

Millennial Task Force member ideas generated in meetings

* Note: this is a working document that summarizes thoughts and ideas that Millennial Task Force members have generated during meetings so far. Many of the items below highlight issues that members either believe exist or are perceived to exist by fellow millennials. Document last updated: 2.19.21

General Comments

- Three different age groups to address: 15-23 (pre-college), 23-38 (early workforce, no kids), and 30-38 (with families)
- Brain drain issue is a regional metro issue with the city of Milwaukee a big component
- Attraction of new people and talent to Milwaukee is equally as important as retention
- Task Force interested in addressing key opportunity gap areas: education, employment, entrepreneurship, criminal justice, health, infrastructure and wealth disparity
- Interested in identifying and building upon existing initiatives and programs such as UWM's Upward Bound, rather than reinventing them
- Both private and public funding is needed
- Important to aim high; it is OK if many recommendations are only achievable in long-term
 - Recommendations should be a mix of new ideas and lending support to initiatives already underway
- All recommendations should be inclusive of everyone and be intentional to aid-groups who have been systematically disenfranchised – should address racial justice and mirror City's current efforts

Reasons Millennials and Gen Z *leave* Milwaukee

Task Force members highlighted that they perceive that Milwaukee's weaknesses in the following areas contribute to regional brain drain:

- **Preconditions** contributing to regional brain drain: poverty, poor educational systems, segregation, poor cultural scenes, poor infrastructure, and crime (poor public safety)
- **Segregation:** Milwaukee is a tale of two cities; belief that City government exacerbates problem by highlighting and catering to handful of neighborhoods (east side and downtown) but not whole city
- **Identity:** city lacks cohesive positive identity
 - Disparities in identities of neighborhoods creates lack of cohesive identity
 - Narrative often negative related to preconditions and outcomes for people of color
- **Pushback from government** against community, grassroots ideas
 - E.g. City government's needless objections to Milwaukee "People's Flag"
- **Belief that pipelines, internships** often don't lead to opportunities
 - Young talent not getting enough exposure to various fields and industries
 - Frontline jobs have too much turnover because they are not invested positions
- Youth Council members during 5/6/20 meeting noted they want to eventually leave Milwaukee in part because of:
 - Racism in white-majority areas
 - Lack of Historically Black Colleges and Universities
 - City's unrecognized potential
 - Lack of leadership that is willing to be outspoken about inequality in the city
 - Unsafe conditions for young and black people
 - Unfair treatment from MPD and history of police brutality

Reasons Millennials and Gen Z *stay* in Milwaukee

Task Force members highlighted that they perceive that Milwaukee's strengths in the following areas contribute to residents staying in the area:

- Milwaukee is friendly for entrepreneurship, startups, young professionals
- Good place for entrepreneurs to test their businesses and for young professionals to move to the top

- City is urban, a good size for young professionals and small enough for new startups to try ventures, test operations, and seize new pathways
- City is big enough for people to market themselves and make impact, yet small enough to minimize risks, with more access to opportunities than, for instance, Chicago, which is far riskier
- Milwaukee has relatively lower student debt than other cities
- Youth Council members noted during 5/6/20 meeting that Milwaukee is strong in these areas:
 - Diversity
 - Sense of community: likely to know neighbors, sense of togetherness even in unsafe environments

Opportunities

Apprenticeships

- Apprenticeships offer a valuable opportunity for young professionals, but young people are generally trained to go to college because they lack awareness on what apprenticeships offer
- Offer on-the-job paid training, and similar average wages in Wisconsin compared to professions earned with a college degree
- Overlooked, misunderstood, have stigma of not being as valuable as traditional pathways
- College graduates tend to leave Milwaukee whereas those in trades stay for job opportunities here

Tech Industry

- Tremendous opportunities for new jobs in Milwaukee's tech sector
- Tech Hub Coalition
 - Coalition seeks 70,000 new tech jobs in Milwaukee (double jobs from 2017 to 2025)
 - Goals: Build Milwaukee's tech image; leverage cross-industry partnerships to support startups; grow jobs in existing companies; support freelancers; retain top regional talent; accelerate reskilling of population
 - Working with local universities to provide virtual internships; collaborating with MPS on providing access to tech
 - Coalition more top heavy with big corporations and needs more inclusion with smaller firms

Possible Recommendations to Common Council

Achieve Racial Equity and Implement Criminal Justice Reforms

- Increase financial support for the Office of African American Affairs), connect it with the Health Dept., and streamline OAAA's efforts with the County OAAA
 - City's OAAA should collaborate with new Office of Equity and Inclusion
- Modify police training
 - Ensure that Health Department's Blueprint for Peace is incorporated in police training
 - Implement Wisconsin Policy Forum's policing reform recommendations
 - Police brutality is an issue highlighted by City youths
- MTF should implement and adopt strategies/recommendations of Wisconsin Policy Forum's review of Milwaukee Police Department
 - WPF is currently assessing MPD training, tactics, strategies and barriers and should have report ready by April or May 2021
 - Blueprint for Peace is included in this report
- Create ad-hoc committee of engaged community members to provide feedback, suggestions, etc. to Council on issues related to racial and criminal justice
- Expand emotional intelligence and cultural competency assessments to City employees, beyond only Police Dept. (File #200431)
- Implement housing solutions

- Incentivize first-time home buying and residence in black/brown neighborhoods
- Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) should support the Convent Hill 32-story mixed income apartment tower project
- Address how civil unrest pertaining to systematic brutality, racism, discrimination, inequality, and social injustice goes beyond policing and affects workforce/economic issues as well
- Racial equity should be considered a main component of the rest of the priorities/goals

Protect Health and Wellness

***Note: Task force mentioned this could possibly be combined with Racial and Criminal Justice? TBD*

- Address the major impacts COVID-19 has had on the black and brown community
 - Ensure that the vaccine is equitably and evenly distributed by all parties involved, including Health Department
- Increase funding to the Office of Violence Prevention
 - OVP's current ReCAST grant funding is in its last year and is expiring soon
 - Health Department only gets 2% of City budget, and OVP only gets fraction of that
- Promote and advocate for goals and recommendations of OVP's Blueprint for Peace

Re-think and Improve City's Infrastructure

- **Near-term transportation goals**
 1. Explicitly state that the City aims to reduce automobile trips, and ensure all policies, designs, decisions, ordinances, reflect this goal (zoning code, parking requirements, parking pricing, etc.). Specific to DPW, mandate safety, comfort, and access for all users over speed and capacity
 2. Become a member of the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) and adopt all NACTO street design guidelines
 3. Support the efforts of the Equal Rights Commission and the Health Department to ensure all actions impacting the Right of Way comply with the City's Achieving Racial Equity Resolution. Collaborate with the Regional Transit Leadership Forum
- **Long-term transportation goals**
 1. Reorganize DPW to create a modern transportation agency that is tasked with addressing equity, climate change, safety, economic development, mobility, mode shift, quality of life, and create new strategic plan with a vision, goals, and meaningful next steps
 2. Commit to Vision Zero the elimination of serious injury and death caused by traffic violence. This will create a safer, healthier, and more equitable city
 3. Develop and propose a well-researched, widely supported, and sustainable funding source to generate local revenue for transportation; including maintenance, transit improvements, mobility improvements, streetscape improvements etc. Must be a transparent process with wide support that is explicit on where funds will be used
- Create Pedestrian-First plan, which will involve improving infrastructure and built environment - better sidewalks, bike lanes, and public transit
 - Infrastructure is a racial issue as well; there are few running, walking, biking lanes in minority neighborhoods
 - Could adjust, alter, reduce projects in order to implement Complete Streets in some fashion
- Make street design more consistent throughout City, improve curb appeal, install pedestrian malls
- City's Complete Streets should be more aggressive as a policy instrument, have more follow-through on implementation, be more forward-thinking, should have overall vision, be better marketed, and be intentional
 - Could generate revenue for this by increasing parking prices
- Priority to invest in disadvantaged neighborhoods first - Sherman Phoenix site (Fond du Lac Ave. and 35th St.)
- DPW town hall meetings should ask Millennials for input

- DPW implement process and schedule to evaluate streets for total reconstruction (30 year cycle) or for high impact paving

Encourage New and Improved Education Pathways

Expose and connect young people to career pathways, including non-traditional ones

- Schools and higher education should provide young people opportunities to learn about variety of career pathways that they could pursue in Milwaukee
 - Conversation should be diverse and inclusive of many sectors, pathways, and talent pools
 - E.g. Atlanta’s resource guide – local institutions should as part of curriculum teach about Milwaukee and its resources, either as a class or particular assignment
- Connect students to opportunities in Milwaukee by elevating City’s Earn and Learn program
- Pandemic has made location less of a selling factor, but physical location is still an important aspect of many jobs
 - Invest more in physical locations
 - Provide adequate resources to those working from home
- Improve workplace cultures

Incentivize young people to stay in Milwaukee for college

- Data suggests Milwaukee universities may not be their first option
 - Many 18-19 year olds move away from Milwaukee and go to Madison
- Provide more resources for pre-college programs to recruit and support students
 - Need more connections with high schools and local colleges
- Devote more resources to scholarships, grants, ACT prep, training
- Free or discounted tuition for enrolling in universities within same state of residence
 - Should be more scholarships and city pool discounted rate for local students
 - Tuition should be discounted for out-of-state students as well
 - Minnesota has tuition reciprocity with Wisconsin
- Students desire higher wages to pay off debt
- There should be HBC in Milwaukee
- Milwaukee’s colleges may have label of being community colleges, which may be stigma
- Improve the college experience, implement curriculums to teach students about Milwaukee job possibilities, and expose them to the city

Expand Employment and Economic Development

Assist and expand startups, apprenticeships, and internships

- Give more assistance and incentives to small startups as opposed to big companies - startups are challenging and take time to be successful
- Apprenticeships should be more heavily promoted, formalized
- Pathways and talent pipelines should improve: internships should lead to future job opportunities
 - City’s Direct Connect MKE app, for workforce development, allows talent to make connections; should be championed by all
 - ERG career development program to provide mentorship to City employees
- City should provide funding to Direct Connect MKE
 - Expand app nationwide to attract out-of-state people to Milwaukee

Expand economic development tools

- Measures are needed to retain upwardly mobile people, who are most likely group to leave the city
- Expand capacity and resources for Business Improvement Districts (BID) to improve commercial corridors

- BIDs seem to be disproportionately funded and successful
- Grow Tax Increment Financings (TIF), which help expand property tax base and fund site improvements that would not otherwise occur
- Successful BIDs and TIDs should allocate funds to underperforming BIDs and TIDs
- Implement anti-displacement measures and programs for childhood development or tax credits for childcare
- Explore a revolving loan fund program to purchase empty buildings
 - E.g. Cincinnati's \$50 million New Markets Fund allowing the Cincinnati Central City Development Corporation (3CDC) to buy property within Over the Rhine Neighborhood
- City should not only focus on projects \$10 million or greater, and could create Opportunity Zone
- Expand and improve transit in order to connect people to job sites

Explore a Universal Basic Income Program

- A UBI pilot program was previously proposed by Alderwoman Chantia Lewis in 2019
 - Selected lower-income families would receive \$500 a month through private funds – could not be diverted to satisfy debt, obligated expenses or to a middle man

Extend work VISAs for immigrants

- Target foreign-born people to move to and stay in Milwaukee
- Immigrant population has helped kept Milwaukee's overall population afloat

Promote city's positive stories

- Needs to be central story telling hub - City government should help promote a positive narrative, rather than catching up to a negative one
 - Perhaps a dedicated position can be created in City's Public Information Division in City Clerk's Office; task force could be involved too
 - Could direct VISIT Milwaukee and others to promote city, perhaps with incentive
 - Policymakers should create policy to promote and assist all its communities, small businesses and startups
- Organizations can help develop a more positive narrative for the city
 - At a minimum, need more awareness of city's opportunities and assets
 - Milwaukee needs an identity based on authentic pride and making a difference
- Lack of pride and good narrative may be reason why students leave Milwaukee for college
- Companies must brand better, attract better, and improve identities
 - Historic companies that are no longer in touch with younger generations should help startups
 - Bottom-up approach needed: e.g. Sherman Phoenix development success
- Branding campaigns are generally unsuccessful: often misdirected use of funds (but there is still value in seeking to change city's narrative)
 - E.g. State of Wisconsin \$7 million branding on Chicago CTA lines
 - Madison is growing without initiatives: UW Madison is integrated into urban fabric, although there is still population loss
 - \$50 million needed to effectively target a market

City should better market its programs and improve company culture

- Many people have no awareness about programs that are offered, and often they are too siloed
- Expand File Number 191461, which directs Employee Relations Director to implement plan for conducting regular "stay interviews" with City employees
 - Perhaps request dedicated City funding and a position to conduct these interviews

Expand City's reach and promote creativity of City employees

- Create a “Department of Transformation” or “Department of People” to help spur innovation and talent attraction to Milwaukee
 - Would provide scope for monitoring and becoming involved in national issues and initiatives and ensure City fully captures federal and state grant opportunities related to issues such as potential decommissioning of highways, co-housing, and affordable housing dollars
 - Office would identify weaknesses within City government – for instance, point out that there needs to be more Planner positions
 - Identify weaknesses in Milwaukee among Racial and Criminal Justice, Education, Infrastructure Health and Wellness, and Employment and Economic Development
- Many employees are hamstrung by their titles and are not able to operate creatively outside of their capacity
- Create a Talent Retention and Attraction Task Force to continue MTF efforts, and to hold parties accountable and to advocate for implementation of various recommendations, including MTF’s

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