

Millennial Task Force member ideas generated in meetings

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* 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 in Milwaukee that are real and perceived.

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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

Possible Recommendations

Expose young people to non-traditional career pathways

- 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

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

City's positive stories need to be better promoted

- 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
- City government should help promote a positive narrative, rather than catching up to a negative one
 - Create media kit for the DNC
 - 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
- 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

Student Debt Relief

- Students desire higher wages to pay off debt
- Interest in programs offering free or discounted tuition for enrolling in universities within same state of residence

Misc.

- Attraction of new people and talent to Milwaukee is equally as important as retention