

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: April 19, 2024

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

From: Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation

Subject: Milwaukee County Department of Transportation 2023 Annual Report.

File Type: Informational Report

This informational report provides a report on how Milwaukee County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) set and achieved its 2023 goals.

POLICY

This report aligns to Chapter 108: Achieving Racial Equity & Health.

Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	Chapter 108: Achieving Racial Equity & Health
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BACKGROUND

[File 22-104](#) amends Chapter 108 to require that “annually, by April 30 of each year or sooner, each Milwaukee County department leader and/or their designee(s) shall provide a written and oral report outlining their year-end results to a Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors committee. The reports shall, at a minimum:

- (a) Indicate the year-end goals the department set in the prior year
- (b) Share the rationale and relevance of the department’s performance metrics (i.e. explaining why they are “SMART” goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely, and extending) and how they align to the county’s racial equity strategy, if applicable)
- (c) Report the department’s year-end results relating to the goals it had set, and
- (d) Provide a thorough analysis clearly articulating why goals were significantly exceeded, met, or not met.
- (e) Explain the department’s progress in creating a departmental-level strategic plan that aligns to the countywide strategic plan and provide an update about future plans to revise and enhance the departmental-level plan in the year ahead.”

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

- 1A: Reflect the full diversity of the County at every level of County government
- 1B: Create and nurture an inclusive culture across County government
- 1C: Increase the number of County contracts awarded to minority and women-owned businesses
- 2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity
- 2B: Break down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered
- 2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions
- 3A: Invest “upstream” to address root causes of health disparities
- 3B: Enhance the County’s fiscal health and sustainability
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities

Alignment to the above strategic objectives is articulated in response to the questions below.

BODY

1. What were the top 3 goals of your department/office in 2023? Please explain why they are “SMARTIE” goals (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely, inclusive, and equitable) and how they align to the County’s racial equity strategy.
 - **Goal 1:** MCDOT actively participate in the development of transportation related strategic objectives that address “dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities”.
 - **1A:** Address the root causes of racial and socio-economic inequities in our community and in county government itself through policy initiatives and programs that create intentional inclusion.
 - Create, submit, and received federal and state funding to develop a countywide plan to end reckless driving for all 19 municipalities in the County.
 - **Goal 2:** Implement and refine plans for each of the 5 Transportation Divisions on individual recruitment.
 - Airport recruitment & retention
 - Highway Maintenance recruitment & retention
 - Transportation Services recruitment & retention
 - Fleet recruitment & retention
 - Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) recruitment & retention
 - **Goal 3:** Continue progress on the development of a strategic Plan and 3-year work plan for the Transportation Department.

These three goals align with the County’s racial equity strategy and goals as we/MCDOT continues to support diversity and inclusion efforts across Milwaukee County.

2. To what extent were these goals accomplished in 2023? Please explain.

Each goal has metrics, measurement tools and assumptions including risks identified in meeting the stated goals.

Goal 1:

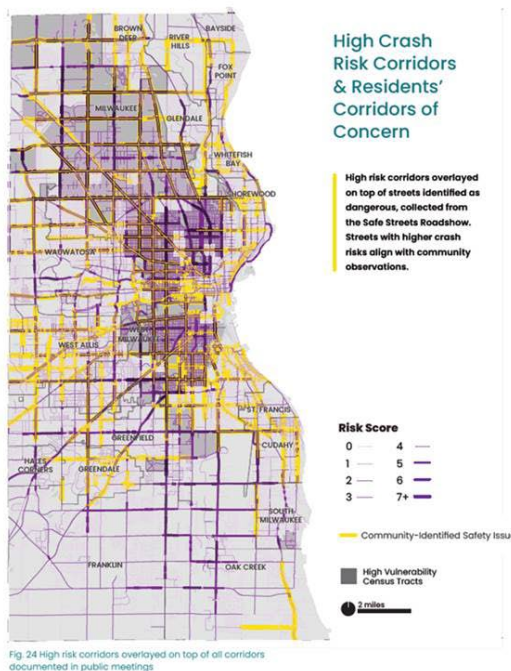
Made significant progress on transportation-related strategic objectives that address “dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities.”

- Earned four different grants totaling nearly \$2,000,000 since late 2022 that are funding our [Complete Communities Transportation Planning Project](#) and other safe streets initiatives in Milwaukee, Greendale, Shorewood, South Milwaukee, Wauwatosa and West Allis.
- Published the first two deliverables as part of Phase One of the Complete Communities Transportation Planning Project: the [Milwaukee County Transportation Safety Assessment Report](#) and the [Milwaukee County Motor Vehicle Collision Dashboard](#)
- Continued delivering on the Goals and Objectives of the Complete Communities Transportation Planning project:
 - MCDOT Director’s Office staff and the project team carried out 22 Safe Streets Roadshow public engagement meetings, with at least one in each of the 19 municipalities, including four in the City of Milwaukee, one of those being exclusively in Spanish. We engaged approximately 600 residents who generated nearly 1,000 written response, place-based feedback and verbal comments. The project team took public comments and provided information at all four Milwaukee County Budget Open House events in August 2023, as well.
 - Identified 21 Corridors of Concern (see accompanying map and list) after considering High Risk Crash Network scores and Resident Observational Feedback—these corridors are where select intersections and street segments will be highlighted for appropriate safe streets countermeasures.
 - Driver’s Education representatives are at the table as part of this project’s Safety Working Group steering committee. The project was also presented to the Committee on Community Engagement & Racial Justice, a subcommittee of the Milwaukee County Youth Commission, and their feedback was incorporated into the project’s Phase One findings.
 - Several law enforcement representatives have been at the table as part of this project’s Safety Working Group, as well. While “lack of enforcement” is a complaint that residents have identified repeatedly during public engagement, redesigning the highest risk intersections and street segments are a method of self-enforcement through infrastructure that is present all day, every day.
- Carried out two different RFPs as part of Phase Two to hire an Action Plan Development consultant team and a Traffic Safety Data consultant team. These industry experts will work with MCDOT Director’s Office staff, municipal representatives and both steering committees to produce Milwaukee County’s first-ever Comprehensive Safety Action Plan and each participating municipality’s

Comprehensive Safety Action Plan, gaining eligibility for all involved to apply for federal implementation funding in 2025 to pay for select street safety improvement projects.

- Generated a project website that is continuously updated with pertinent information regarding each aspect of the project: <http://county.milwaukee.gov/CompleteCommunities>

High Risk Network + Corridors of Concern



- 27th St.
- 60th St.
- 76th St.
- 92nd St.
- 108th St.
- Capitol Dr.
- Fond du Lac Ave.
- Good Hope Rd.
- Green Bay Ave.
- Hampton Ave.
- Lake Dr.
- Layton Ave.
- Lincoln Ave.
- Mayfair Rd.
- Miller Park Way
- National Ave.
- North Ave.
- Port Washington Rd.
- Sherman Blvd.
- Silver Spring Dr.
- Teutonia Ave.

(listed alphabetically)

Goal 2:

Implement and refine plans for each of the 5 Transportation Divisions on individual recruitment.

- **Airport recruitment & retention**
 - Fall hiring event at 3 locations throughout the county; north, south, and central. This event included a streamlined process that took care of as many pre-employment needs as possible. HR recruitment and our HR business partners were very helpful in making the event a success.
 - Passenger Boarding is up; Airline Service is up and the MKE team is outperforming our peers in other Cities across the county.
 - Airport accomplishments include: Nonstop airline growth, destinations have increased as more travelers chose to fly Milwaukee. Case in point – Both Delta and Southwest airlines have added “daily” non-stop service west to Salt Lake City and Kansas City.
 - Increased nonstop service East to Washington D.C. twice daily on American Airlines.
 - In 2023 MKE Airport won international recognition for its outstanding

customer service. The airport was awarded the Airport Service Quality Award for Best Airport in North American from the Airport Council International, for a second year in a row.

○ Highway Maintenance recruitment & retention

- Significant increases in the recruitment and retention of diverse talent, which has resulted in a decrease in vacancies. (8 Vacancies currently. Conducted interviews this week looking to make offers for 8 positions next week.)
- Increased Public outreach/feedback via our Issue Reporter Web App. (213 entries so far in 2024. 95% have been completed.)
- 24 hour turn around on all maintenance concerns: A total of 413 Issues reported and resolved in 2023.
- Increased Employee training, education and engagement activities. (7 Highway Maintenance Worker 2s will be promoted to Highway Maintenance Worker 3s next month. Safety and Training week set for week of August 12th. Family Day has been set for August 17th. Work Zone Awareness week will be celebrated tomorrow. Service Awards given today. Solutions Team continues to grow.)
- Promoted continuing or developmental education opportunities for all staff. (Leadership & Development Training for Supervisory staff. 8 Maintenance Supervisors took the training in 2023.)
- Highway received 12 Discretionary Maintenance Agreements from WisDOT, totaling \$1.275M dollars over our routine maintenance agreement budget with the State. (As of today, we have received 5 discretionary Maintenance agreements for the year, totaling in about \$700K.)

○ Transportation Services Division recruitment & retention

- The Division has been successful in retention due to a great cultural environment in diversity, flexibility in work arrangements, recognition of hard work, and valuing open communication. (No staff vacancies in 2023)
- The Division has completed renovations and has transferred all staff to the Lapham facility.

○ Fleet Management recruitment & retention

- Fleet successfully filled most vacant mechanic positions in a very competitive market, by working with HR to host an on-site job fair. – 4 vacant mechanic positions were filled, two of which were minority employees.
- Provided office space to three displaced departments resulting from BHD closure. IMSD help desk (approximately 8 staff), BHD Transport Team (3 shifts- approximately 9 staff), BHD Mobile Crisis (2nd shift) approximately 10 employees.
- Invested in the county's first full electric vehicles for a cost/benefit case study. 1 Chevy Silverado (squad car), 1 electric wheel loader at the zoo, 2 Tesla's currently on order (squad cars).
- Awarded contract for solar feasibility study on the roof of the Fleet garage. – Study is currently schedule for completion within the next month. Initial findings look promising.

- *New Objective in 2023 - Fleet Management has identified vehicle utilization as a main driver of Fleet operating costs to user departments. Two of Milwaukee County's largest vehicle and equipment users are MCDOT-Highway Maintenance, and Parks Operations. Utilization rates will be documented throughout 2024 and presentations of findings to those departments will occur in January 2025.
- Milwaukee County Transit recruitment & retention
 - Goal #1 hire 145 Operators – At the start of 2023, MCTS employed 682 Operators which was a historic low for the organization. Although the turnover rate slowed during the last half of 2022, there was still a great need to hire more Operators. In 2023, the Talent Acquisition team met the challenge (and goal) and hired 161 Operators which was 30% more than 2022 (124). MCTS has never hired this many Operators in one year.
 - Goal #2 Increase staffing level of the Maintenance Department to 95% -- At the start of 2023, the staffing level was approximately 90% which led to slight disruptions to service and at times buses were not available for pull out for routes. The Talent Acquisition team was able to hire 12 Mechanics and Maintenance workers, which would have brought the staffing level to 96%. However, throughout the course of 2023, there were several resignations and retirements. By the end of 2023, the staffing level was at 91%. Therefore, this goal was not met.
The most difficult position to fill is the "A" Bus Mechanic (highest level Mechanic). The Human resources department has several strategies in place to continue to hire more Mechanics. Additionally, there has been a renewed focus on training lower-level positions to become "A" Bus Mechanics. In the past 24 months, MCTS has seen a great deal of success from promoting from within the Maintenance department through on the job training.
 - Goal #3 Reduce turnover rate of Bus Operators to 15% --- Beginning in 2021, MCTS began to see an unprecedented number of resignations which led to extremely high turnover. A goal was set for 2022 to reduce the turnover rate from 25% to 20%, and that goal was met. In 2023, MCTS set a goal to reduce turnover rate from 20% to 15%, and that goal was also met. By the end of the 2023, the turnover rate for Bus Operators shrunk to 14.7%. This was accomplished by implementing a variety of tactics. However, the most important change was to provide more support during the first year of employment which included more frequent, and regularly scheduled meetings with their supervisor and training staff. It was also helpful that a new Collective Bargaining Agreement was signed with ATU Local 998 which raised the wages for all Operators.
 - 2024 MCTS Proposed Goals
 - Goal #1 Increase staffing level of the Maintenance Department to 95% - The Talent Acquisition team is collaborating with the Marketing department on this effort. They have created a recruitment campaign that will place ads on buses, bus shelters, tv, radio, social media and print.

Additionally, as stated above, the Training program has expanded and a lot of resources are being poured into lower level positions to train them to move into the “A” Bus Mechanic position.

- Goal #2 Hire 120 Operators – This goal was set to hire for attrition as the turnover rate still remains low.
- Goal #3 Reduce “Time to Fill” for Non-Represented positions by 25% - MCTS would like to remain as competitive as possible in the marketplace. This means that when top talent is interested in working for the organization, there cannot be any delays from Human Resources, the hiring manager or any third party that may be involved in the selection process. Therefore, the goal is to reduce the amount of time that it takes from a requisition being opened to the time a new-hire begins their employment. Currently, the “Time to Fill” is approximately 90 days for non-represented positions.

Goal 3:

Continue progress on the development of a Strategic Plan and 3-year work plan for the Transportation Department.

- MCDOT has completed the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, as attached.

3. What factors enabled progress toward accomplishing these goals?

- Support of leadership, including the County Executive’s Office and the County Board of Supervisors in meeting stated objectives.
- External and Internal support to address ongoing reckless driving and safety concerns of Milwaukee County residents. MCDOT engagement with plans and objectives to organize and address a long-standing public concern.
- Pay increases closer to market standards attracted more qualified applicants. We had a lot of success recruiting by “word of mouth.” All employees recruited were actively employed elsewhere and applied because someone they knew worked here and strongly recommended it. Our workplace climate has improved greatly over the past few years, that has helped us greatly to retain staff.

4. What factors hindered progress toward accomplishing these goals?

- Limited financial and staff resources to engage and involve the County staff in the broader safety concerns of reckless driving.
- For MCTS the top-level mechanic (A Bus Mechanic) has been the hardest position to fill. Although the wages are fairly competitive to the market, it has been extremely challenging to fill 3rd shift positions. This is a union environment, and all positions are filled based on seniority.
- For Fleet, Mechanics are in very high demand right now, so more aggressive recruitment strategies are going to be necessary for us to fill remaining position vacancies.
- Compensation remains an issue. There is a study underway by Human Resources.

5. Aside from financial resources, what help does your department/office need in identifying and achieving your strategic goals?

- Continued support from the Strategy, Budget, and Performance Office.

FISCAL EFFECT

The report is informational only and there is no fiscal impact.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Milwaukee County Department of Transportation

PREPARED BY:

Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Milwaukee County Department of Transportation

APPROVED BY:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Donna Brown-Martin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Milwaukee County Department of Transportation

ATTACHMENTS:

MCDOT 2023-2027 Strategic Plan

cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk