

Milwaukee County

## INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

Date: **March 16, 2022**

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Gordie Bennett, Sustainability Director, Department of Administrative Services, Facilities Management Division

Subject: From the Sustainability Director, Department of Administrative Services, Facilities Management Division, requesting authorization of \$2,171,566 in American Rescue Plan Act funding for a new capital project named *Climate Action Plan and Lighting Upgrades*

File Type: Action Report

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### **REQUEST**

The Sustainability Director, Department of Administrative Services, Facilities Management Division, respectfully requests authorization of \$2,171,566 in American Rescue Plan Act funding for a new capital project named *Climate Action Plan and Lighting Upgrades*.

### **POLICY**

In April 2021, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors committed Milwaukee County to becoming carbon neutral by 2050 and requested the Sustainability Director to develop and administer a strategic plan to achieve carbon neutrality in Milwaukee County facilities and operations by 2050, per File No. 21-389.

In July 2021, the County Board resolved to create a Milwaukee County ARPA Task Force to review and recommend Federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funding allocations, per File No. 21-555.

The ARPA Task Force recommended an allocation of \$2,171,566 in ARPA funding for the Climate Action Plan and Lighting Upgrades project at its **March 10, 2022** meeting.

### **BACKGROUND**

The requested \$2,171,566 in ARPA funding will be used to advance Milwaukee County's carbon neutrality initiative by: 1) launching a lighting upgrades program in County buildings; and 2) developing a 'Climate Action 2050 Plan' for County operations. The lighting upgrades program will provide 'proof of concept' for future greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction projects by the County. The Climate Action

2050 Plan will identify actions that the County will take to further reduce or offset its operational emissions.

The proposed five-year project will be managed by staff from the Department of Administrative Services, Facilities Management Division, Office of Sustainability (OS), with support from selected consultants, contractor(s), and diverse Milwaukee County stakeholders. The Sustainability Director will serve as project manager for the Climate Action Plan, while the Energy Program Manager will oversee the Lighting Upgrades Program. Detailed information about the project approach, scope, schedule, and budget are provided in the attached *Project Proposal* and *Project Presentation*.

### Lighting Upgrades Overview

The Lighting Upgrades Program will be implemented through a unique partnership with a local third-party workforce intermediary (e.g., Employ Milwaukee, WRTP|BIG STEP, etc.), electrical contractor(s), and the local community. Under the direction of OS, the workforce intermediary will recruit and train unemployed and underemployed Milwaukee County residents to inventory existing lighting in County buildings and make recommendations for lighting upgrades. The trainees will then assist with upgrading the lighting as directed by OS and under the supervision of the selected electrical contractor(s). The program will consist of ten, six-month cohorts during which three or more residents complete the training then apply their new knowledge and skills toward upgrading County lighting. Surveys will be administered at the beginning and end of each cohort to gauge whether the program helps increase trainees' interest in pursuing a career in the trades.

The Lighting Upgrades Program will enhance Milwaukee County's fiscal health by improving the energy efficiency of lighting systems in approximately 3 million square feet of County building space TBD. The lighting upgrades will reduce County operating costs and electricity use by approximately \$258,664 and 861,832 kilowatt-hours per year, respectively. As a result, the upgrades will reduce County GHG emissions by about 611 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per year. This represents 0.5% of Milwaukee County's total operational emissions in 2022.

### Climate Action 2050 Plan Overview

As recommended by Milwaukee County's Sustainability Task Force<sup>1</sup>, the plan will be developed using a racial equity lens to identify GHG emission mitigation and climate adaptation strategies that provide financial, equity, and health co-benefits for communities of color and other vulnerable populations. The planning process will be organized around three phases:

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<sup>1</sup> The Sustainability Task Force (STF) was formed in 2021 by County Executive Crowley to develop and recommend a climate action plan framework for Milwaukee County operations. The Sustainability Director presented this 'Climate Action 2050 Framework' to the County Board, per File No. 21-770.

Phase 1: Preliminary Research & Planning:

- Re-engage the Sustainability Task Force
- Finalize goals, targets, scope, and logistics for the planning process
- Develop and deploy a comprehensive communications strategy, including stakeholder engagement
- Research existing and model climate policies and programs
- Research funding sources for plan implementation

Phase 2: Plan Development:

- Inventory GHG emissions from 2019-21 Milwaukee County operations
- Update County's emissions forecast through 2050
- Conduct a climate change vulnerability assessment (identify anticipated climate hazards in Milwaukee County and evaluate how these will impact vulnerable populations and County services, systems, and assets)
- Draft list of County mitigation and adaptation strategies, identifying emissions impacts, responsible parties, and potential partners and co-benefits
- Share draft Climate Action 2050 Plan with stakeholders and engage them to refine and expand the list of strategies

Phase 3: Plan Implementation and Monitoring:

- Initiate early action projects to identify barriers, build support, learn, and manage expectations
- Develop a plan for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting plan progress

**ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

The proposed project supports Milwaukee County's strategic plan by creating Intentional Inclusion and Investing in Equity. OS will develop the Climate Action 2050 Plan with Intentional Inclusion of diverse stakeholders, including local communities of color and other vulnerable populations. In addition, as described in the Climate Action 2050 Framework<sup>1</sup>, the plan will emphasize strategies and actions that provide racial and health equity co-benefits - not just environmental protection or cost savings.

The proposed Lighting Upgrades Program will Invest in Equity by creating training and job opportunities for unemployed and underemployed County residents. To enhance equity benefits, the program will actively seek participation by women, people of color, and residents of Qualified Census Tracts<sup>2</sup>. These efforts are intended to help dismantle barriers to careers in the trades, which offer good wages but currently lack racial/ethnic and gender diversity<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> A Qualified Census Tract (QCT) is any census tract (or equivalent geographic area defined by the Census Bureau) in which at least 50% of households have an income less than 60% of the Area Median Gross Income.

<sup>3</sup> During 2021, 94% of trades apprentices in Wisconsin were males, and just 11% of apprentices were 'minority' - see <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/facts-data.htm>.

**FISCAL EFFECT**

A total of \$2,171,566 is being requested from Milwaukee County's \$183 million in Federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 funding. There is no tax levy impact.

**TERMS**

The proposed project will start in 2022 upon availability of the requested funding. The Climate Action 2050 Plan will be completed in 18-24 months, while the lighting upgrades will be substantially complete by 2026. All funds will be encumbered by December 31, 2024.

**VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

Gordie Bennett, Sustainability Director, Department of Administrative Services, Facilities Management Division  
Stuart Carron, Director, Department of Administrative Services, Facilities Management Division  
Aaron Hertzberg, Director, Department of Administrative Services

**PREPARED BY**

Gordie Bennett, Sustainability Director, Facilities Management Division, Department of Administrative Services

**APPROVED BY**

*Stuart Carron*

Stuart Carron, Director,  
Department of Administrative Services, Facilities Management Division

**ATTACHMENTS**

Resolution  
Fiscal Note

Cc: David Crowley, Milwaukee County Executive  
Sup. Jason Haas, Chair, Finance and Audit Committee  
Sup. Sheldon A. Wasserman, Chair, Parks, Energy and Environment Committee  
Mary Jo Myers, Chief of Staff, Office of the County Executive  
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board  
Aaron Hertzberg, Director, Department of Administrative Services  
Steven Cady, Research and Policy Director, Office of the Comptroller  
Janelle M. Jensen, Manager, Legislative Services, Office of the County Clerk