

**MILWAUKEE COUNTY  
INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION**

Date: April 20, 2023

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

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

Subject: WY0625021 Climate Action 2050 Plan

File Type: Informational Report

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This informational report provides updates regarding Milwaukee County's strategic plan to achieve carbon neutrality in county facilities and operations by 2050 – hereafter referred to as the 'Climate Action 2050 Plan', or 'CA50 Plan.'

### **POLICY**

File No. 21-389 commits Milwaukee County to become carbon neutral by 2050 and requests the Sustainability Director to develop and administer a strategic plan to achieve carbon neutrality in Milwaukee County facilities and operations by 2050.

File No. 23-485 requests that the Office of Sustainability, Department of Administrative Services develop criteria to evaluate the contribution of capital projects to Milwaukee County's carbon neutrality policy and strategic plan.

### **BACKGROUND**

Climate action planning for Milwaukee County is being guided by Milwaukee County's Sustainability Task Force (STF) and coordinated by the Office of Sustainability. Formed in 2021 by the Office of the County Executive, the STF is chaired by the Sustainability Director and consists of staff and administrators representing nine county departments. More information about the task force, including its membership and public meetings, is available through the County Legislative Information Center<sup>1</sup>.

In August 2021, the STF published "Climate Action 2050 – Achieving Net Zero Carbon Emissions While Advancing Equity, Justice, & Community Resilience" (hereafter, the *CA50 Framework*<sup>2</sup>). This report is the framework for developing and administering a strategic

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<sup>1</sup> <https://milwaukeecounty.legistar.com/DepartmentDetail.aspx?ID=45502&GUID=27A7D063-47A7-4DF4-B9ED-6ECD2241041E>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://milwaukeecounty.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5127520&GUID=A81EF9E0-BA24-49C5-925F-4572D7BC2019>

carbon neutrality plan for Milwaukee County. As recommended by the STF in the CA50 Framework, the plan will be developed using a racial equity lens to identify strategies that will help the county mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change while improving community health and equity. In this framework, the STF established guidelines for climate action planning – see Figure 1. The CA50 Framework also identified high-level strategies for achieving carbon neutrality, and provided lessons learned from other local governments. Per the framework, the plan will serve as a roadmap for Milwaukee County to:

1. Achieve 'carbon neutrality', or zero net carbon emissions, in county operations no later than 2050;
2. Improve the resiliency of county operations and the community to climate change; and,
3. Align Milwaukee County's climate initiatives with its Vision to become the healthiest county in Wisconsin by achieving racial equity.

In September 2022, the Office of Sustainability kicked off development of the Climate Action 2050 Plan with the STF and clean energy consultants Energetics. This capital project (WY0625021) is supported by \$220,000 in Federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 funding. Table 1 provides a timeline and progress summary for CA50 Plan development.

**Table 1. Climate Action 2050 Plan Timeline & Milestones.**

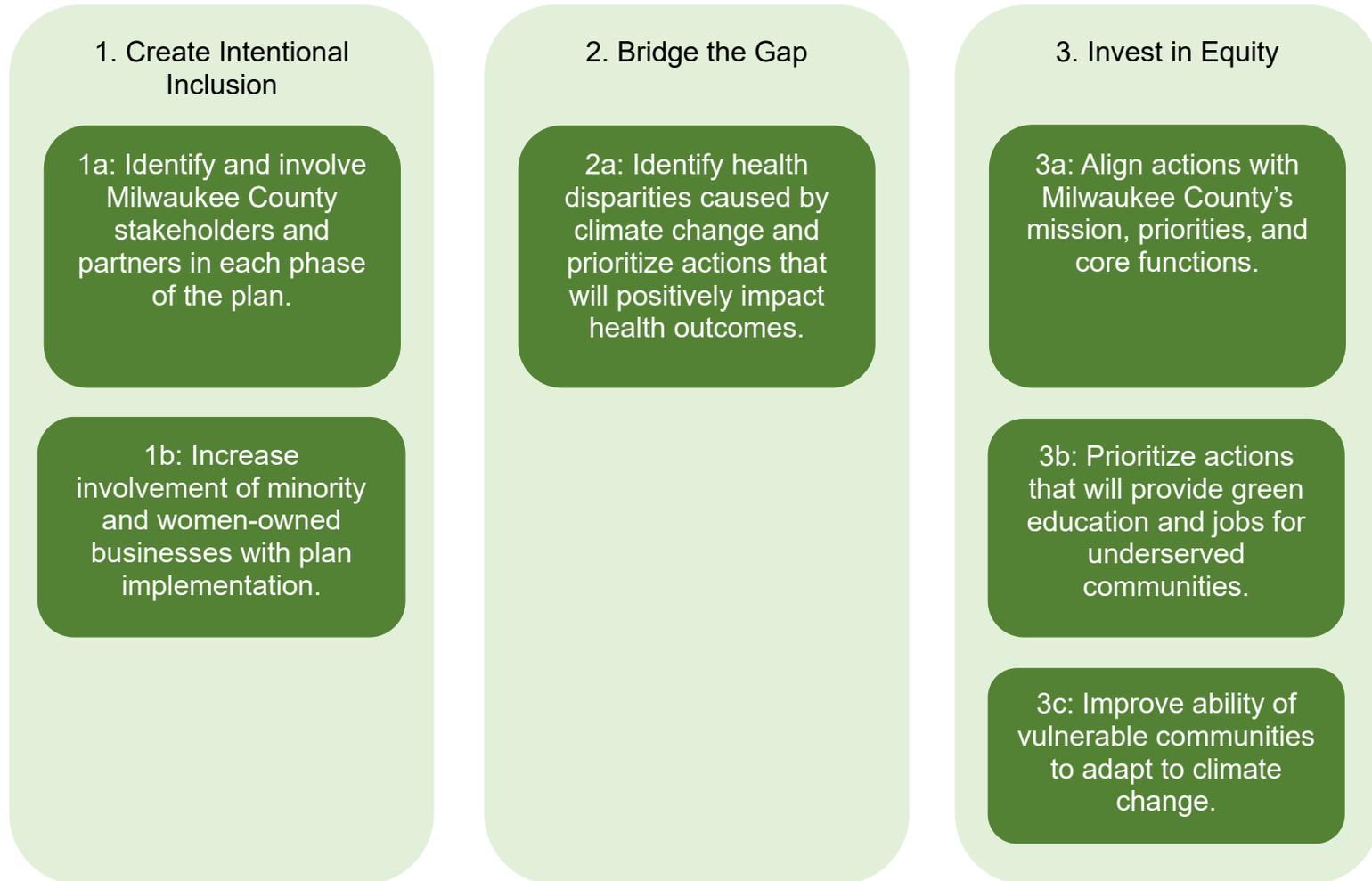
- ✓ Sep. 2022: Hold Kickoff Meeting with Sustainability Task Force
- ✓ Dec. 2022: Community Engagement Strategy
- May 2023: Vulnerability Assessment & Emissions Assessment
- Jan. 2024: Draft Climate Action 2050 Plan
- Feb. 2024: Implementation & Monitoring Program
- May 2024: Final Climate Action 2050 Plan
- June 2024: Presentation of final plan to County Board

✓ Completed ➤ In-progress ○ Not yet started

### **Engagement Strategy**

As noted in the CA50 Framework, engagement of county stakeholders is critical to the success of the Climate Action 2050 Plan. Some climate actions will impact not just county operations but also the larger community. It is crucial to make the public aware, and to welcome and empower them to share their concerns and ideas before finalizing the plan.

**Figure 1. Guiding Principles for the Climate Action 2050 Plan.**



Source: Milwaukee County CA50 Framework<sup>2</sup>

During fall 2022, consultants Energetics worked with the STF (collectively, the ‘planning team’) to develop a *Community Engagement Strategy* for the Climate Action 2050 Plan<sup>3</sup>. The strategy describes how the planning team will conduct comprehensive and meaningful outreach to diverse stakeholders, including but not limited to non-English speakers, persons with disabilities, and BIPOC communities. Community engagement will begin with information sharing and build toward empowering stakeholders with CA50 Plan decision-making - see Figure 2. As of this writing, the planning team has engaged 27 internal and external stakeholders with the plan – see Attachment 1 for community engagement to date.

In December 2022, the planning team launched an online survey to gauge how climate change is impacting Milwaukee County residents. Survey results and findings are summarized in Attachment 2.

The online survey garnered 755 responses which Energetics will summarize as part of the *Vulnerability Assessment Report*. However, survey respondents largely identified as White/Caucasian and as residing in more affluent zip codes. The planning team recognizes that the respondents do not represent the full diversity of Milwaukee County. Accordingly, the planning team is working with the Office of Equity and community partners to boost participation by underrepresented populations.

During 2023, the planning team will host multiple workshops for community members to learn about and help shape the Climate Action 2050 Plan. The first community workshops are tentatively scheduled for May 24 and 25. Additional information about these and future workshops will be posted to the [CA50 Plan webpage](#)<sup>4</sup> and shared with the County Board. Supervisors and their constituents can stay apprised of these events by subscribing to the Office of Sustainability [newsletter](#)<sup>5</sup>.

### **Vulnerability Assessment**

Energetics is preparing a *Vulnerability Assessment Report* that describes, explains, and evaluates Milwaukee County’s exposure to climate change hazards, and identifies the region’s key vulnerabilities. This evaluation will focus on both Milwaukee County operations, as well as the effects of climate change on county residents. A special emphasis of this analysis will be the different ways that climate impacts affect the county’s many communities, including disparate effects of climate hazards on county residents based on factors such as race, age, income, language, disability, transportation access, and others. A draft report will be discussed at the May 2023 Sustainability Task Force meeting.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://milwaukeecounty.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=AO&ID=127686&GUID=afbd4ce4-a26a-4619-9406-e67139388360&N=Q0VTIEZpbmFsIERyYWZ0>

<sup>4</sup> <https://county.milwaukee.gov/climate-plan>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://us6.campaign-archive.com/home/?u=0247d533dd&id=56a4ea6555>.

**Figure 2. ‘Community Engagement to Ownership’ framework.**



### **Emissions Assessment**

As part of CA50 Plan development, Energetics will develop an *Emissions Assessment Report* for Milwaukee County. The report will include a review of the approach, data sources, assumptions, and methodological consistency of the county’s 2019-2021 operational carbon emissions inventories. Energetics will review these inventories and evaluate to ensure they comply with the Local Government Operations Protocol<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, the *Emissions Assessment Report* will provide a ‘business as usual’ emissions forecast for Milwaukee County that will help frame the effort needed to achieve carbon neutral county operations by 2050. A draft report will be discussed at a future Sustainability Task Force meeting.

### **Related Work by Others**

Milwaukee County is developing the Climate Action 2050 Plan around the same time as several related community plans. Most notably, a city-county task force has drafted a climate action plan for Milwaukee to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 while creating family-supporting ‘green’ jobs<sup>7</sup>. In addition, the State of Wisconsin is seeking federal

<sup>6</sup> The Local Government Operations Protocol is the rulebook for accounting for carbon emissions associated with local government operated buildings, vehicles, and other operations - see [https://s3.amazonaws.com/icleiusaresources/lgo\\_protocol\\_v1\\_1\\_2010-05-03.pdf](https://s3.amazonaws.com/icleiusaresources/lgo_protocol_v1_1_2010-05-03.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> <https://city.milwaukee.gov/climate/Climate-Plan>

Climate Pollution Reduction Grant funding to develop a statewide climate action plan. The scope of the CA50 Plan and these community plans includes emissions from Milwaukee County Transit Services, among other county operations. Accordingly, the CA50 planning team will investigate and recommend opportunities to advance Milwaukee County's climate action priorities while supporting community plans.

### **Plan Completion**

The Climate Action 2050 Plan is on track to deliver a draft plan for Milwaukee County stakeholders' feedback in January 2024 (see Figure 1). The final Climate Action 2050 Plan will be presented for the review and approval of the County Board during June 2024. Community members and other stakeholders may provide input on the planning process via a standing survey<sup>8</sup>. Additionally, stakeholders may direct any questions or concerns about the Climate Action 2050 Plan to the county's Sustainability Director at [sustainability@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:sustainability@milwaukeecountywi.gov).

### **ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Climate Action 2050 Plan will support Milwaukee County's strategic plan by creating Intentional Inclusion and Investing in Equity. The planning team will develop the plan with Intentional Inclusion of diverse stakeholders, including but not limited to non-English speakers, persons with disabilities, and BIPOC communities. In addition, as described in the CA50 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.

### **FISCAL EFFECT**

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

### **VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

None

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QVC35D2>

**PREPARED BY**

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**APPROVED BY**

*Stuart Carron*

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

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Community Engagement to Date
2. VA Survey Results Memo

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