



INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE: July 2, 2019

TO: Theo Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

CC: Marcelia Nicholson, Vice Chairwoman; Board of Supervisors and Chair of Transportation, Public Works & Transit Committee

FROM: Nicole M. Brookshire, Executive Director, Office on African American Affairs

SUBJECT: File No. 19-442 – FY 2020 Budget (Operations & Capital)

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

The Office on African American Affairs (OAAA) is committed to improving Milwaukee County policies and practices through the lens of racial equity. We also recognize that government has the potential to leverage significant change and set the stage for achieving racial equity across our community – which begins with our local County government.

Milwaukee County File #19-442, was referred to the Office on African American Affairs to analyze the report from a racial equity lens and Title VI requirement. To recap, File #19-442, is an informational update by Milwaukee County Transit System, for assistance and recommendations to the department's proposed budget Fiscal Year 2020.

At the start of 2019, Milwaukee County embarked on the process of **normalizing** conversations around Racial Equity by offering training to all levels of leadership (Department heads and Elected Offices). OAAA's effort to begin the normalization process this year and most recently with managerial training this month, confirms the office's effort to familiarize all staff with racial equity terminology and the impacts of racial inequities. It is also important to note that all countywide training for Milwaukee County staff will not begin until July 2019. While OAAA's intent is to offer all staff with racial equity training, the use of racial equity tools to best determine equitable decisions and operational practices are not introduced nor effective, until all training has been offered and attended. In addition, once normalization has occurred, the development and then use of a racial equity tools is considered phase II and will require more time.

To honor the Milwaukee County Board's request to review File#19-442, this response is the office's best faith effort, to assess racial equity.

OAAA is using a national racial equity framework to drive racial equity in Milwaukee County. This framework is composed of a three-prong approach: **normalize** (use a racial equity framework to

implement racial equity training), **organize** (build organizational capacity through learning how to use a racial equity tool), and **operationalize** (implementation of the consistent use of a racial equity tool while remaining data-driven). Prior to the development of a racial equity tool, OAAA has outlined assumptions for this file, and suggestive optional recommendations for Milwaukee County Transit System. Furthermore, the following recommendations are intended to inspire further exploration of equitable practices with Milwaukee County decision-makers.

DEFINITION OF A RACIAL EQUITY TOOL

Racial equity tools are designed to integrate explicit consideration of racial equity in decisions, including policies, practices, programs, and budgets. It is both a product and a process. The use of a racial equity tool can help to develop strategies and actions that reduce racial inequities and improve success for all Milwaukee County constituents.

Too often, policies and programs are developed and implemented without thoughtful consideration of racial equity. When racial equity is not explicitly brought into operations and decision-making, racial inequities are likely to be perpetuated. Racial equity tools provide a structure for institutionalizing the consideration of racial equity.

A racial equity tool:

- proactively seeks to eliminate racial inequities and advance equity;
- identifies clear goals, objectives and measurable outcomes;
- engages community in decision-making processes;
- identifies who will benefit or be burdened by a given decision, examines potential unintended consequences of a decision, and develops strategies to advance racial equity and mitigate unintended negative consequences; and,
- develops mechanisms for successful implementation and evaluation of impact.

Use of a racial equity tool is an important step to operationalizing equity. However, it is not enough to use it by itself. We must have a much broader vision of the transformation of government to advance racial equity. To transform government, we must **normalize** conversations about race, **organize** to build organizational capacity, and **operationalize** new behaviors and policies to achieve racial equity.

OAAA ASSUMPTIONS

- All Office on African American Affairs staff have not received all applicable racial equity training, and currently is not fully equipped to complete a comprehensive racial equity assessment.
- Fiscal years 2019/2020 the Milwaukee County workforce will begin its process to normalize the conversation surrounding Racial Equity, referencing the [Government Alliance on Race and Equity \(GARE\) logic model](#).
 - a. Racial Equity & Milwaukee County – Leaders Training (November 2018 – April 2019)
 - b. Racial Equity Managerial Training (June 2019 – August 2019)
 - c. Racial Equity All County Training (July 2019 – January 2020)
- State of Wisconsin’s budget appropriations, those issued to Milwaukee County continues to decline, relative in size, over the past two decades. This limited revenue continues to disparately impact Milwaukee County, causing undue burden to public services; those which our community residents depend on, daily. The short-term funding via the Federal Congestion, Mitigation and

Air Quality (CMAQ) grant being available only until the end of 2020; will result in a transit need to replace this grant funding with a new source of \$2.4M by FY2021.

- Long-term capital improvement and fleet replacement needs will be required to be maintained. MCTS is required to adhere to Federal Transit Administration requirements; such as: Transit Asset Management plan – inclusive of fleet replacement schedules (every five years) and capital related items (building and non-revenue vehicles).
- Declining trends in ridership, is an indicator of socio-economic changes in the community. Nationwide declining ridership is being experienced by metro transit agencies; often due to residents using alternative transportation options.
- Individual rider racial demographic data is not currently being captured by MCTS. Population-level data (2010 Census data) was used by MCTS, as the demographic data source for conducting a disparate impact or disproportionate burden analysis.
- Title VI regulation was designed to limit further harm to people of color when service line or route changes are needed. This regulation solely, does not advance equity, as each government jurisdiction have systemic inequities perpetuated by decades of inequitable planning and policy making.
- Transit equity research continues to focus on federal policy; often not incorporating the need for state and local transportation funding and governance reform.

EQUITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are the Office on African American Affairs recommendations for file number 19-442:

1. Align Milwaukee County's Fair Deal workgroup's recommendation for adjusting State Shared Revenue payments on other, non-mandated services, like public transit. Specifically, to address the 'urgency' in receiving an increase in revenue to address transportation funding gaps. In addition, seeking the workgroup's support in re-defining state legislation grant criteria so funding is eligible for MCTS operating costs, or to enhance lobbying efforts with State legislature, to advocate for re-defining eligible grant criteria (to allow operating costs as an eligible expense).
2. Continue to expand MCTS's outreach efforts and seek ways to enhance awareness to key stakeholders; identify ways to include resident and rider feedback on the front-end of decision-making. Achieving equity requires shared decision-making that is rooted in transparency and a commitment to changing inequitable policies and practices. Bringing the community into all stages of infrastructure planning and implementation allows for community knowledge and priorities to shape decisions and ultimately leads to better projects and outcomes.
3. Continue to expand MCTS's outreach efforts by partnering with 'new' and 'existing' organizations, to provide a broader frame of reference. Working alongside partners to frame additional questions to riders; to get to the root of their transportation problem/need.
4. Explore and invest in opportunities to partner with other transportation providers, those who support the community. It is important to evaluate and pursue non-traditional partnerships that can benefit the larger community. Consideration to form an agreement with a transit partner; a provider who could ensure transit access to where certain routes end. Ex: a local and affordable rental bicycle provider(s).
5. Explore and invest in capturing ridership demographics and rider need(s); to best capture why riders choose MCTS for transit purposes. Utilize data, to best reference asset-based language which highlights rider needs, validates MCTS impact to community, and confirms who MCTS serves. Currently, there appears to be an assumption that all individuals who utilize MCTS have

no other forms of transportation – but there is no racial demographic data (via rider surveys) to support this assertion.

6. Work closely with Transit Services Advisory Committee (TSAC). Consider expanding TSAC committee by-laws to expand community resident representation (as an appointed committee member). Offer TSAC member racial equity training, to help equip the committee in reviewing/making racial equity decisions. Align TSAC to MCTS outreach efforts.

ADDITIONAL TRANSIT MODEL FOR CONSIDERATION

1. **Transit Center-Inclusive Transit: Advancing Equity Through Improved Access & Opportunities**
(<http://transitcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Inclusive-2.pdf>)

“Access to high-quality public transportation can make cities more inclusive by increasing mobility and opportunity, particularly for people with low incomes and people of color. The role of a community is essential to fair and just transportation planning and decision-making processes. This can lead to prioritizing transportation investments that better enable people to meet their day-to-day needs—getting to work, school, the grocery store, the doctor’s office, and social and leisure activities. Allowing people to meet these needs creates long-term economic opportunities and helps people escape poverty. In addition to transit’s well-documented environmental and economic benefits, public transportation can be a powerful tool to advance racial equity and social justice in American cities.”

2. **Metropolitan Council-Transportation Public Participation Plan**
(<https://metro council.org/About-Us/Publications-And-Resources/Transportation-Public-Participation-Plan.aspx>)

This Transportation Public Participation Plan establishes a framework for the region’s stakeholders to influence both long-term transportation policy development and short-term transportation programming. It details the methods and strategies that will be used to engage the wide range of stakeholders, from policymakers, to business interests, to residents of the region. It also identifies specific ways those stakeholders can connect to the decision-making process.

3. **Federal Transit Administration-Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients**
(https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/FTA_Title_VI_FINAL.pdf)

Accurate demographic data is essential in being results driven as stated in the referenced report. Analyzing ridership demographics by administering surveys to riders that record detailed indicators such as race, travel pattern, purpose of riding as listed in the referenced document. Why census data is important to overlay detailed data collection it does not suffice for the Title VI requirement as illustrated in Exhibit 2 on page 108.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Aligning with GARE’s Logic Model, best practice indicates that a Racial Equity Plan should be written after Racial Equity has been normalized and organized within our jurisdiction. Moreover, the creation of a toolkit should proceed the amendment of practices and procedures.

2. The Racial Equity Plan will shape key definitions with the support of the RE Ambassador cohort, to ensure continuity.



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Cc: County Executive – Chris Abele
County Executive Chief of Staff – Raisa Koltun