

**MILWAUKEE COUNTY
INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION**

Date: June 23, 2023

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Gordie Bennett, Sustainability Director, Department of Administrative Services, Facilities Management Division

Subject: Incorporating Climate Action into Capital Project Scoring Criteria

File Type: Informational Report

This informational report offers a new 'Climate Action' component to Milwaukee County's capital project scoring criteria for evaluating the contribution of capital projects to Milwaukee County's carbon neutrality policy and strategic plan.

POLICY

Milwaukee County Code of Ordinances Section 36.03 states, among other things, that the County's Capital Improvements Committee shall establish criteria upon which a determination of the priority of each capital project included in the plan may be based.

File No. 21-389 commits Milwaukee County to become carbon neutral by 2050 and requests the Sustainability Director to develop and administer a strategic plan to achieve carbon neutrality in Milwaukee County facilities and operations by 2050.

File No. 21-770 presents a framework ('Climate Action 2050 Framework') developed by Milwaukee County's Sustainability Task Force¹ upon which the county can prepare a strategic carbon neutrality plan.

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Milwaukee County Ordinance (Section 36.03(b) and (c)) the Capital Improvements Committee (CIC) is responsible for the establishment of capital project scoring criteria and prioritization of the projects based upon those criteria. Subsequently, the CIC submits a (non-binding) prioritized capital projects report (typically each August) to the County Board and County Executive to assist with the development of the annual capital budget.

¹ Formed in 2021 by the Office of the County Executive, the Sustainability Task Force is chaired by the Sustainability Director and consists of staff and administrators representing nine county departments. More information about the task force, including its membership and public meetings, is posted to the County Legislative Information Center¹.

During April 2023, the County Board requested that the Office of Sustainability, Department of Administrative Services develop criteria to evaluate the contribution of capital projects to Milwaukee County's carbon neutrality policy and strategic plan – see File No. 23-485.

DISCUSSION

The Office of Sustainability, Department of Administrative Services respectfully offers the following new 'Climate Action' component to Milwaukee County's capital project scoring criteria:

Component	Impact
Climate Action	5 – Tackles county emissions & provides three or more co-benefits.
	4 – Tackles county emissions & provides two co-benefits.
	3 – Tackles county emissions & provides one co-benefit.
	2 – Tackles county emissions but does not provide co-benefits.
	1 – Does not tackle county emissions but provides at least one co-benefit.
	0 – Neither tackles county emissions nor provides co-benefits.

Definitions:

- 'Tackling county emissions' means directly or indirectly reducing greenhouse gas emissions released into the atmosphere because of Milwaukee County government operations.
- 'Co-benefits' are beneficial outcomes from the County's climate actions that are not directly related to reducing emissions. Research suggests that local governments that track and report co-benefits have more successful climate action programs².

The final Climate Action 2050 Plan, due to the County Board by June 2024, will provide a detailed list of potential co-benefits from Milwaukee County's climate actions. Based on the guiding principles of the plan (see the Climate Action 2050 Framework), however, possible co-benefits of climate actions could include:

1. Community Engagement: Increases or improves community engagement with county government.
2. Economic Inclusion: Exceeds county, state, or federal standards for TBE/DBE participation.
3. Public Health: Improves the health or wellbeing of county residents.

² Carbon Disclosure Project. (2020). The Co-Benefits of Climate Action: Accelerating City-Level Ambition. Accessed 8/13/21 from <https://www.cdp.net/en/research/global-reports/co-benefits-climate-action>.

4. Model Government: Improves the efficiency or effectiveness of county government.
5. Workforce Development: Provides education, training and/or job opportunities for county residents.
6. Climate Resiliency: Increases preparedness of the County and residents for extreme heating, flooding, or other climate hazards.

Table 1 provides hypothetical ‘climate action’ scores for two ongoing Office of Sustainability capital projects:

- WY062502 will develop the Climate Action 2050 Plan for county operations. The project provides a roadmap for future climate actions that will reduce county emissions and improve climate resiliency. The project will emphasize community engagement throughout and will assess the vulnerability of the County and residents to climate change.
- WY062506 will upgrade lighting in up to 12 county buildings while providing training and job opportunities for local youth apprentices. The project will reduce building energy use across several departments, thereby reducing county emissions and improving the efficiency/effectiveness of county government. Additionally, the project will create career pathways in the skilled trades for area youth – thus contributing to workforce development.

Table 1: Sample ‘Climate Action’ Scores

Project	Emissions Reduction	Community Engagement	Economic Inclusion	Public Health	Model Government	Workforce Development	Climate Resiliency	Climate Action Score
WY062502 Climate Action 2050 Plan	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	3
WY062506 Lighting Jobs Program	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	4

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The described ‘Climate Action’ component to Milwaukee County’s capital project scoring criteria would support Milwaukee County’s strategic plan by creating Intentional Inclusion and Investing in Equity. The component would assign higher points to capital project requests that tackling county emissions and improve community health equity – thus supporting Milwaukee County’s Vision to be the healthiest county in Wisconsin.

FISCAL EFFECT

The report is informational only and has no fiscal impact.

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ATTACHMENTS

None

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