

Milwaukee Equity and Climate Alliance

**Citizen Action of Wisconsin, 350 Milwaukee, Wisconsin Conservation Voters,
Wisconsin Green Muslims, Sierra Club-Great Waters Group, Earth Justice
Ministry of the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee**

September 15, 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, Dennis Yaccarino, and members of the Common Council,

This letter is a follow up to MECA's August 22nd letter to you and is endorsed by the member organizations listed here.

We are the **Milwaukee Equity and Climate Alliance (MECA)**, 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. *This budget request is further intended to position the City to attract desperately needed federal investment with shovel ready projects related to climate and equity.*

Rationale

This budget process is occurring at a time of health and economic crises resulting from the pandemic, and urgent civil rights protests, on top of an existential climate crisis. A great deal of money and effort will be required to make Milwaukee a thriving community for all, but city budgets are extremely tight. Moving Milwaukee forward on climate and equity has never been more critical.

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 Paris Climate Accords and to mitigate persistent racial and income inequality through “green” jobs. The Task Force has identified the crucial first steps in this process. *We respectfully suggest that your Mayor’s Budget Proposal adopt those recommendations and position Milwaukee to attract a fair share of the anticipated \$2 trillion accelerated investment in infrastructure and equitable clean energy to Milwaukee under a President Biden Build Back Better plan.*

If Milwaukee lays the groundwork, federal funds will be available under Build Back Better for clean and efficient energy, clean and accessible transit, affordable and sustainable housing, training and workforce development, remediation and reduction of legacy pollution, and clean water infrastructure, with 40% of overall benefits of spending targeted to disadvantaged communities. Milwaukee should make this happen, first, by spending the dollars needed to create the Milwaukee Climate and Equity Action Plan that will demonstrate our serious intentions and lay out strategies to achieve them; and second, by spending the dollars to develop the Short-Term Projects already identified into more clearly defined shovel ready projects.

Budget Request

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

1. \$150,000 - Funding 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 qualified experts to work with the Task Force and engage stakeholders and the community to develop comprehensive strategies for emissions reductions that will simultaneously reduce racial and income inequality through training and vocational programs in “green” jobs, addressing neighborhoods of high vulnerability to climate impacts, etc.
2. \$350,000 – Developing the Short-Term Projects identified by the Task Force’s working groups in the Preliminary Report into well-defined shovel ready projects that are ready for implementation
 - a. GHG Emissions Assessment and Reduction Strategies, pp. 22-24
 - b. Jobs and Equity, pp. 35-36
 - c. Education and Community Outreach, p. 61

Respectfully submitted,

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Cc: Dennis Yaccarino, Budget & Management Director

Cc: All Members of Common Council