

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE  
INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION**

Date: August 20, 2021 (original)  
September 7, 2021 (revised – staff comments removed)

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

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

Subject: Emissions update and framework for developing and administering a strategic carbon neutrality plan for Milwaukee County operations, from the Director of the Office of Sustainability, Facilities Management Division, Department of Administrative Services

File Type: Informational Report – ID #21-770

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**REQUEST**

As directed by File 21-389, this Informational Report provides: 1) an update on Milwaukee County’s progress toward reducing and eliminating its carbon emissions; and, 2) a framework for developing and administering a strategic plan for Milwaukee County to achieve carbon-neutral operations by 2050.

**POLICY**

Milwaukee County Legislation:	File 21-389, File 20-318, and File 17-506
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**BACKGROUND**

1. Progress Update - Operational Emissions:

In 2017, per File 17-506, Milwaukee County adopted the goal of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for County operations in accord with the Paris Climate Agreement, which pledges to reduce national GHG emissions by at least 50% by 2030, relative to 2005. Furthermore, in April 2021 per File 21-389, the Milwaukee County Board resolved that the County shall achieve carbon-neutral operations, or zero net emissions, by 2050.

To determine Milwaukee County’s progress toward reducing and eliminating its carbon emissions, the Office of Sustainability completed a GHG emissions inventory for County operations for calendar years 2016-18 and shared these with the County Board - see File 20-318.

Between 2005 and 2018, Milwaukee County's total operational GHG emissions decreased by 65,166 MTCDE (almost 31 percent). Three factors most likely led to this decrease: 1) a reduction in the County's building portfolio; 2) increased County energy and fuel efficiency; and, 3) greener We Energies' electricity supply.

With consultants at ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability USA, the Office of Sustainability has prepared a forecast of Milwaukee County's operational GHG emissions. Based on this analysis, the County appears to be on track to meet or exceed its 2030 emissions target. To achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, however, the County must further reduce or offset operational emissions by an average of 3.6% per year (2,879 MTCDE) from 2022 through 2049.

## 2. Framework for Achieve Carbon-Neutral Operations by 2050:

In response to the request within the April Board resolution, the Director of the Office of Sustainability convened a Sustainability Task Force to develop a framework for developing and administering a strategic plan for Milwaukee County to achieve carbon-neutral operations by 2050.

The Task Force, which consists of a seven-person Steering Group and 11-person Technical Group, held public meetings roughly once every two weeks from June-July 2021. The Steering Group established the branding ('Climate Action 2050') and guiding principles for the framework, while the development of specific technical pathways was guided by the Technical Group. The resulting document, Milwaukee County's *Climate Action 2050 Framework* ('Framework'), is attached to this report.

Although not intended to be a plan, the Framework identifies three major avenues for reducing Milwaukee County's operational carbon emissions: 1) improve the energy efficiency of County buildings; 2) convert the MCTS bus fleet from diesel to electric; and 3) increase the County's use of clean energy from renewable sources such as solar or wind. The Framework suggests that Milwaukee County could achieve carbon-neutral operations by 2050 by implementing these and other strategies. Further research, business case development, feasibility and risk analysis, and engagement with County stakeholders and partners, however, is needed to refine the list of strategies.

The Framework suggests an 18 to 24-month timeline for the development of Milwaukee County's strategic carbon neutrality ('Climate Action 2050') plan. To support the County's Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan, the Framework also recommends that the plan be developed with significant input from County departments, community stakeholders and partners. Some carbon neutrality strategies will impact not just County operations but also the larger community. Thus, it is crucial to inform and engage the County employees, the general public, and others with developing the plan.

The next step in Climate Action 2050 would be to fund, organize and initiate the research and detailed planning required to map out specific strategies that lead to an implementation plan. Details and high-level costs for this are included in the Framework document.

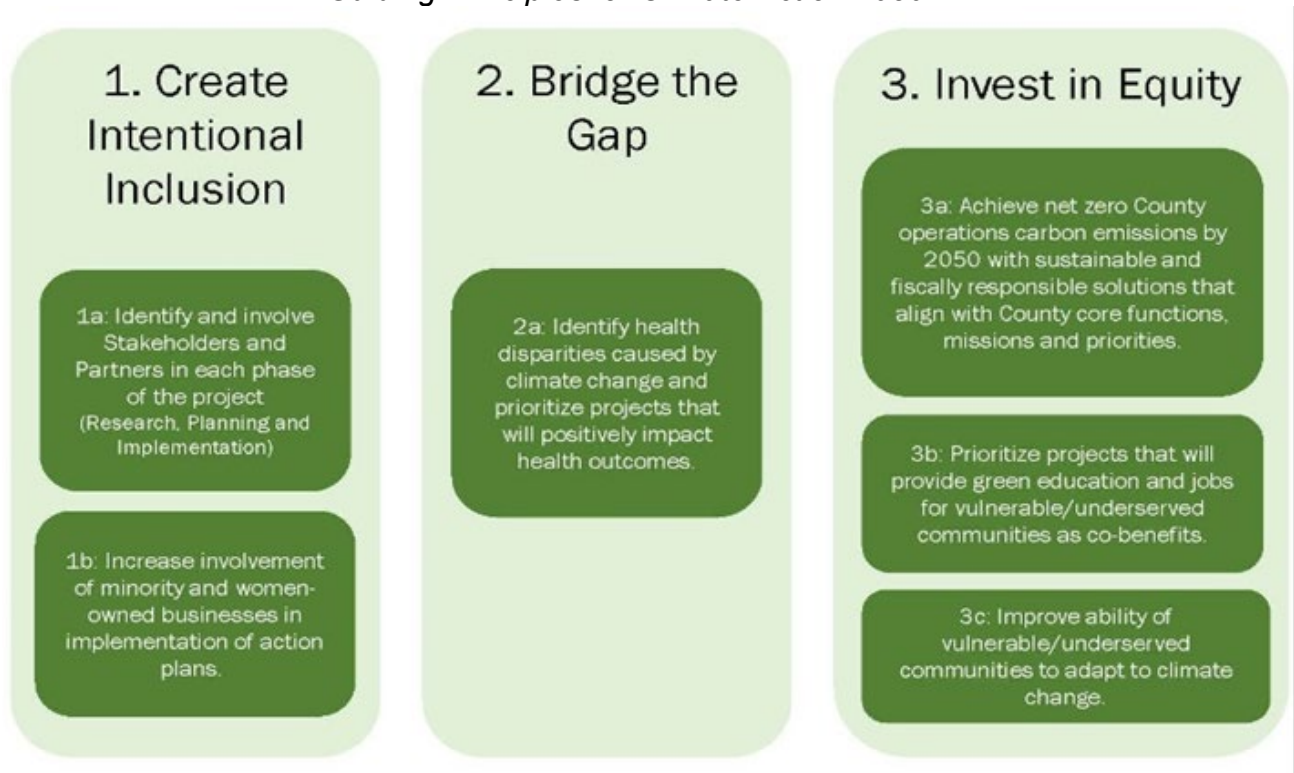
## **ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Steering Group established the Guiding Principles for Climate Action 2050 as shown below. These principles build off Milwaukee County's Vision that by achieving racial equity, Milwaukee is the healthiest county in Wisconsin, and directly align with the three Strategic Focus Areas of:

1. Create Intentional Inclusion
2. Bridge the Gap
3. Invest in Equity

Climate change and our response to address it can directly impact health and racial disparities in Milwaukee County, and this implementation must supplement and not compete with the current County Vision and strategy. The alignment of the Guiding Principles for Climate Action 2050 to the County Vision and plan is critical to help build momentum and reinforce the importance of both.

### *Guiding Principles for Climate Action 2050*



Further details on the co-benefits of climate action (such as health, jobs, community business development, fiscal sustainability, and resiliency) and their alignment to strategic plan are included in the Framework document.

**FISCAL EFFECT**

None, report is informational only.

**TERMS**

None, report is informational only.

**VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

Gordie Bennett

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**APPROVED BY**

*Stuart Carron*

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Stuart Carron, Director,  
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**ATTACHMENTS**

*A1 - Climate Action 2050 Framework Report*

*A2 - Climate Action 2050 Framework Presentation*

cc: David Crowley, County Executive  
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office  
Sheldon Wasserman, Parks, Energy & Environment Chair, Supervisor District 3  
Steven Shea, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Vice-Chair, Supervisor District 8  
Felesia Martin, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 7  
Sylvia Ortiz-Velez, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 12  
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