



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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**COUNTY EXECUTIVE CHRIS ABELE, MILWAUKEE COUNTY PARKS AND THE ABILITY CENTER
ANNOUNCE PLANS TO MAKE BRADFORD BEACH ACCESSIBLE**

County Executive Chris Abele today joined Milwaukee County Parks, The Ability Center and community advocates to unveil plans to make Bradford Beach accessible for people with disabilities. Ramp Up, which is targeting a \$100,000 fundraising goal, will increase accessibility to the beach through the construction of permanent ramps and the addition of modern equipment.

“By ensuring Bradford Beach is accessible to all Milwaukee County residents, we are working towards making our community assets a convenient and viable choice for people with disabilities,” said County Executive Chris Abele. “The Ramp Up at Bradford Beach is an important next step as we work towards more aggressively modernizing our County and creating a Milwaukee County that benefits all of our residents for generations to come.”

Ramp Up at Bradford Beach will be funded in part by a robust community funding campaign, in addition to support from Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele, Milwaukee County Parks, Milwaukee County Office for Persons with Disabilities and The Ability Center. Milwaukee County Parks will partner with Kelly’s Greenscapes on construction.

“Milwaukee may not be considered a beach town by most people in the country, but this transformation rivals and even surpasses the accessibility of many of the most famous beaches in the world,” said Damian Buchman, founder and director of The Ability Center and Ramp Up MKE. “Very few beaches offer this level of independence for people with all abilities.”

Beginning this summer, mobi-mat path access will allow for people with disabilities to more easily access Bradford Beach. The Dock will be providing several beach wheelchairs free of charge. Plans to further modernize the beach will include the installation of ramps to better open access.

“We are working hard to create high-quality, reliable options to get all residents and visitors where they want to go in Milwaukee County parks,” said Guy Smith, Director of the Milwaukee County Parks Department. “We are thrilled to partner with The Ability Center to ensure people with disabilities have safe, convenient ways to access Bradford Beach. We look forward to working closely with all communities to ensure we are working towards building convenient and equitable ways to visit all of our parks and facilities.”



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Ramp Up first launched at Bradford Beach in 2015 as a cross-sector effort to make community assets across Milwaukee County more accessible for people with disabilities. Together with Milwaukee County Parks, Kelly's Greenscapes, of Sussex and The Ability Center, accessible beach wheelchairs helped to bring more residents and visitors with disabilities from the walkways to the water. The beach equipment allows people in wheelchairs to more easily move across sand.

"People of all abilities should have the opportunity to enjoy our lakefront, said Milwaukee county Supervisor Sheldon A. Wasserman, 3rd District. "This is a great first step towards making that happen."

Upgrading Bradford Beach to make it fully accessible is a complex task, since it was developed in the early 20th century when ADA equipment and other modern amenities were not standard components of construction projects. Constraints to bring Bradford and other County assets to modern-day standards requires significant planning time and expense given these site constraints.

"The ultimate goal of the Milwaukee County Office for Persons with Disabilities is to make Milwaukee County the most accessible county in the country," Tim Ochnikowski, Director of the Milwaukee County Office for Persons with Disabilities said. "Today's announcement continues an effort to make Bradford Beach, and Lake Michigan, more accessible to persons with disabilities. Together with FREE Aira services and the beach wheelchairs, this project will make Bradford Beach one of the most accessible beaches in the country."

The Milwaukee County Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD) is committed to creating a more accessible place for residents to live, work and play. In addition to supporting campaigns for modern, adaptive equipment, OPD sponsors recreational activities designed for people with disabilities at two facilities located in county parks in South Milwaukee and Wauwatosa called the Wil-O-Way Recreation Centers. Recreation programs are offered during the spring, summer and fall seasons. Programming is available to individuals with disabilities ages 16 and up through the Wil-O-Way Recreation Center. Activities are planned for weekdays and weekends, afternoons and evenings, and include exciting offerings such as bowling, ceramics, cooking classes, community outings and Friday night dances.

For more information about Ramp Up, visit: <https://tacwi.org/programs>.