

TO: Alderwoman Marina Dimitrijevic and County Board Chair Marcelia Nicholson, Co-Chairs Milwaukee City-County Climate and Equity Advisory Board

CC: Erick Shambarger, Director, Office of Environmental Collaboration; Grant Helle, Director, Milwaukee County Office of Sustainability; Members of the Advisory Board

From: Jennifer Evans and Linda Frank, Our Future Milwaukee Coalition

RE: Requests of the City-County Advisory Board on Climate and Economic Equity

Date: February 18, 2025

We extend our sincere thanks to Erick Shambarger and other city staff who have worked so diligently to secure funding and begin implementation of Milwaukee's Climate and Equity Plan. Recent efforts made by Milwaukee County Supervisors and Grant Helle, the new Sustainability Director, to engage with the City-County Advisory Board are a welcome development, which we wholeheartedly support.

Our Future Milwaukee Coalition includes 20 organizations representing various sectors of the community. In keeping with our mission to ensure the full and equitable implementation of Milwaukee's Climate and Equity Plan, we monitor government action, inform the public, and advocate for resources to support local climate action. In this capacity, we submit the following requests and recommendations to the Advisory Board:

**A. Fully comply with Common Council [Resolution 230288](#)**

1. Ensure dual representation by, and coordination with, the city and county.
  - a. Resolution 230288 calls for the annual meeting to be co-chaired by the Milwaukee Common Council President or designee, and the Chair of the Milwaukee County Board or designee.
  - b. Staff from the Environmental Collaboration Office and the County Office of Sustainability are requested to coordinate planning and reporting. The opportunity exists to offer a joint city-county report.
2. Promptly fill vacancies on the Advisory Board (including the Youth Commission position)
3. Exercise the Advisory Board's responsibilities to **advise, review, and report** on progress of Milwaukee's Climate and Equity Plan.<sup>1</sup>
  - a. The Advisory Board should have the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to the reports to the City and County Board committees. It is urged to utilize the expertise of Advisory Board members and enable them to ask probing questions and provide information and support. This may include, for example, questions about alignment with state and regional initiatives, inquiries about data validation, and evidence of gaps in service to underserved communities.

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<sup>1</sup> While Resolution 230288 calls for the Advisory Board to report on the progress of Milwaukee's Climate and Equity Plan, it was announced at the [January 23, 2025](#) meeting that this function will be delegated to the Environmental Collaboration Office, which will submit its report to the City's Steering and Rules Committee, with input from the Advisory Board. It was also announced that there would only be one annual report to Steering and Rules, and that the annual meeting will serve as preparation for the report. This raises at least two issues of concern: 1) The Climate and Equity Plan requires that the Environmental Collaboration Office submit a biannual Communication File to Steering and Rules, but the Advisory Board is only meeting once a year. 2) To date, the Advisory Board has not offered any substantial review or assessment of progress on the Climate and Equity Plan or reporting thereof. During the Annual meetings it has accepted all reports as presented, placing the full burden of accuracy and accountability on the Office of Environmental Collaboration staff.

- b. Provide opportunities during scheduled meetings for community questions and comments.

## **B. Schedule Meetings in Advance**

1. Designate a consistent schedule (month and day) for the annual meeting of the Advisory Board. This date should be coordinated with the County Board of Supervisors.
2. Schedule the Annual meetings as a two-hour in-person or hybrid meeting to enable discussion.
3. Announce the Annual meetings to the public with at least two weeks' notice, and invite public participation.
4. Conduct additional meetings of the Advisory Board to facilitate the execution of its duties as needed, including:
  - a. A biannual meeting to support and coordinate with the Environmental Collaboration Office's biannual report to the Steering Committee.
  - b. Quarterly or monthly meetings to facilitate research and coordinate reporting.

## **C. Modify Advisory Board Meeting Content and Reporting**

1. Invite staff from the following entities to actively participate in the meetings:
  - a. Milwaukee Environmental Collaboration Office
  - b. Milwaukee Office of Equity and Inclusion
  - c. Milwaukee County Office of Sustainability
2. Provide progress reports in advance of the meeting(s)
  - a. Staff from the aforementioned offices are requested to provide written drafts at least one week in advance of the annual (or biannual meetings) to enable review and discussion by Advisory Board members.
  - b. As feasible, reports from all three entities listed above will provide an overview of:
    - i. Planned versus actual activities
    - ii. Action timelines with benchmarks
    - iii. Measurable impacts on equityThe format can be flexible, including a one page dashboard. These short-term metrics may be supplemented by periodic reports regarding emissions reductions.
3. Plan the Agenda to maximize time for review and discussion while limiting the amount of time spent on verbal reports.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The bulk of time in previous meetings has been taken up with a verbal listing of information that was readily available through other sources. While ECO's prodigious accomplishments in acquiring funding and initiating programs are to be applauded, this approach to the agenda does not provide ample time for reporting by multiple parties or for discussion and review.