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GMC releases City Operational Review detailing potential savings

*200-page report outlines efficiency opportunities
for fiscally challenged city*

MILWAUKEE (Nov. 14, 2023) – The Greater Milwaukee Committee (GMC) today released its Operational Review for the City of Milwaukee, a [200-page report](#) that outlines opportunities for Milwaukee to enhance service delivery while saving taxpayer resources.

The analysis presents dozens of options drawn from review of city operations and benchmarking against peer cities around the country. Areas of focus to leverage savings and revenue generation include:

- Leasing municipal property to advertisers - billboards, trash cans, etc. - which could generate up to \$49 million over 10 years;
- Updating city health benefits by prioritizing high-deductible plans and health savings accounts, saving up to \$7 million over 10 years;
- Gainsharing - identifying cost savings (starting with fleet services) and sharing those savings with employee teams, which could yield \$8 million in savings over 10 years;
- Consolidating city and county nurseries, saving up to \$3 million over 10 years; and
- Disposition of city real estate, including the 809 N. Broadway building and three properties in the Menomonee Valley, which could save up to \$20 million or more over the next decade.

The Operational Review was initiated in late 2022 with the city facing the prospect of laying off police officers, firefighters, and city staff in the wake of the most challenging fiscal situation in its history. At that time, Mayor Cavalier Johnson asked the GMC to be part of exploring how the city could operate differently. With no assurance that a sales tax effort would ultimately be successful, the city needed to put everything on the table for review.

While the actions of the state Legislature and local government have staved off the dramatic cuts feared a year ago, the city still faces continued structural deficits starting in 2025. The Operational Review provides a roadmap for stronger city finances and better service delivery, a recipe that every resident and business can embrace.

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“The work by the Mayor and County Executive David Crowley, with support from the private sector, has brought Milwaukee back from the brink,” said Joel Brennan, president of the Greater Milwaukee Committee. “However, preserving the status quo when many neighborhoods in our community lack appropriate levels of service is not good enough for Milwaukee. The dozens of options outlined in this report provide opportunities for the mayor and Common Council to dramatically change the way that the city delivers services.”

Brennan credited the mayor, his cabinet and the dozens of frontline city employees who contributed time, talent, and feedback to the report over the last several months. National consultant Ernst & Young LLP supported the development of the project throughout 2023.

“The GMC is a committed partner to solving our community’s most pressing challenges,” said Peggy Kelsey, the GMC’s board chair. “Our members have agreed Milwaukee’s long-term fiscal health is a strategic area of focus for our organization. We look forward to collaborating with the city to implement the recommendations in this report.”

The GMC also announced that local community volunteer Betsy Brenner and David Gay, of Ernst & Young, will co-chair the task force that will work with the city to enact options from the report in 2024. In addition, Mayor Johnson included an Innovation Director in his 2024 city budget to lead up the city’s efforts to drive greater efficiency and save taxpayer dollars.

About the Greater Milwaukee Committee: The GMC is a 75-year-old membership organization whose members are cross-sector civic leaders. The organization focuses on the most significant community challenges and opportunities in an effort to make Milwaukee the best place to live, work, play, stay and learn for all.

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