

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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

From: David Crowley, County Executive  
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive Office

Subject: Informational Report on the Organizational Redesign Project

File Type: Informational Report

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**REQUEST**

To provide the County Board with an informational report regarding the organizational redesign project.

**POLICY**

Milwaukee County General Ordinance Chapter 108

**BACKGROUND**

Milwaukee County's vision of achieving racial equity and becoming the healthiest county in Wisconsin requires a multi-faceted approach to challenging the way power is instituted in decision-making and the foundational ways our organization functions, including policies, processes, and procedures. The findings from a 2020 [organizational assessment](#) conducted by external consultants revealed that, "Organizational silos – enabled by the structure – were frequently identified as a barrier across all [strategic] focus areas." In other words, Milwaukee County was not designed over the decades to be equitable and customer-focused and without careful examination of the County's structure, achievement of the vision would always be somewhat out of sight.

In 2021, seven strategy teams were created to take action towards the nine objective areas within the three focus areas. One of the strategy teams working to "Bridge the Gap" is the Integration Team, which was charged with the objective of "breaking down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered." Based on the 2020 organizational assessment, the group focused on organizational structure as the main way to enable County government to change and adapt to be more strategic, customer-focused, and equitable in its service delivery. The team collaborated closely with the Service Alignment and Fiscal Health strategy teams, which are addressing additional, yet intersecting, organizational pain points.

Achievement of the Integration Team's objective will move us toward the vision by creating an organizational structure that:

- Is organized around the customer.
- Clarifies responsibilities and lines of accountability for core organizational functions, including racial equity.
- Facilitates department collaboration and problem-solving to better meet customer needs.
- Breaks down silos between and within departments to more efficiently allocate resources across the organization and in line with strategic priorities.

The Integration Team first analyzed the current state by using information collected from the organizational assessment, reviewing Counties similar to Milwaukee County in various ways, and developing a scorecard to evaluate organizational structures. The scorecard was used as a baseline evaluation tool to see how an organization's structure aligned with indicators critical to achieving Milwaukee County's vision.

The indicators on the scorecard covered six categories that included:

- Customer service
- Efficiency
- Fiscal health
- Accountability
- Racial equity impact
- Feasibility at Milwaukee County

The scorecard was used to evaluate Milwaukee County's structure and seven (7) other county structures. From there, the team developed a comprehensive package of design recommendations to present to executive leadership.

The County Executive's Office hired the consulting firm that conducted the current-state assessment, Eagle Hill Consulting, which has experts in organizational design, to do a deeper analysis and vetting of the recommendations put forth by the Integration Team. Eagle Hill was charged with advising on the work done by the Integration Team in order to verify best practices, identify additional opportunities, and make adjustments to the recommendations, as needed.

This informational report is a comprehensive set of recommendations that has resulted from the approach outlined above. The recommendations are slated to rollout in phases so that proper change management and resourcing is in place to ensure the success of the redesign. A number of changes, particularly those in administrative functions, are proposed to occur alongside the 2022 budget process, despite many recommendations being cost neutral. Other changes are recommended for implementation in 2023 or later, though preparation for those changes may start more immediately.

## Framework

Best practice for organizational design is to organize systems, processes, and services around common customer bases. At a high level, customers can be segmented into the large categories of “Internal” and “External.” In Milwaukee County currently, Human Resources, Administrative Services, or Corporation Counsel would be examples of departments who primarily serve internal customers; in other words, the services provided help support the operations of the institution at large. Departments like Health and Human Services, Parks, and Transportation would primarily serve community members, or “external customers.” Structuring around common customer bases allows teams to focus on meeting the holistic needs of people in a generative, efficient manner. All elements of the organization must work in tandem to achieve Milwaukee County’s vision.



Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks

Figure 1: From *Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks: Standards for Organizations Around the World* © 2021 Yvonne (Nene)KegomoditsweMolefi, Julie O'Mara, and Alan Richter. Used with permission. All Rights Reserved.

As shown in the figure above from the Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks, services, whether internal or external, must sit on a strong strategic foundation. Together, these three broad pieces reinforce each other to form a strong institution; when one piece is weak, the entire structure suffers. At minimum, the Integration Team’s recommendations help sort out the logic of how Milwaukee County government is structured by building backwards from common customer bases. The recommendations go beyond this, however, by drawing clearer lines of accountability and providing resources necessary to achieve racial equity and health for the community.

Related File No's:	<a href="#">Milwaukee County - File #: 20-172 (legistar.com)</a>
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## ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This report aligns to several strategic objectives, but most specifically to objective 2B: Break down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered.

## FISCAL EFFECT

The organizational redesign project is in development and the fiscal effects have not been fully determined. The project is intended to result in an organizational structure that is customer centric to enable us to reach our vision, which may have some initial upfront costs, but expected to result in longer-term efficiencies. Additional details will be shared with future updates on this project.

## TERMS

N/A

**VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

[Kelly.McKone@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:Kelly.McKone@milwaukeecountywi.gov)

[Isaac.Rowlett@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:Isaac.Rowlett@milwaukeecountywi.gov)

[Claire.Miller@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:Claire.Miller@milwaukeecountywi.gov)

**PREPARED BY:**

Kelly McKone, Organizational Performance Director, County Executive Office

Isaac Rowlett, Strategic Planning Director, County Executive Office

Claire Miller, Continuous Improvement Manager, Department of Administrative Services

**APPROVED BY:**

David Crowley, County Executive

Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive Office

**ATTACHMENTS:**

PowerPoint is forthcoming.

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