

Milwaukee Equity and Climate Alliance

August 19, 2020

Mayor Tom Barrett
City Hall
200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee WI 53202

Via Email

RE: Budget Item, \$500,000
Climate and Equity Funding, a Response to COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter

Dear Mayor Barrett,

Greetings from the **Milwaukee Equity and Climate Alliance (MECA)**. We are a partnership of organizations with the common interest of advocating for bold solutions that will address both the climate crisis and our persistent economic and social inequities, especially among communities of color in Milwaukee. MECA was a key advocate for the resolution creating the **Milwaukee City-County Task Force on Climate and Economic Equity (Task Force)** and continues to advocate for a fully implemented comprehensive plan to address these issues.

We are writing to you with a budget request for funding the recommendations in the [March 2020 Preliminary Report](#) of the Task Force.

Rationale

In every crisis, there is opportunity. Will Milwaukee grasp the opportunity presented by the COVID-19 and the resulting economic crisis? As the world struggles to rebound from high unemployment and historic business losses, Milwaukee can lead by rebuilding our local economy better, as an economy that is more sustainable and more equitable. And while everyone is looking to government to stimulate a rebuilding of the economy, the Black Lives Matter movement has prepared the community for transformational action on equity, not only to end disproportionate police violence towards people of color, but also to end the continuous disinvestment of communities of color. This is an opportunity for Milwaukee to rebuild the local economy with strong programs that address sustainability in light of the climate crisis and foster the creation of new employment and business opportunities in energy transition, efficiency, urban forestry and other green economy areas while targeting these employment and business opportunities, first and foremost to our communities of color, .

This recommended budget item will build on great efforts already underway in your administration, like the August 11 Drive-Thru Job Fair, the Residence Preference Program, the Mayor's Manufacturing Initiative, and other collaborations with WRTP/BIGSTEP, Employ

Milwaukee and others. It will support the many great programs of your administration's Environmental Collaboration Office and start the process of taking their work to the next level.

The City-County Task Force on Climate and Economic Equity was created to follow through on commitments made by you and our local legislative leaders to honor the commitments of the Paris Climate Accords. The Task Force has identified the crucial first steps in this process. Will your Mayor's Budget Proposal adopt those recommendations and move this effort from words to action?

Budget Request

MECA recommends an expenditure of \$500,000 for two purposes:

1. \$150,000 - Consultant contract to develop recommendations for a Milwaukee Climate and Equity Action Plan (see pp. 16-17 of the Preliminary Report)
 - a. **Greenhouse Gas Inventory & Analysis** - the City, through ECO has contracted for a community greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory that will serve as a baseline against which to measure progress towards the City's adopted GHG reduction goals. The GHG inventory will be followed with a narrative report analyzing the data and making forecasts to show numeric reductions needed to achieve a 45% GHG reduction goal by 2030.
 - b. **Development of the "Milwaukee Climate and Equity Action Plan"** – hire a sustainability consulting firm to “support and facilitate strategy development for emissions reductions” that would take into account and “balance GHG reduction potential, up-front and ongoing costs, impact on economic equity, and social and political feasibility.”
2. \$350,000 - Implementation of Short-Term Projects identified by the Task Force's working groups in the Preliminary Report,
 - a. GHG Emissions Assessment and Reduction Strategies, pp. 22-24
 - b. Jobs and Equity, pp. 35-36
 - c. Education and Community Outreach, p. 61

An ideal result on the second item will be implementation of all Short-Term Projects identified in the Task Force Preliminary Report. Some of those recommended Short-Term Projects can be highlighted for immediate implementation to stimulate the local economy and respond to the broader issues raised in the Black Lives Matter movement. Equally crucial is the funding for a Milwaukee Climate and Equity Action Plan which will create a pathway to comprehensive progress on equity and sustainability. (Note that the Short-Term recommendations of the Finance and Funding Opportunities working group are not referenced here as they point to funding sources outside of city government).

Respectfully submitted,

Milwaukee Equity and Climate Alliance

Cc: Dennis Yaccarino, Budget & Management Director