwaukee County's Washington Park, 1859 N. 40th Street, was the 2013 winner of the Milwaukee Awards for Neighborhood Development Innovation (MANDI) for their successful efforts to revitalize this important historical Milwaukee landmark. The award was received in the Brewers Community Foundation Public Space Award category. This category identifies nominees that use public space to contribute significantly to the overall well-being of the community.

The MANDI's are similar to the Oscar awards in that winners are selected by peers. A Selection Committee (twenty-eight private, public and government volunteers) reviewed nominations, chose finalists, visited each finalist, and selected winners. Sixteen finalists were announced in December, and five winners were named at the live event on March 14th.

"This recognition highlights the hard work, dedication and keen insight that your Park System continues to demonstrate by improving the quality of life for our community," County Executive Chis Abele commented, "Special thanks goes out to Sarah Toomsen, Parks Landscape Architect, and all the park partners who pulled together in moving towards restoring Washington Park."

The partnership of Milwaukee County Department of Parks, with Urban Ecology Center, and the Washington Park Partners, a coalition of neighborhood groups, has resulted in reduced crime (51%), fruit orchards, soccer leagues, bicycle clubs, a summer concert series, new playgrounds, a farmers market and significant increases in usage and programming. Regarding Washington Park, a Selection Committee member said, "An amazing collaborative effort to turn a vast, neglected park into a magnet for healthy community!"

The MANDI's are sponsored by U.S. Bank, in partnership with Local Initiatives Support Corporation, to recognize efforts to strengthen Milwaukee's central city neighborhoods. The goal is to identify innovative and persistent work of people and organizations that are improving the quality of life in Milwaukee.

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ADDRESS  
9480 Watertown Plank Road  
Wauwatosa, WI 53226-3560

PHONE/FAX  
ph: **414 / 257 PARK** (7275)  
fax: 414 / 257 6466



EMAIL  
[parks@milwcnty.com](mailto:parks@milwcnty.com)

WEBSITE  
[countyparks.com](http://countyparks.com)