Milwaukee County Organizational Assessment
Audit Committee Presentation

EAGLE HILL
unconventional consulting

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Executive Summary

Across the focus areas of Racial Equity, Duplication and Efficiency, Collaboration, and Customer Service, Eagle Hill found that the most common challenges are related to limited accountability and organizational silos.

Summary of Key Findings

1 Racial Equity

Without a central point of accountability, Departments do not consistently consider or integrate racial equity practices into their processes, services, or decision-making.

2 Duplication & Efficiency

While there is some evidence of duplication of services at the Department-level, duplication may be found within Departments. However, the siloed structure has led to lost opportunities to realize efficiencies through knowledge-sharing.

3 Collaboration

Collaboration is an untapped strength for Milwaukee County Government. However, organizational silos and inefficiencies in process inhibit collaboration among employees.

4 Resident Experience

The County's employees are passionate about serving the community, but the current processes, systems, and structure do not enable employees to provide a consistent resident experience.

Summary of Key Design Option Considerations

- **Clarify Leader Roles & Accountabilities for Racial Equity:** Clarify leader roles and accountabilities in achieving the racial equity vision for both internal and external, mission-oriented decisions.
- **Promote Knowledge Sharing:** Break-down organizational silos to create opportunities for employees and managers to share processes, resources, tools, and best practices.

- **Co-Locate Services:** Consider co-locating services with common residents and related service offerings to improve collaboration among employees.
- **Establish Resident Experience Accountability:** Establish accountability for the development, implementation, and management of a resident experience strategy and standards.

Data Collection and Analysis Framework

Data Collection

Eagle Hill pulled upon multiple data sources to understand organizational strengths and challenges, including a review of County documentation and collection of anecdotal data from a diverse set of County leadership and staff.

DOCUMENT REVIEW

Eagle Hill reviewed documents including the strategic plan update, current organization charts, department descriptions, and an accountability chart provided by Milwaukee County to understand how the County is currently structured and the services offered.

INTERVIEWS

Eagle Hill interviewed 17 Cabinet leaders and other elected officials to gather additional context on current organizational strengths that will enable the County's success and obstacles that may hinder progress toward achieving the vision of racial equity.

FOCUS GROUPS

Eagle Hill analyzed the data collected through 7 focus groups with 45 leaders from across the organization and 16 residents who use County services, to further understand strengths and opportunities in meeting resident needs.

Key Questions

What is working really well today about the organization that will enable the County to achieve its strategic goals?

How do you know if you're meeting your residents' needs? What does success look like?

What actions do you take now to ensure racial equity is part of decision-making in your department?

Data Analysis Framework

Eagle Hill structured its analysis by grouping findings based on alignment with the four identified focus areas and five enabling pillars.

Focus Areas

Racial Equity	Duplication & Efficiency	Collaboration	Resident Experience

Enabling Pillars

- Process
- Services
- People
- Culture
- Structure
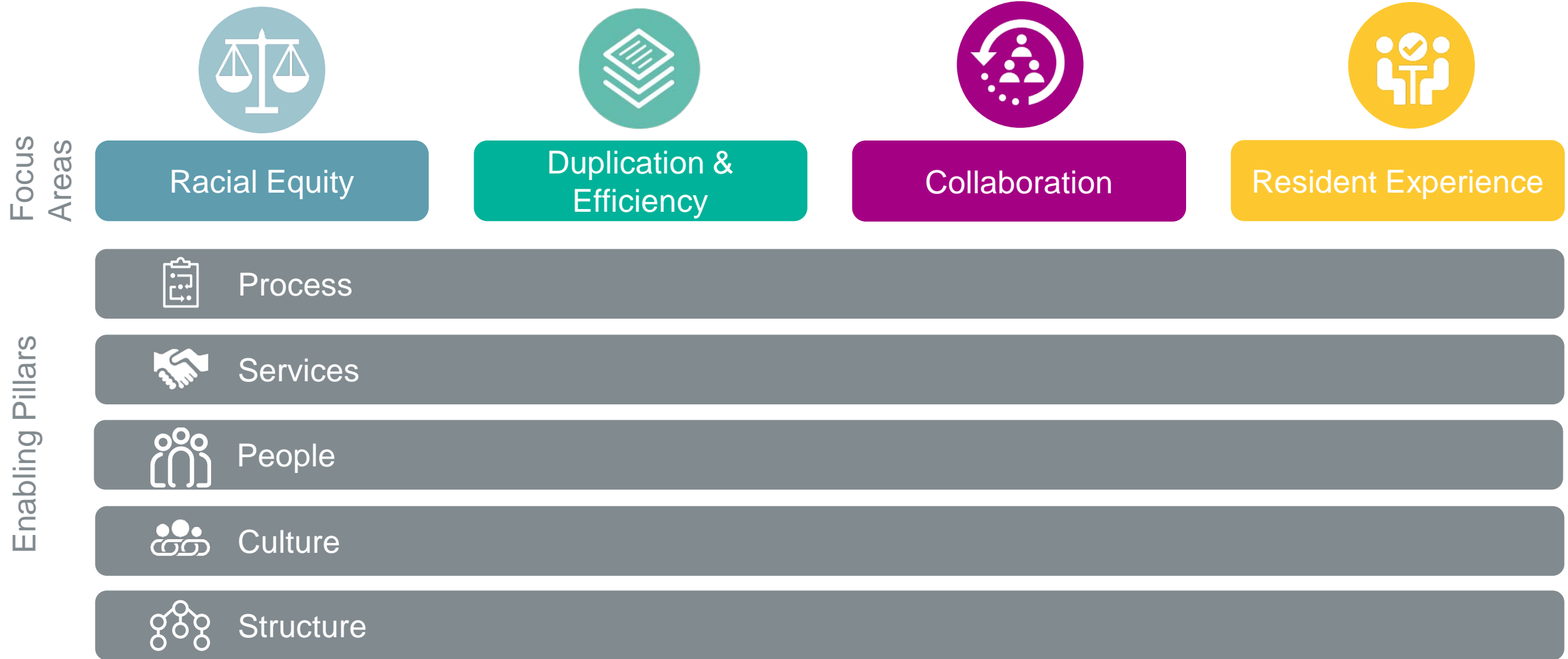
Findings

High-Level Employee Perspectives

Eagle Hill collected the data from 3 employee focus groups to better understand employees' high-level perspective of the current state organization.

Name one strength of the organization:

Pride • Desire • Benefits • Stability • Effort • Emerging • Making • Parks • Momentum • Diverse • People • Employees • Collective • Learning • Improve • Variety • Trying • Listening • Changing • Longevity • Flexible • Experience • Service • Leadership • Work • Willing • Dedication • Accessible • Commitment • Community • Opportunity • Environment

Name one weakness of the organization:

Motivation • Politics • Turnover • Planning • Slow • Behind • Delayed • Pay • Budget • People • Data • Process • Silo • Uncertainty • Diversity • Technology • Funding • Agility • Acting • Needs • Reactive • Resources • Bureaucracy

High-Level Employee Perspectives

Eagle Hill collected the data from 3 employee focus groups to better understand employees' high-level perspective of the current state organization.

Describe the organization's culture in one word:

Findings Summary

Eagle Hill analyzed the interview and focus group data using a quantitative method to identify commonalities throughout the discussions.

Focus Areas

	Racial Equity	Duplication & Efficiency	Collaboration	Resident Experience
Process	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red
Services	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Red
People	Yellow	Gray	Yellow	Yellow
Culture	Red	Gray	Green	Green
Structure	Red	Red	Red	Red

Key:
- **Red :** Frequently mentioned as a barrier to achieving the vision
- **Yellow:** Mentioned as neither an enabler nor barrier for achieving the vision
- **Green:** Frequently identified as a strong enabler to achieve the vision
- **Gray:** Data not collected as part of this assessment

Key Takeaways

》》 Inefficient and/or undefined processes (and systems) were frequently mentioned as a barrier to collaboration and employee's ability to meet resident needs.

》》 A lack of formal resident experience processes and supporting infrastructure was frequently mentioned as a barrier to leadership and staff's ability to understand the extent to which they are meeting resident needs.

》》 Organizational silos – enabled by the structure -- were frequently identified as a barrier across all focus areas.

》》 While people were highlighted as a strength of the organization, staff do not know their role in achieving the racial equity vision.

》》 Staff highlighted that employees are passionate about serving their community and want to collaborate to better serve but are hindered by silos and limited insight into resident needs. In turn, racial equity is not yet widely integrated into the County's culture.

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Thank you!

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Appendix

Appendix A: Detailed Findings

1. Racial Equity

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Summary: *Without a central point of accountability, Departments do not consistently consider or integrate racial equity practices into their processes, services, or decision-making.*

KEY FINDINGS

Process

- Nearly all departments mentioned that they use a racial equity lens in decision-making when it comes to hiring practices. Many departments ensure a diverse hiring panel is present for interviews, and JEQs are being updated using a racial equity lens.
- Departments did not consistently describe how they consider racial equity in decision-making as it applies their external, mission-oriented services.
- The process for rolling out the racial equity training lacked a consistent strategy and communication plan. Many employees did not connect the training to the strategic plan, and leaders were confused about their role in communicating with their employees. Managers felt that the Cabinet did not anticipate the unintended fallout and trauma from the training and did not ensure "psychological safety" and support.

Services

- As an internal service, Human Resources does not provide consistent support and tools to enable racial equity in internal decision-making, such as standardized hiring questions or guidance on appropriate make-up of the hiring panel.
- While the County emphasizes racial equity for internal decision-making (e.g. hiring), few proactive measures are taken by the County to review data through a racial equity lens and make decisions around service offerings.

DESIGN OPTION CONSIDERTIONS

- **Align to Strategy & Outcomes:** To enable the organization to achieve its vision, racial equity must be prioritized in the structure.
- **Clarify Leader Roles & Accountabilities for Racial Equity:** Clarify leader roles and accountabilities in achieving the racial equity vision for both internal and external, mission-oriented decisions.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **Develop a Comprehensive Racial Equity Training Strategy:** Create a communication, training, and implementation plan with clear roles, responsibilities, timing, support, and change management tools.
- **Enable Data-Driven Decision Making:** Consistently provide data on racial equity in services to enable data-driven decision making.
- **Create Affinity Groups:** Create forums for employees to process information and share like experiences around racial equity.

1. Racial Equity (Continued)

KEY FINDINGS

People
- Leaders do not feel that they have the right skills or tools to handle conversations around racial equity with their employees. Leaders are collaborating to solve for the feelings left behind from the training rather than co-creating innovation.
- Leaders and staff do not understand their specific role in achieving the racial equity vision.

Culture
- There is an underlying fear that the vision of racial equity will disappear when the new County Executive takes office.
- While many leaders felt that the culture is changing, the majority of participants agreed that change is very slow. Leaders need more time to process the racial equity training and information themselves, and need support and accountability from a single spearheading department (e.g. Human Resources or OAAA).
- The racial equity training was in conflict with the organization's culture, as people enrichment was not considered as part of the training initiative.
- There is an underlying culture of employees who come to work to "do their job" and do not understand their role in achieving racial equity. There is little accountability to address these aspects of the culture.
- The conversation around racial equity resonated only when the words were separated (race and equity) for the purpose of discussion, and the focus group participants could provide tactical solutions. However, participants were apprehensive when discussing race.

Structure
- It is unclear which leaders or offices are accountable for achieving the racial equity vision and what specifically they are accountable for achieving.
- The relationship between the County Executive Office and Board of Supervisors has been historically challenging and a barrier to achieving the vision.

DESIGN OPTION CONSIDERTIONS

- **Diverse Leadership Team:** Review current leadership team for diversity, and identify opportunities to create a more diverse leadership team when filling key leadership roles.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **Develop Strategic Communication Plan:** To improve employee understanding of the vision, create a communication plan to educate employees and help them see their role in achieving racial equity.
- **Foster Relationship-Building:** To improve collaboration throughout the County, create opportunities to build relationships and trust between the County Executive and Board of Supervisors.
- **Foster Internal Culture Change.** To embed racial equity into behaviors and actions, set the expectation through integrating into core values and performance management practices.

"I can't help but be skeptical about this initiative knowing that it's being led by two white people."

"This is a very personal topic, and we all need time to process. We need more support and time."

2. Duplication & Efficiency

Summary: *While there is little to no duplication of service at the Department-level, duplication may be found within Departments. However, the siloed structure has led to lost opportunities to realize efficiencies through knowledge sharing.*

KEY FINDINGS

Process
- The multi-layered approval process for things like budgets, contracts, proposals, or other initiatives causes inefficiencies and delay in action.
- While HR eliminated duplication with a centralized model, the hiring process is inconsistent and inefficient. With several rounds of reviewing candidates before they can be interviewed, the entire process takes on average six months.

Services
- It appears that the Department of Health & Human Services, Department of Aging, Veterans Services, and Department of Administration may provide similar services to residents, however we were unable to uncover specific details.
- There is little data available for departments to know when they share residents. In some cases, residents may have multiple case managers assisting them with obtaining services and resources.

Structure
- The current organizational structure is siloed, which may lead to inefficiency, with leaders "doing things their own way."
- There are currently no forums for managers to share best practices and learn from each other, which leads to inefficient processes, "reinventing the wheel," and each department creating their own solutions.

DESIGN OPTION CONSIDERTIONS

- **Promote Knowledge Sharing:** Break-down organizational silos to create opportunities for employees and managers to share processes, resources, tools, and best practices.
- **Centralize Case Management Functions:** Eliminate assignment of multiple case managers for a single resident.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **Streamline the Approval Process:** Identify simple requests or initiatives where the approval process can be simplified.
- **Develop Resident Needs Survey:** Create a centralized, county-wide survey to collect and analyze resident experience data.

"We operate in a very risk-averse environment. There are too many cumbersome manual processes, but no one wants to change them."

"HR is a major obstacle. There is no support from recruiting whatsoever."

3. Collaboration

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Summary: *Collaboration is an untapped strength for Milwaukee County Government. However, organizational silos and inefficiencies in process and structure inhibit collaboration among employees.*

KEY FINDINGS

Process
- HR has mandated process documentation in AMOP; however, many processes remain undocumented resulting in duplication of efforts, inefficiencies, and a lack of collaboration across the departments.
- Many interviewees mentioned that a resident may have multiple case managers and there is no central data management system, which makes it hard for departments to share data and collaborate when serving the same resident.

Services
- The lack of resident data makes it difficult for departments to identify a shared resident and opportunities to collaborate around service delivery.
- The formation of the L10 group has been identified as most the efficient way for a small group of leaders to collaborate and address issues around service delivery.

People
- The County employees appreciate opportunities to collaborate, but such opportunities are limited due to resources and budget constraints.
- Staff indicated that a perceived lack of collaboration between the County Board of Supervisors and the County Executive Office has led to a trickle-down effect into the behaviors of the rest of the organization.

DESIGN OPTION CONSIDERTIONS

- **Promote Knowledge Sharing:** Break-down organizational silos to create opportunities for employees and managers to share processes, resources, tools, and best practices.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **Develop a County Services Resource Guide:** Create and house a County services resource guide in a centralized location for employees to use to best guide residents and navigate County services.
- **Create Manager Forums:** To foster collaboration and eliminate inefficiency.

3. Collaboration (Continued)

KEY FINDINGS

Culture
- There has been positive change in the County over the last few years, the County's culture and the desire to collaborate are widely acknowledged as an area of strength for the organization.
- While the overall culture is one of collaboration and mission-focus, there are parts of the County's legacy culture that still leans towards indifference to excellence in delivering quality service to residents.

Structure
- The County Government physical layout hinders collaboration in delivering services to customers. For example, the service locations are not convenient to get to or navigate if a customer needs services from more than one department. Thus, multiple departments cannot work together to address the customers' needs.
- Due to the siloed organizational design, it is not easy for departments to collaborate on day-to-day service offerings or initiatives.

DESIGN OPTION CONSIDERTIONS

- **Enhance Collaboration in Resident Experience:** Create opportunities within the structure for departments to work together to serve like residents.
- **Co-Locate Services:** Consider co-locating services with common residents and related service offerings to improve collaboration among employees.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **Implement a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System:** Invest in a CRM system for the County to start capturing and addressing customer needs in a centralized and accessible location.
- **Improve Facility Signage & Branding:** Develop consistent and clear signage for all locations, including County branding, and resources such as a service offering brochure or navigation map.

"We have no idea if we share customers with another department. It has even caused a death."

"Personalities get in the way of collaboration."

4. Resident Experience

Summary: The County's employees are passionate about serving the community, but the current processes, systems, and structure do not enable employees to provide a consistent resident experience.

KEY FINDINGS

Process
- Cumbersome HR processes make it challenging to staff-up, and limited resources make it difficult to offer more robust services to residents.
- When residents present the County with a need, they are often served with a process to resolve their issue, rather than a service or a resource.

Services
- Due to the lack of data on resident satisfaction, it is unknown if the services provided by the County meet the resident needs. County Supervisors often pass on constituent requests to County departments, but whether or not the service is provided or solves the problem is unknown.
- There is a perception among managers that recent changes in compensation created low morale, which may negatively impact employee attitudes and, in turn, resident service.
- County services may or may not be what the resident actually needs, and employees do not have the training or tools to identify the true needs of their residents.

People
- County employees and leadership are passionate about serving the community and take pride in helping residents with their needs; however, employees may not be knowledgeable of all service offerings or know where to direct residents if they need a particular service or resource.

DESIGN OPTION CONSIDERTIONS

- **Enhance Centralized HR Model:** Document process standards for hiring practices, diverse hiring panels, and racially equitable job descriptions. Hold HR staff accountable for consistent performance.
- **Establish a Customer Service Center:** Consider establishing a customer service center, including a phoneline, mailing and email address for constituents to contact the County to request services or information.
- **Establish Resident Experience Accountability:** Establish accountability for the development, implementation, and management of a resident experience strategy and standards.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **Promote a Resident-Centric Culture:** Highlight the County's culture as an enabler to achieve the vision of racial equity and leverage this strength to foster a resident-centric culture through integration of resident experience into core values, a Credo, and performance management practices.

KEY FINDINGS

Culture
- County employees (leaders, managers, and front-line) are dedicated and have the willingness to serve the County's residents with Integrity, Respect and Excellence.
- The County Government's culture has dramatically improved over the last two years and serves as a top strength of the organization.
- Even with the strong culture, not all employees are invested in striving for good resident service or participating in racial equity initiatives; and there is lack of accountability to correct these behaviors.

Structure
- Physical locations of certain departments make it difficult for residents to navigate and receive services in a timely and efficient manner.
- Marketing around County offices and services is lacking. There is little to no communication to residents, and no initiative to educate residents on services provided by the County versus the City.
- Due to the political structure of the organization, some elected official offices, contractors, and other County partners did not receive the racial equity training and may not have the same priorities when it comes to resident experience.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **Enhance Employee Engagement:** Determine county-wide customer service standards, and address employee engagement and accountability.
- **Improve Facility Signage & Design:** Install multi-lingual, 508-compliant signage in elevators, hallways across the county buildings and consider alternate, easily accessible entry-points to the Courthouse building.
- **Enhance Communications:** Consider communications best practices for both internal and external communication, branding, and marketing of County services.
- **Focus on Resident Engagement:** Consider a resident engagement strategy across all Departments to provide opportunities for leaders to collaborate on resident data, resident services, and outreach. Determine a single accountability point to set the strategy and determine initiatives to provide an excellent resident experience.
- **Include County Partners:** Determine a way to communicate the value of racial equity for County partners (e.g. Sherriff's Office, vendors) and encourage participation in racial equity training.

"Make it closer and easier for customers to get the services they need in one place."

"Customer service standards have to tie back to performance management and setting a good performance management structure."

Appendix B: Interview and Focus Group Questions

Leadership Interview Guide Questions

Eagle Hill asked the following questions to all Cabinet Members and Elected Officials during the Leadership Interviews to understand the leaders' perspective of the organization.

Process and Services
- *What is the function of your department? What services and programs do you provide?*
- *What role will your department serve in achieving racial equity in Milwaukee County?*
- *What stakeholders, departments, divisions, and/or other leaders do you interact with most (and why), and what interactions are most important for mission effectiveness?*
- *Are there any departments, divisions, and/or other stakeholders with whom you don't regularly interact, but would be important partners to achieve both mission outcomes and racial equity?*
- *What actions do you take now to ensure racial equity in decision-making in your department? What else could you do to advance equity in decision-making? What would the ideal process look like?*

Customers
- *Who are your customer groups (internal and external)? How does your department interact with key external or internal customers? Describe these interactions.*
- *How do you know if you're meeting your customers' needs? What does success look like?*
- *Describe the day-to-day collaboration between your department and other departments or divisions to deliver services to, and meet the needs of, your shared customers? What opportunities exist to improve collaboration to better serve your customers?*
- Give an example of a time when collaborating across departments seemed slower or harder than it needed to be? What gets in the way of collaboration?
- *What steps do you take to ensure that racial equity, diversity, and inclusion are taken into account when it comes to delivering services to your customers?*
- *What opportunities do you see for the County to be more customer-focused?*

Leadership Interview Guide Questions (continued)

Eagle Hill asked the following questions to all Cabinet Members and Elected Officials during the Leadership Interviews to understand the leaders' perspective of the organization.

Structure

- Given the current structure, how easy or difficult is it for customers to navigate the County's services?
- What would it look like to have a more customer-centric structure? What would you be afraid of losing that works well today?
- *How effective is the executive management team? What areas for improvement exist?*
- *How effective is the centralization of certain departments (e.g. HR)? How could we optimize this?*
- *Where might there be overlap in functions and services between departments?*
- *What is working really well today about the organization that will enable the County to achieve its strategic goals? What are the major problems and constraints?*

People & Culture

- *Describe the County's culture, both strengths and weaknesses.*
- *Through the recent strategic planning efforts, the County has identified Respect, Integrity, and Excellence to be core values. Which of these core values does the county "live" really well and where do you see room for improvement?*
- *What legacy culture issues may hinder or increase the County's success in achieving its goals?*

Additional Questions

- *How is large-scale change adopted in your department or county as whole?*
- *Is there anything you that you would like to emphasize for consideration in the Organizational Assessment project effort?*
- *If you were the incoming County Executive, what would you change about how the organization operates and why?*
- *What are some of the outstanding customer needs that your department is working toward?*
- *What resources do you need to deliver on the strategy?*
- *What opportunities do you see for improvement within the County's structure or processes?*

Employee Focus Group Guide Questions

Eagle Hill asked the following questions to all managers during the Employee Focus Groups to understand the managers' perspective of the organization.

- *In **one word** describe Milwaukee County Government's Culture, Strength, Weakness.*

- *How do you find out about important information (e.g. strategic plan, racial equity training, etc.)?*

- *How do you communicate with your customers? How do customers provide feedback or get in touch with your department?*

- *What organizational obstacles inhibit your ability to meet customers' needs? What enablers would help you better meet your customers' needs?*

- *What opportunities do you see for the County to be more customer-focused and racially equitable?*

- *Describe the day-to-day collaboration between your division and other departments or divisions to deliver services to your shared customers? What stands in the way of collaboration, if anything? What enables collaboration?*

- *What racial equity strategies strengthen your collaborations with other departments/divisions?*

- *What actions do you take now to ensure racial equity in decision-making in your division? What else could you do to advance equity in decision-making? What would the ideal process look like?*

- *What stakeholders, departments, divisions, and/or other leaders do you interact with most (and why), and what interactions are most important to achieve racial equity?*

- *Are there any you don't regularly interact with, but would be important partners to achieve racial equity?*

- *Where might there be overlap in functions or services?*

- *Describe your interaction with centralized departments (HR, IT, Finance).*

Customer Focus Group Guide Questions

Eagle Hill asked the following questions to all participants during the Customer Focus Groups to understand how customers navigate the County's services.

Health & Human Services

- *Think about the last time you contacted the Milwaukee County Government for help on human services of any kind (list above):*
  - *Whom did you contact? How did you contact this office?*
  - *How many people did you talk to before getting your problem resolved?*
  - *How easy or difficult was it to navigate the services?*
  - *Describe how you felt during the experience (confused, frustrated, relieved, hopeful, etc.)?*
  - *Did you detect any racial bias?*
- *Have you ever wanted to contact the County for service(s) but did know where to go or how to access the service??*
- *Have you experienced working with multiple county departments at one time? If so, how was your experience, such as working with veterans' services and Department of Human & Health Services?*
- *Based on your experience, what was really great about the services you received? What can be improved about the service(s) that you received?*
- *How could we better coordinate services to meet your needs?*
- *How would want to provide your feedback to the County and how often?*
- *How do you or people you know connect with County services?*

Parks

- *Think back to the last time you used County parks:*
  - *How would you describe your experience with Milwaukee County's parks and recreations services?*
  - *How did you access the parks system?*
  - *Did you have to get in contact with someone? How did that conversation go?*
- *How would you describe:*
  - *The accessibility (location in county, transit to/from) of these services?*
  - *Have you ever had issues accessing these services? If so, please describe?*
- *Do you feel 'welcome' while using these services?*
- *Do you feel these services are inclusive for all residents and visitors? If no, can you elaborate?*
- *How easy or difficult is it for you to navigate County parks and recreation services?*
- *How could we better coordinate services to meet your needs?*