



Joe Parisi
County Executive

County Of Dane
Office Of The County Executive

October 1, 2019

To: Dane County Board of Supervisors

Fr: County Executive Joe Parisi

Re: 2020 Budget Summary

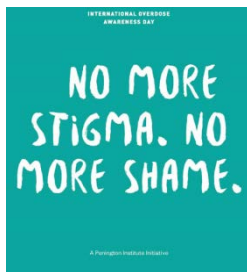
2020 Budget – New Decade, Continued Commitment to Our People and Places

We are a community of compassion and empathy. Our cumulative character informs our actions of inclusion and understanding. This budget, like the ones I've offered previously, aims to reflect who we are; a people who put others above self, the greater good before the chosen few, and an acute awareness of the human condition. We continue our focus on the barriers to opportunity and challenges facing some of those who call this community home. Poverty, mental illness and substance abuse are often the root of those challenges, precluding individuals and in turn families from true fulfillment. Our focus on prevention and help in these areas of real need are center to this, the first budget of the new decade. We build upon successes while exploring new opportunities to make a substantive difference for individuals and their families. Financial resources are committed to efforts with tangible outcomes where dollars invested in real work leads to real results.

Additionally, we continue our leadership at protecting the place we call home - the lands and waters that mark the uniqueness of being both the fastest growing county in Wisconsin while maintaining an unrivaled focus on conservation and water quality. Paired together, our continued commitment to people and the places they inhabit, work, and recreate inform the priorities reflected in this budget. As we head into the new decade the safety net we've created for our most vulnerable is stronger. Our quality of life is more vibrant and ability to bring people together around a common goal more apparent. While we will always innovate in the name of leadership, advocate in the pursuit of being better, and advance a bold vision in the name of hope, we need to also be mindful of our many shared successes and accomplishments.

This is an incredible community. The 2020 Dane County budget reflects our excellence while recognizing our opportunities to do just a bit better. Much has changed since the last turning of a new decade. We start this next one in a place of better financial resiliency with a reserve fund more than \$50 million higher than it was 10 years ago. We've laid a strong foundation as we navigate into 2020 and beyond.

Mental Health



Ours may not be the generation that cures mental illness. It will however be the one in which awareness and acceptance forever replace the stigmas and stereotypes that previously surrounded mental and behavioral disorders, which needlessly delayed much needed help for those who suffer the very real effects of these illnesses. Ours can also be the generation that addresses substantive questions with parity. On paper, help is available. Unfortunately, despite best intentions access to it is often fraught with long phone calls and health care bureaucracy. These pitfalls would present as a series of hurdles and frustrating annoyances to someone who isn't mentally well. To someone who is mentally ill, this pursuit of treatment can seem like an endless chase, furthering their sense of despair and exacerbating a self-perception that hope and help is out of reach.

A system in which people have to advocate and champion their own well-being to fight an illness in which they have a diminished or no sense of well-being is set up for failure; an endless cycle of missed opportunities, frustration, and sadness. Severe shortages among local health care providers result in long waits for even initial consultations. Even after the initial hurdle is cleared of someone recognizing a need to seek help, the wait is then weeks and sometimes months before they can meet with a mental health professional in a clinical setting. Often times that wait is paired with a drive to an outlying community – sometimes outside of Dane County – where wait times are shorter.

More than 7 out of 10 people in our community are part of a private health insurance plan. There is no disputing that health care networks need to be part of the solution to the access challenges facing those with mental illness. The system in place applies conventional referrals and bureaucracy to an unconventional but very real illness. Mental illness isn't chest pain, cancer, or breathing problems. It's pervasive and often precludes the careful thought needed to navigate traditional health insurance driven processes. The health care system needs to do better by

those with mental illness. I'm hoping data from the soon to be released mental health study commissioned by the county will reveal opportunities for shared improvement by our health care providers. It's critical that the analysis and subsequent report we've commissioned PCG to conduct have complete data and full cooperation of all health care providers and insurers.

County government's commitment to community based mental health treatment and services totals over \$63.5 million a year. This figure has more than doubled over the past decade. The Building Bridges School Based Mental Health Program I unveiled in 2013 is now an over one million dollar a year effort working directly with young people, their parents, and teachers in nearly five dozen Dane County schools. We've made a real difference in the mental health and well-being of young people and provided needed supports in school districts. This budget adds the funding needed for Building Bridges to be offered year-round in our latest district to join; the Monona Grove School District. As I will discuss shortly, the model we've built to bring mental health resources into schools is replicable in other places young people gather, affording us an ability to bring help to places it's needed.

We've put great attention in recent years on front end prevention, focusing a good deal of our mental health efforts with young people and families with school aged children. This budget includes \$200,000 to bolster mental health services for older populations. These dollars will fund two full-time mental health professionals as part of a pilot project to assist non-Medicaid eligible adult seniors. They will work with Senior Focal Point case managers to help keep seniors who experience chronic mental illness living independently. Direct intervention like this can help with food security and other living considerations that may otherwise be affected by the toll that severe mental illness takes on daily functioning.

There is a clear and present need for us to continue our pursuit of means of breaking down barriers and ensuring front line treatment is available. Too many times each year families across our community experience the unrivaled pain of losing a loved one at the hands of mental illness or addiction. Often this sorrow culminates many years of tireless work by loved ones to create hope and optimism in the face of an illness than precludes those who suffer from it from feeling the same. This year, a member of our Dane County family lived this tragedy when Emergency Management Director Charles Tubbs, his wife Cindy, and family lost a son and brother. This budget creates the brand new "CJ Tubbs Fund for Hope, Healing and Recovery," a new \$500,000 county grant program designed to enhance community based mental health and addiction services. These grants will be awarded early next year to organizations in the best position to provide direct assistance to those suffering the ill-fated effects of severe mental illness and drug or alcohol addiction. The Tubbs Family will help us establish the criteria for reviewing and prioritizing future grant requests.



CJ Tubbs

I'm also creating the brand new "End Deaths by Despair Coalition" in this budget. Poverty, depression, and other life circumstances are driving too many to the drastic decision of ending their own life, either with intent or accidentally through the overuse of substances. I'm asking the Safe Communities Coalition to convene this new team for a coordinated, community wide dialogue and real time review of efforts that are

working – like our Emergency Room to Recovery initiative to get those who overdose on opiates into treatment after they present at a hospital. The “End Deaths by Despair Coalition” will bring together partners from Dane County health care and payer systems, criminal justice, K12 and higher education, non-profit and faith leaders, and human services providers to develop a shared work plan. Together we can help prevent the irreparable pain brought on by suicide and premature, preventable deaths. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says more than 152,000 Americans died from alcohol and drug related fatalities and suicide in 2017. That is the highest number ever recorded nationally and more than twice the total from 1999. A recent study indicated suicide rates nationally for those ages 25-64 increased 41% between 1999 and 2016. We aren’t immune from these tragedies, but we are a caring, creative, and determined community. We can do better, together.

There’s interest in our community in exploring the alternative process of a “Mental Health Court” to better link those who find their way into the criminal justice system with an underlying mental health or behavioral condition. This would be focused on treatment and rehabilitation. The consultants hired to review the current community mental health assets did preliminarily identify a “Mental Health Court” as a reasonable course of action to reduce jail recidivism. The budget includes \$25, 0000 to study the feasibility of creating such a court which could be modeled after other successful diversion programs such as Drug Court and Community Restorative Court.

Human Services - Community Centers



Community Centers Press Conference 9/26

Dane County continues to add more population than any other Wisconsin county. This growth creates opportunity for neighborhoods and communities to find that right balance of maintaining each one’s individual identity and character while finding the best means of bringing people together to contribute toward a greater good. Our population may be surging but in many ways we haven’t lost our “small town” feel. Neighborhood and community centers are an integral component to the sense of togetherness we share. These nearly two dozen centers across the county are a gathering place for families to celebrate milestone moments of joy and rally around each other in the midst of tragedy. This budget recognizes the great potential of our community centers in advancing long standing county policy priorities – reducing poverty, improving mental health services for young people, combating loneliness in our elderly populations and bringing

partners together to support families. These centers offer more than just a physical place to gather, they change lives and make memories often by simple acts of the great human gifts of time and generosity.

These centers epitomize who we are as a community and are the perfect extension of the incredibly successful mental health work we’ve done in schools. In the past year, the Goodman Community Center partnered with Anesis to bring community based mental health services into the

Center to work with young people. Dane County provided \$20,000 toward this first time effort to help with start-up. Taken to scale and done community-wide, the model offers great promise at positively impacting the well-being of young people – meeting them where they already gather. That’s why I’m creating a new \$500,000 grant program in this budget for community centers to launch new mental and behavioral health work for kids and families. Childhood mental health, trauma, and poverty are all barriers to the future success of young people in our community. These centers see firsthand every day the effects of mental health challenges and trauma on our young people. That’s why I’m also including \$30,000 for community centers to offer training on trauma informed care to their volunteers and staff. While this expands the scope of the county’s past investment in these areas, we’ve seen great success through the Building Bridges youth mental health teams of bringing important services straight to the physical spaces where those with needs already gather as a community.



This budget also links two of our greatest assets – our community centers and our incredible Dane County parks to get young people better engaged with the natural world around them. I’m creating “Dane County Get Outside!” an initiative connecting young people ages 7 to 14 with the vast array of natural resources and parks that contribute so much to our quality of life. This program builds on a pilot effort started this year between our county parks department and the Bridge/Lakepoint/Waunona Community Center that got kids outdoors to experience everything from pine cones to animal and plant species. The budget hires a Youth Coordinator for Dane County Parks to take on the work needed to expand this outdoor learning opportunity to other community centers such as Vera Court, Warner Park, Badger Rock, and Eagle Heights. Parks staff will visit centers to work with students on the importance of parks and natural areas and from there the fun will head outdoors with an established curriculum put together by our very own parks staff. In an era where tablets and phones are the readymade go-to for so many kids, it’s important we take the time to instill an appreciation in them for the peace that comes from being out where the air is fresher and world quieter.

Human Services – One Family at a Time

Expanding the county’s role into partnering with Community Centers is a logical extension of the county’s collaborative work that’s been underway for many years in neighborhoods through efforts like Joining Forces for Families (JFF) and the county’s Early Childhood Zones. As we grow and our once quiet outlying communities become bustling suburbs, it’s important we ensure all who live here can access the resources of county government. That’s why I’m expanding the incredibly effective Dane County Joining Forces for Families in this budget to two new areas – one that will serve families in western Dane and another for areas in the eastern part of the county. The JFF office expansions into Mazomanie and Marshall at a cost of more than \$185,000 will allow existing staff to spend more time in other outlying communities. This change will double the JFF staff time in Stoughton starting next year to four days per week. As we build capacity, we’re able to connect more people with services and extend a helping hand one family at a time.

I'd like to spend a moment reflecting on the success of Dane County Joining Forces for Families. JFF was first created 26 years ago under then County Executive Rick Phelps. What started as a pilot effort with a couple of social workers in a few neighborhoods has grown today to 18 offices countywide, where staff came into contact with over 40,000 individuals in 2018 alone. I've increased funding to this initiative by over 61% (total annual budget over \$1.6 million) since becoming County Executive quite simply because JFF works. The lifeline it provides to families struggling to make ends meet is tangible. JFF may be one of the most impactful family focused program in the entire country.



JFF Meeting

A few years ago I created the Dane County Eviction Prevention Fund. These dollars utilized by our JFF staff kept nearly 300 Dane County families in their homes last year. Similar to the last couple of budgets I'm adding more dollars to this fund (additional \$50,000 for 2020, now totaling \$200,000) to help stabilize housing situations. I'm also bolstering dollars available to our JFF staff to help families with transportation needs. As I've heard firsthand in meeting with our JFF social workers in recent weeks, they frequently come upon families where the inability to afford one time significance expenses – like a car repair-is the difference between keeping a job that supports loved ones to sliding into family altering financial difficulties. By adding \$50,000 in discretionary funding for JFF in this budget we can directly help more individuals with acute, emergent needs that can lead to spiraling living situations.

One of the more successful partnerships county government has been a part of in recent years is “Healthy Food for All,” an effort to reduce food waste and expand the availability of nutritional foods to areas of need across our community. To date, the collaborative has picked up 327,000 pounds of prepared, unserved food from partners like Epic Systems, American Family Insurance, the Aldo Leopold Center, and local farmers markets. “Healthy Food for All” then packages the food and delivers it to households, kitchens, and other community organizations where a healthy meal makes a significant difference. County government provided the delivery van for the initiative when it got started. It's grown with now over 272,500 meals served in just a few years. I'm including \$30,000 in this budget to help “Healthy Food for All” expand its food waste collection, packaging, and distribution efforts. This will help get more food into the community. What started as a small, grassroots effort has made an enormous difference in neighborhoods across the county.

Hundreds of local agencies assist Dane County Human Services each year with the important work of caring for and protecting our community's vulnerable. They work alongside county efforts like Joining Forces for Families, protecting kids, working with seniors, caring for those with disabilities, and offering a hand of hope to those with mental illness. That's why I'm providing a 3% cost of living increase to all human services contract providers in my 2020 budget. I'm grateful for all these providers do each day to help make a difference. The work is difficult and sometimes thankless, but it's deeply valued and we are profoundly grateful.

Human Services – Housing



Valor on Washington Press Conference

Reflecting on the past decade, the progress we've made at addressing community wide challenges is perhaps best exemplified by the work we now do on housing and homelessness. The Homeless Day Resource Center, known as "The Beacon," is now an established, financially sustainable public/private collaboration that serves thousands each year. Dane County's Affordable Housing Fund started as a means to jumpstart a few partnerships to create permanent housing. In the coming year, work will begin on "Valor on Washington," a veterans housing project being built on land owned by the county. In just a few short years the Affordable Housing Fund has allocated \$8.3 million, creating 953 total housing units. That doesn't include the \$6 million in the fund this year that I anticipate will be awarded in the coming weeks. Similar to most of the difficult, nuanced work we do, needs will always strain available resources. As the community continues to grow and the cost of rent and housing increases, access to affordable units will only become more challenging for those who earn what are generally considered "living wages." This is an area where county government needs to remain a supportive partner.

My budget creates the new Division of Housing Access and Affordability within Dane County Human Services. The growth of our Affordable Housing Fund and increased need for accountability and data collection with our projects means the time has come to create a county team dedicated to helping develop and then monitor the success of these housing partnerships. This group will be run by a new Dane County Housing Coordinator funded in this budget, supported by a new full time Housing Program Specialist, and teamed with existing county staff who already work on federal housing and development funds like the Community Development Block Grant Program, and HOME. I'm including another \$3 million for the Dane County Affordable Housing Fund for 2020. I'm also adding dollars for the Beacon to bolster its bus transportation program, add work hours for community navigators to help individuals locate housing, and assist the City of Madison with challenges that tend to present in the downtown area during the warmer summer months. The budget also adds \$66,000 for more staffing to improve safety and services at the men's night shelter operated by Porchlight.



Rethke Affordable Housing

Human Services – Immigration



Immigration Rally 8/8/19

The images of the past several months of children crying in parking lots, moms and dads being separated from kids as they head back to school are the most recent raw, visceral reminder that sadly not everyone shares our humanitarian values. Leadership in our nation's capital has created an environment where crass political opportunity rooted in a delusion of self-advancement, is somehow taking precedence over basic human decency. The culture of fear created by this presidential administration has created much consequence, the effects of which have touched our community. This budget responds as such.

For far too long immigrants here and across the country have been subjected to pure hatred emanating from the misguided leadership in our nation's Capital. I asked the County Board in the spring of 2017 to amend our budget to make sure we, as a local community, were ready to help our immigrant friends and neighbors. This initiative led to the creation of the Immigration Assistance Fund and a full-time Immigration Affairs Specialist within our Human Services Department. To this day, too many cower in fear daily in the place they should feel safest – their community. We aren't responsible for this injustice, but the resources we created both within county government and our partner support organizations like Centro Hispano continue to be inundated with the very real needs of families thrust into living in day to day fear. It's time we do more.

This budget creates the new Office of Immigration Assistance within Human Services, adds another full-time bilingual social worker and bolsters our commitment to Centro Hispano to improve our ability to meet the needs of kids, parents, and families' needless suffering at the hands of antiquated ideology. Fabiola Hamden has done remarkable work since starting as Dane County's first Immigration Affairs Specialist. We're going to give her more staff and resources to meet a community need that sadly continues to grow. This budget includes over \$180,000 in new dollars to support our local immigrants. As long as there is hatred, Dane County will put forward the resources necessary so individuals who live in this community know this is a place that chooses compassion and understanding above all.

Human Services – Victim Advocacy

In past budgets, I've highlighted the increased prevalence of sex trafficking both here at home and across our state and country. To help with prevention efforts, we added a full time position within Dane County's Neighborhood Intervention Program this year to work directly with young women who may be targets of this behavior. After meeting with State Attorney General Josh Kaul, our Neighborhood Intervention youth social workers, and detectives from the Sheriff's Office this summer I'm convinced there's greater needs to be met in this area. That's why this budget adds \$80,000 for Project Respect, a key community partner in advocating for victims of sex trafficking. These dollars will help with safety planning, crisis intervention, and intensive case management services to juvenile and adult victims of trafficking and help reunite them with families while stabilizing their living situations.



Another key community partner that works tirelessly for victims is Domestic Abuse Intervention Services (DAIS). The county was a partner a few years ago in funding millions for the construction of the new DAIS shelter because of our advocacy for victims. Sadly, the demand for DAIS services continues to increase sharply, with legal advocacy work increasing 55% in 2018 alone. These individuals support victims of domestic violence with safety planning and help navigate the legal system on everything from restraining orders to family and criminal court proceedings. I'm adding \$45,000 in this budget to support DAIS' advocacy work. Domestic violence is entirely unacceptable

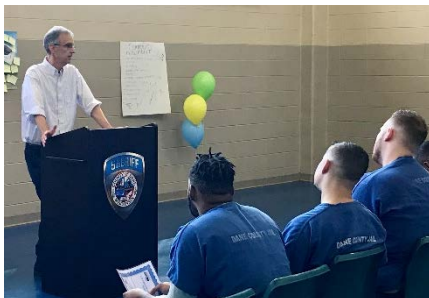
and is pervasive. The DAIS Help Line took 2,443 calls for help from victims seeking legal advocacy in 2018. That was 452 more calls than the year before. It's imperative that we keep community attention focused on these issues so they don't get lost in the many other challenges we work so hard on in each budget.

The sum of all these initiatives is a human services budget that totals \$231.1 million for 2020, far and away the most significant portion of the county budget.

Criminal Justice Reform

Agging physical space concerns with the City-County Building Jail forced appropriate (and continued) attention on the imperative that we as a community have appropriate supports in place to address some of the common thread root causes for what lands individuals in the criminal justice system. Prevention is such an integral part of what informs our many direct service related budget priorities. This is why such focus is placed in each county budget in the areas of mental health, poverty, drug and alcohol addiction. Some of the most innovative work we do – Building Bridges School Based Mental Health Teams, Early Childhood Zones, Joining Forces for Families, Neighborhood Intervention Program, the new Community Mental Health and Trauma Reduction work highlighted in this budget – are all rooted in the fundamental goal of prevention. As

we all know, sometimes more is needed. With the difficult task of designing what the physical structure of a consolidated jail needs to be now behind us, we need to return attention to the real opportunity that exists to improve human outcomes. This has to be about people, not the space or place and that's why my budget creates the new position of Jail Population Manager. This individual will serve as a liaison between the entities that comprise the criminal justice system and help reduce a person's average lengths of stay in the jail. This person will have the data available to monitor real time bookings and the status of stays that sometimes are artificially inflated due to trip points in the process. This will help people move through the jail quicker and when paired with the Jail/Human Services Re-Entry Team created in the 2017 budget can do so in a way that better aligns an individual's needs with available services in a more timely fashion.



Parenting Inside Out Graduation

This budget furthers our work at reducing recidivism. The Sheriff's Office is coming off of a highly successful pilot initiative better connecting parents who are incarcerated with their children. The "Parenting Inside Out" program resulted from a partnership between the Sheriff's Office, National Institute of Corrections, the UW School of Social Work, and the UW Extension and Literacy Link. The first class of ten individuals graduated this year. It works and we can do more. That's why I'm creating a new Family Connections Coordinator in this budget to take Parenting Inside Out to scale in 2020 with the goal of strengthening the bond between parents and children subjected to the difficulties of incarceration.

The chemically addictive properties of heroin and opiates have proven to challenge criminal justice recidivism rates across the country. We are fortunate in this community to have the pioneering work led by the Safe Communities Coalition that brings the bridge to treatment and recovery right into our jail and now in all of Dane County's hospitals. Known as ED2Recovery and Jail2Recovery, Dane County has long funded these "recovery coaches" which intervene right at the place where those overdose victims are present – emergency rooms and eventually our jail. Safe Communities has seen an over 88% success rate at getting overdose victims into treatment with the helpful nudges and careful, direct guidance of these recovery coaches in emergency rooms. Of those who started treatment in ED2Recovery, none of them were re-admitted to a local emergency department for an overdose. Zero. The success rate at getting inmates into treatment in the jail is 81%. Together the two programs have helped over 410 individuals start treatment in just the past couple of years (ED2Recovery started in 2017, Jail2Recovery in 2019). There's opportunity to do so much more in our jail as the heroin epidemic evolves into new and different opiate dangers such as fentanyl laced cocaine. That's why this budget proposes expansion of the "Recovery Coach" model into Drug Court deferred prosecution programs, and community organizations like the Outreach LGBT Community Center and those who work directly with African American, Latino, and Hmong populations.

Access to Opportunity



In 2014 I introduced “Access to Opportunity,” a series of initiatives aimed at breaking down barriers to success, reducing disparities, addressing disproportionate gaps in educational achievement and the criminal justice system all while doubling back on our efforts ensuring county government reflects the community that it goes to work for every day. We’ve made progress. One of the early discoveries we made after launching “Access to Opportunity” was the correlation between having a drivers’ license and the ability to get a job. Our drivers education partnership with the Madison Metropolitan School District and the local Cooperate Extension (CESA) has helped hundreds of young people earn a drivers’ license. Being able to legally drive is too often an upfront stumbling block to economic security. The high up-front, out of pocket cost is a barrier to those living in poverty. To no surprise, data shows significant racial disparities when it comes to who has the means to afford the over \$400 cost of paying for drivers education. This budget grows the program we created to bridge that gap, helping 120 Madison high school students get drivers’ education each summer. It also creates a new partnership with Operation Fresh Start (\$52,000 county funds) to help high school grads previously unable to secure a license.

The budget creates a new Parks Apprenticeship program, modeled after a partnership I developed between the Urban League, Latino Academy of Workforce Development, the Dane County Departments of Public Works and Highway and Waste and Renewables. Through professional mentoring and apprenticeships, we’ve helped a number of individuals secure commercial drivers’ licenses and give them the skills to operate heavy equipment. Many of them applied and are now part of our team of county highway workers. \$50,000 can establish a similar effort for our Dane County Parks Department, which as the lands we manage grows, is always in need of additional helping hands.



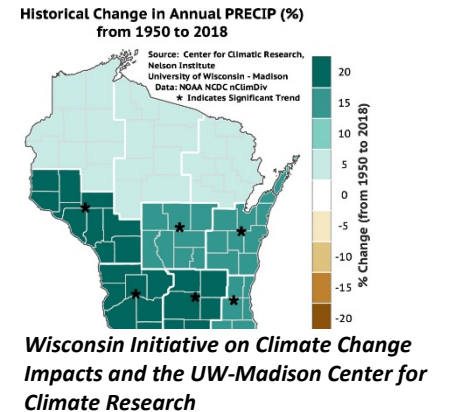
I’m including \$100,000 in the budget to develop an at-risk youth mentoring pilot project to set up a community team that can advocate and mentor young people who might otherwise be at risk of behavior that can lead to trouble with the criminal justice system. Poverty is a compelling motivator for many of the poor, sometimes dangerous choices of some youth in our community. Regardless the root cause of what’s occurring some of these young men and women simply need a champion, a role model, someone to look up, and talk to when life choices present in those teenage years. The more choices those with lived experience can help intervene on with these young people, the better chance we have to preserve lifetimes of opportunity and prevent years of consequence from a night gone bad.

With this budget I am ending the controversial practice known as “birth cost recovery collections.” Currently, the federal government permits child support agencies to re-coup costs for Medicaid funded births. These dollars are collected after child support payments are made and counties retain a portion of the proceeds for the administration of this collection. We can forgo this revenue and give these parents one less

expense while many of them struggle to make ends meet. The racial disparities in Birth Cost Recovery are stark, with these parents being asked to reimburse the federal government hundreds of dollars each year for many years in some cases.

Climate Change – Adapting and Mitigating

One year removed from last summer’s devastating floods, the effects remain and reminders too fresh of how quickly communities - and our natural landscape - can change at the hands of Mother Nature. While we missed the big deluges this summer, the massive rains in which totals are measured by how we used to only measure snow, did happen in our neighboring counties. This is our new norm and is proving to be an annual, or more frequent occurrence. As recently as a couple of weeks ago flash flooding triggered road washouts, rock slides, and stranded vehicles keeping our neighboring counties busy – even this late in the season. Even without those massive downpours, we are still running over eight inches above normal for precipitation year to date. By early September we tallied up what is considered our yearly average for precipitation, with several months of the year to go. Waterways are running higher more frequently because of what keeps falling from the sky but even more so what’s percolating from the ground. We’ve reached a point of saturation following years of wetter than normal weather. Groundwater levels in many places are the highest in recent memory. This had a devastating impact on our highly productive agricultural lands -nearly one of every ten acres typically used for farming in Dane County went unplanted this year as a direct result of groundwater flooding. At one point this spring, groundwater inflow into Lake Mendota was running three times faster the normal rate. In short, we’re saturated and in some locations there aren’t many places for that water to go. We are already experiencing the effects of a climate that’s changing.



Weed Harvester

Given what’s occurring, county government needs to adapt. I’m proposing we accelerate our work to increase capacity and flow in the Yahara Lakes. My budget creates a brand new sediment removal crew and purchases the equipment needed for the county to do its own hydraulic dredging. This ensures for years to come we have the equipment and staff expertise in house to manage new work demands created not by our doing, but new realities that pose unique challenges to a quickly growing area with diverse water resources. I’m including \$5 million in new county dollars in the budget to purchase equipment needed for this work and the staff to carry out the job. This adds 4 new positions dedicated to this work in the Land and Water Resources Department. In the weeks ahead we will award a bid to a firm to remove sediment that’s accrued at the bottom of the Yahara River around upper Mud Lake and the lower end of Lake Monona. The first phase of the flood mitigating hydraulic dredging project will advance this winter and next year while the county builds the internal capacity needed to do subsequent parts of this multi-year effort. What we’re embarking upon is incredibly involved,

bold, and innovative. Thanks to partners like Secretary Cole and his staff at the State Department of Natural Resources and the City of Monona we are embarking with confidence on what may be the most substantive opportunity we have at minimizing impacts of lakes that rise when it rains.

It's estimated this first phase will remove 40,000 cubic yards of accrued sludge and sediment from Lake Monona and Upper Mud Lake. The project's second phase will address miles of the Yahara River between Lakes Waubesa and Kegonsa and then south of Lake Kegonsa. Madison Mayor Rhodes-Conway and I have had a number of helpful discussions about removing sediment in the Yahara River between Lakes Mendota (Tenney Lock) and Monona. With the close proximity to public works infrastructure and being in an urban setting there are many good questions to answer, including how to best dispose of the eventual sediment that's removed. Future budgets will include engineering and design money to look at how to best remove what sits at the bottom of the Yahara in the central city.



Pheasant Branch Land Acquisition

Aggressive weed harvesting in the Yahara River helped maximize water flow out of our lakes this summer. Funds in the 2019 county budget added more cutters, staff, and the ability to offload weeds in real time to barges, allowing water to flow the fastest it could out of the lakes. Given topography – the subtle change in elevation from Lakes Mendota to Kegonsa - the increased rate and volume of urban stormwater run-off due to growth, and the frequency of heavier rains, our lakes will continue to need a multi-faceted approach. The county's acquisition this year of a 160 acre farm adjacent to Pheasant Branch Conservancy melds our priorities of managing water "quantity" while improving water "quality." This purchase – the most significant in our rich conservation history – prevents hundreds of millions of gallons of floodwater run-off from hitting Lake Mendota and areas downstream than if the lands had been developed as was envisioned. Instead we will take what would have been black-top and sidewalks and create a prairie restoration project that's good for our waters, air, and our pollinator friends. There will be an announcement in the coming weeks on a developing partnership to expedite this conversion to flood mitigating prairie.

Like all areas, we are susceptible to future flooding resulting from climate change induced extreme weather. Given that, I'm creating the new Dane County Flood Risk Reduction Fund to ensure the county can vie for public ownership of lands facing a similar situation to what we saw with the Acker Farm next to Pheasant Branch this summer. For us to responsibly and comprehensively approach mitigating flood risk, preservation must be an option for high volume run-off properties. I'm starting this fund with \$3 million in 2020. I'm also providing \$400,000 to expedite the clean-up and repair of one of our region's most valued recreational resources which is still reeling from last summer's record flooding. Pheasant Branch Conservancy sits adjacent to 400 acres of county owned and managed lands. It's a crown jewel drawing nature lovers and walkers alike. What took so many years to build-up was destroyed in the matter of a few hours during a deluge last August. We owe it to our communities to

show our resiliency and these dollars, when teamed with a county grant award to the City of Middleton this fall, will put us close to \$900,000 in county funds to fix Pheasant Branch.

Perhaps in no other area in county government are the real time effects of climate change felt greater than in the ongoing work we're leading in the area of cleaning up our lakes and improving water quality. Intense rains and extreme temperature swings when teamed with the proliferation of invasive species like the zebra mussel have dramatically changed the ecology of our lakes in just a few years. As these factors influence the waters we're working diligently to improve, it's important the county and its partners advance a comprehensive approach that capitalizes both on the opportunities afforded by technology along with a sustained focus on the fundamental basics. There's greater interest in composting as a means of remedying manure run-off. The advent of the national bio-fuels market provides new reason for optimism that financially sustainable treatment systems that keep more manure off the lands could one day be the standard instead of their current place as an innovative exception. The access we provided to the interstate natural gas pipeline at Dane County's new landfill Bio-Gas plant offers a readymade, economically lucrative solution to reducing phosphorus run-off while encouraging private investment in renewable fuels.



A manure treatment system is on the verge of being fully operational at the Gundersen Health Systems owned digester outside of Middleton. It will process hundreds of millions of gallons of animal waste from three family farms in the Lake Mendota watershed and there's already some discussion about adding other farmers to this project. This system essentially eliminates the need for one of the larger manure storage lagoons in the watershed. The proliferation of these treatment technologies is ultimately the most effective means of allowing us to both improve water quality and maintain one of the most vibrant dairy economies in the country. Our county has lost over 70 dairy farms in the past five years as a result of national economic pressures the agricultural industry hasn't experienced the likes of in a long time. Much of the industry contraction has impacted smaller dairy operations and the economics are such that those with more cows are more likely to have staying power for the foreseeable future. Steps taken by county ordinance in recent months will have a positive effect at limiting winter spreading. Any genuine clean lakes effort needs to include the participation and buy-in of dairy farmers. They've been here for generations and will continue to be. From a land use and economic perspective, those are good things. The more manure we treat and process into renewable bio-gas for fuel, the less ends up on the land. That's why it's important that we encourage all ongoing dialogue about further uses for digesters and nutrient concentration systems.



It's critical that we focus on every opportunity for "win wins." That's why I'm particularly excited by the results of our pilot "Continuous Cover" program this year. Designed to reduce run-off, enhance carbon sequestration, and preserve rural character, interest in the brand new effort launched this spring was overwhelming. With \$750,000 in start-up dollars for the program plus dollars from our Yahara CLEAN budget we're able to award grants to convert nearly 550 acres that had been in annual row crops into continuous, perennial cover. Like other parts of this budget, I'm going to build upon what works heading into the new decade. I'm doubling funding available for Dane County Continuous Cover, including \$1.5 million in my 2020 budget to take advantage of a broader willingness by a number of Dane County property owners to enter into long term agreements to seed down their lands with continuous cover grasses and prairies. The benefits to this are many – reducing phosphorus and carbon emissions, protecting lands for conservation in the face of expanding development pressures, and promoting habitats good for pollinators who continue to face adversity from challenges like pesticides and climate change.

Climate Change – Renewable Energy

Budgets provide a good opportunity to review existing priorities and re-focus as appropriate. They also afford reflection on progress and accomplishment. Our county has much to be proud of in the work done at reducing our carbon footprint, developing renewable energy sources, and establishing operations that are both sustainable and resilient in this ever changing world. We've been regional and national leaders in the areas of renewable fuels and set the gold standard for what's possible at the local government level. We set out years ago to convert wherever possible the county fleet of vehicles to running on cleaner burning renewable natural gas (RNG). We are on the verge of having over 95 vehicles, including dozens of previously diesel-guzzling heavy trucks and plows, running on CNG. This budget includes \$1.2 million to further the fueling infrastructure needed countywide to support our CNG fleet. At the turn of the decade, Dane County had a handful of solar project demonstrations at facilities. Over the past several years we've added solar arrays to county facilities culminating with our largest development to date, over 60 acre project at the Dane County Regional Airport done in conjunction with Madison Gas and Electric. Work on that solar field will begin next year and when complete the countless rows of 31,000 solar panels in the shadow of the airfield will generate 40% of county government's current and future projected energy consumption. This solar development has been sized to cover the projected energy usage of both the eventual jail consolidation project and any future expansion of the Exhibition Hall at the Dane County's Alliant Energy Center. Installation of solar was completed this year at Dane County's Job Center and future arrays are slated for the Sheriff's Training Center outside of Waunakee, parks equipment facilities, and Consolidated Food Services. We are on a path to becoming 100% sustainable within the next 5 years. Teamed with our ability to acquire renewable energy credits, we are well on our way to producing the equivalent-or even



greater-amounts of renewable energy than we use. There's no sense waiting until 2030 or 2050 to do what can be accomplished today through continued innovation and smart investments.

Our Dane County Landfill is far and away the face of sustainable waste management. As 50 acres of prairie planting took root this summer on top of the former landfill hill, trash underneath the topsoil was re-directed to our new bio-gas processing facility. In addition to capturing carbon and methane this project is producing the equivalent of roughly 3 million gallons of bio-fuels each year. Through a partnership with Blue Source and Kwik Trip, what starts as garbage we take to the curb is ending up powering vehicles that run on renewable natural gas (RNG). The result is a payday for taxpayers in the form of federal renewable energy credits and a win for the planet with improved air quality and fewer greenhouse gas emissions. The American Association for the Advancement of Science recently highlighted our project in a national climate change documentary. The Environmental Protection Agency has asked Director Welch to present on the project and what we've done is being highlighted in national publications as a model for renewable energy development. In partnership with local businesses like BioFerm Energy Systems, we have debuted a state of the art facility that's bringing the bio-gas industry to Dane County to see how it's done.

My first budget for the new decade picks up on the progress of the one just passed, building upon our "green" fleet and adding infrastructure at county facilities to promote electric vehicle usage. I'm including \$350,000 to purchase electric vehicle charging stations at 16 county sites: five county dog parks – (Prairie Moraine, Badger Prairie, Token Creek, Capital Springs, and Viking Parks) along with the Alliant Energy Center, Job Center, Badger Prairie Nursing Home, and other county office buildings. By helping visitors to our facilities and parks "charge up," we're recognizing the future of transportation and role electric cars will play as part of an ongoing effort to reduce emissions. My budget also acquires electric cars for the county fleet, expanding our focus on cleaner transportation sources



County government was impacted by two significant power outages within just a couple of weeks this summer. Because of our focus on redundancy and resiliency in the midst of an ever changing world, we were ready and impacts were minimized. In 2014 we budgeted the dollars to build a 911 training center at the East District Campus that could double as a back-up 911 Center. That tornado proof facility was built to be sure we could keep dispatching emergency services in the event of a disaster. After going decades without needing to use a back-up 911 Center, in a span of just 10 days this investment in resiliency prevented us from missing a single 911 call during two significant outages affecting thousands of people in the central city. Our climate work isn't just good for the environment, it can also allow us to be more energy independent and improve public safety. This budget has dollars to take heat from the RNG plant at the landfill and run it to county facilities at the East District Campus. Heat from the processes used to convert landfill gas into vehicle fuel can be gathered and pumped under

the highway to the medical examiner/911 facilities. My budget includes the dollars necessary for this interconnection (\$900,000), a further advance in our commitment to self-sustainability.

Conservation/Lakes

While our work continues to get phosphorus and sediment out of our waters, long term behaviors that manifested over many decades created the current challenges. The cultural awareness and change that's underway will take some time to have a tangible impact but there's progress to report. The first phase of Suck the Muck is complete, extracting 75,000 pounds of phosphorus from one of the key waterways feeding the Yahara Lakes (Dorn Creek). The next chapter of our work is just now getting underway in Token Creek where phosphorus soaked sludge is seven feet deep in some spots. We estimate there are 20,000 tons (enough to fill 1,500 dump trucks) of muck over a one mile stretch of Token Creek. Removing it stops the ongoing seepage of phosphorus into Cherokee Marsh, Lake Mendota and beyond. Next year our work heads to Six Mile Creek between Waunakee and Westport. We need to keep working through the list of waters where the data tells us we have a long established phosphorus problem. The systemic change we've embarked upon fundamentally alters one of the key sources of the green, smelly algae we see in summer. The 2020 budget has \$2.5 million for the next chapters of "Suck the Muck." We need to keep going with a multi-faceted approach, making progress on many fronts to unwind the impacts of old practices.

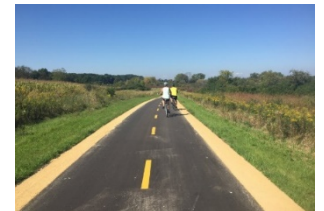


Lake Mendota County Park Beach

Our lakes are such an incredible resource. It's important this generation gets some enjoyment out of them while our heavy lift continues at the bigger phosphorus and algae reduction goals. That's why Mayor Rhodes-Conway and I recently announced a five year Clean Beach Corridor project. Systems the county put in place in recent years at Lake Mendota and Goodland County Parks successfully keep an area of lake water clean even at periods while algae blooms peak outside the system's in water barrier. In partnership with the Mayor, we will install safe swimming areas in the coming years at Warner, Tenney, Esther, James Madison and Vilas beaches in Madison. The county will build the systems, the city will maintain the new and improved beaches, and

together we'll create more opportunities for safe, free family summer fun. This is an opportunity to not only improve quality of life but also supports our commitment to equity, ensuring all have the opportunity to get out and enjoy time in the sand and water.

I'm advancing a couple of other initiatives in my parks budget I'd like to call attention to here. I'm including \$4 million for the Dane County Conservation Fund so we can continue to pursue opportunities for land preservation with clear quality of life, conservation, and recreational benefits. This need is even more apparent by the county's continually increasing and competing land use pressures. Our residents love their trails. That's why I'm including \$300,000 to complete construction of phase one of the North Mendota Bike Trail. This section will run from Woodland Drive to Governor Nelson State Park as



part of a partnership. The county's total investment into the first phase of this project is \$1.3 million with what's included in the budget. The budget has a new \$50,000 bicycle crossing safety program to put up additional signage countywide install more safe crossing systems with warning lights. I'm adding \$250,000 for the next section of work planned to resurface and improve the Capital City Trail and \$600,000 to construct a new dog park at Anderson Farm County Park in the Town of Oregon.

Last year I announced a multi-year program to create accessible shoreline fishing at county parks. This project set out to make sure everyone had the opportunity to enjoy an evening by the water, creating a number of fishing piers that are fully ADA compliant. The first work as part of this is happening at Salmo Pond, Babcock, and Lussier County Parks. I'm doubling funds to this effort next year (\$200,000 in capital budget) so we can continue our push to increase access to all the incredible outdoor resources our county offers. The budget includes \$300,000 for the restoration of Badger Mill Creek in the City of Verona. This work will include habitat restoration in the area of the Ice Age Trail.

Over the past 10 years Dane County has doubled the amount of parks acreage and facilities. Our parks see over 2 million visitors each year and are an incredible success story. The budget adds a new Assistant Parks Director position to help oversee our growing network of 16 recreational county parks, 16 wildlife areas, and 14 natural resource areas. I'm adding \$207,000 to replace the roof of the Heritage Center, allowing for the installation of solar panels there and \$240,000 for a new forestry management truck to help clear downed trees and improve the county's response to storm damage affecting our parks and trails.

Alliant Energy Center, Dane County Regional Airport, Henry Vilas Zoo

This summer's disappointment with the state legislature's elimination of funding to support an expansion at the Alliant Energy Center was an anomaly in a string of otherwise positive news for the campus that has come such a long way since the National Great Recession at the turn of the decade. The Alliant Energy Center is making money, demonstrating its ability to be a self-funded operation. We saw a 75% increase this year in the number of concerts and shows held at the Coliseum. There were 14 new concerts this year, resulting in a 136% increase in Coliseum revenue and 102% increase in attendance. Those revenues have allowed the AEC to grow its reserve fund to nearly \$1.8 million, six times the size it was only 5 years ago. The county and state's joint investment into new facilities at the AEC generated new, sustainable operating dollars for the campus. Construction of the New Holland Pavilions enabled the grounds to retain and grow some of the Center's staple events and upgrades to the Veterans Memorial Coliseum have dramatically altered the AEC's financial picture, returning this once prominent facility to being a destination for national concert and entertainment acts.



2018 will go into the books as the busiest year for concerts at the AEC in well over a decade. The county's sales and marketing agreement with nationally renowned SMG is reaping great rewards. Industry leading musical acts are coming to Madison more than any time in recent history. A country music act this November sold out in a matter of hours after tickets went on sale. More shows are on the docket in the coming months that stand to sustain this success. Improvements made to the Coliseum's rigging, lighting, bathrooms, and flooring have paid immediate dividends. The Coliseum was one of the integral reasons Reebok chose the Alliant Energy Center to host the CrossFit Games. This summer's event had greater television and media coverage than ever before, further putting our AEC campus on the national stage and bringing tens of thousands of people to the heart of Dane County. I'm proposing we build on the AEC's success in this budget. Given shows are coming here, I'm including \$800,000 to renovate the locker room (backstage) areas of the Coliseum. This was one of the top facility improvement recommendations from the same Markin Consulting study that accurately forecasted capital investments in rigging, restrooms, and other accommodations would bolster concert bookings.

From agriculture to bio-tech to music acts, our Alliant Energy Center campus is already one of the more diverse entertainment venues around. I think we can take it a step further and directly market our facility through the lens of equity we've applied throughout all county departments. This budget adds \$25,000 in event promotion and assistance for the Greater Madison Convention and Visitors Bureau to bring culturally and racially diverse organizations and their events to the AEC campus. This can allow us to pursue events like the National NAACP Conference and other dialogues well suited for the AEC grounds.



Dane County Airport

We're also seeing incredible economic driven successes at the Dane County Regional Airport. 2019 will go into the books as a record for the airport as passenger air travel hit new highs, shattering the impressive results from the year before. Airport Director Kim Jones and her team continue to partner with the airlines and local businesses to align our airport with the destinations in demand in the Madison region. More direct flights to more cities is certainly one of the drivers behind a nearly 15% growth in passenger travel so far this year. The airport's exponential growth has heightened the need to make sure our beautiful terminal facility can meet the needs of more travelers. The budget includes \$60 million for a bold modernization project that will expand the terminal and add jet bridges, allowing boarding for more flights to happen concurrently. This over \$100 million expansion of our airport reflects our ongoing commitment to having a world class airport that meets the needs of travelers and airlines with state of the art accommodations. The Dane County Regional Airport is the gateway to our region's economic vitality. Its new parking ramp constructed just a few years ago is approaching capacity more frequently. We built it in 2013 with the future in mind and primed for expansion. This budget includes the dollars needed design and engineer work to add onto the ramp in the coming years.

This year's decision to change how fundraising is done at the Henry Vilas Zoo was not the path easiest traveled but instead the one that best aligns the zoo with this community's values-conservation, education, and a focus on the challenges of species survival in the midst of global climate change. With pressing needs requiring a timely resolution in advance of this summer's Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) accreditation, we faced a difficult decision. Change is never easy. Fast forward a few months since this challenging but necessary transition and the zoo is in the strongest place it has ever been. We proudly achieved AZA accreditation just a few weeks ago. New staff to help better care for the animals are on the job. Dollars earned from conservation programs, the conservation carousel, food, gift shops, and donation tubes will exceed the annual contribution from the former entity hired to raise dollars. Money raised at the zoo, is staying at the zoo. Community donations left on zoo grounds by visitors are running four times 2018's collections. At the time of writing this budget, members of this community have dropped off \$170,000 in just four months into on grounds donation tubes. Last year's donor tube collections were reported to the county to be just over \$40,000 for the entire year. Customer Sales at the Glacier Grille, Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream, and gift shops grossed \$324,000 last month alone.



The Henry Vilas Zoo has been able to get back to the basics: it is a family friendly, free zoo that's owned and accessible at all times by the entire community. This is everyone's zoo. That's why the budget I'm introducing has the staffing necessary to make this family destination even more accessible, allowing us to stay open those warm summer nights between Memorial Day and Labor Day. This will allow moms and dads to get home from work, grab the little ones, and head out for fun, educational evenings at the zoo. Having a free zoo, open and accessible to all is an issue of equity – family entertainment for all regardless of means.

The success of the Zoo's transition was recognized by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums inspection team when it visited the zoo for several days this summer. The AZA team wrote, *"The Zoo and County should be commended for the seamless transition absorbing all Society functions. This was a significant effort on the County/Zoo's part including: a) all employees choosing to transition to the County were allowed to do so and the County created positions for these staff; b) from a Guest perspective, the Zoo experience was unchanged during the transition; c) contracting with a new concessionaire allowing food and gift employees to work for the new vendor d) developed a more comprehensive animal welfare assessment process."* Director Schwetz, zoo staff, and I attended the AZA Conference and met with the Accreditation Committee in September, demonstrating our county's and community's love, affection, and support of its free zoo. Securing accreditation was the guiding goal for the challenging events of 2019. Now we look forward to a bright future, ensuring free family fun for generations to come.

The decision to move forward in the manner in which the county did was difficult. That said, there are indications the priority placed on AZA accreditation is not the only benefit to the change made. As mentioned, on grounds cash donations are in uncharted territory. The zoo

recently received a \$125,000 gift from a will, an example of this community's well demonstrated love and care for our zoo's mission of conservation. This fall the zoo will unveil is new "Conservation Club," community memberships that will directly support the Henry Vilas Zoo's work, dollars that have never before gone directly back to the zoo.

Public Safety



I'm proposing \$3 million for construction of a new Dane County Emergency Operations Center and home for the county's Department of Emergency Management. Whether it's flooding, power outages, or severe storms we've all benefited greatly in recent years to a highly organized, centralized management of incidents that affect county government operations and the community. Emergency Management is currently located in the Public Safety Building and will need to move as a result of the jail consolidation project. These funds will help secure a new long term home for one of our most critical county assets.

The budget has \$3.5 million at the request of the Sheriff for renovation work needed to establish a new southeast precinct in Stoughton and around \$700,000 for the acquisition of 13 new SUVs for patrol deputies. I'm adding county dollars to the 911 Center budget to replace lost state revenue that supports a shift supervisor position and re-classifying 911 pre-hire positions to full time new communicators to help with scheduling flexibility and to reduce overtime.

The growth of the community has resulted in more multi-lane highways. The pending completion of the Verona Road expansion project, ongoing work to widen the interstate, and potential use of shoulders on the beltline during peak travel times adds to the complexity of keeping roads safe in ice and snow. The budget has \$2 million to purchase four "tow plows" and heavy duty quad-axle trucks to pull them. Tow plows are a relatively new line of equipment that allows a single truck to clear two lanes of highway at the same time with a single pass. This will help our ability to keep traffic moving on the Beltline and Interstate. Given more lane miles are added to the county system with projects like Highway M on the west side of Madison and Verona, I'm including \$1.4 million to buy 4 more tri-axle highway trucks (plows).



Personnel

This budget marks the fourth consecutive year of increasing wages for county employees. I'm proposing a 3% increase which totals nearly \$5.2 million in new money for 2020, the single largest new operating expenditure in this budget. The county workforce is 185 full time members stronger today than it was at last turn of the decade, demonstrative of the increased commitment we've placed on caring for the people and places of our quickly growing county. It takes people to provide services and we're fortunate in Dane County to have such a highly skilled workforce that's up to the job of meeting our community's evolving needs.

Personnel expenses comprise the vast majority of the county budget each year. As the son of a union construction worker I was raised to know the value returned when you invest in quality people. In Dane County, we get an enormous return from our workers. That's why we're making a significant investment in our people. Continuing the health insurance offered today in 2020 without any design changes is over \$5.1 million in new money in this budget. Wages, health insurance, and the county's increased contribution to the Wisconsin Retirement System totals over \$11.5 million in 2020. That is all brand new money in the budget and is noteworthy for a couple of reasons. First, it is a demonstrable commitment to our workforce of the value we place on fair wages and a good health plan for our workers and their families. It also calls attention to a challenge that awaits future county budgets.

The county's health insurance costs for active employees and retirees were \$27.8 million in 2010. It will exceed \$50 million next year with words of caution that substantial health insurance increases are on the horizon. The county's insurance broker (consulting firm) recently cautioned that sustaining our current plan could result in an additional \$9 million per year increase starting in 2021. In a recession, these kinds of increases would compete directly against funding needed for direct services. We've solved a lot of difficult challenges in recent years and we will need to work together to navigate this constructively and creatively.

The budget includes a newly created retirement enhancement program for county employees. This enhancement is designed to help retirees address one of the most pressing concerns facing all Americans, the cost of health care. Under the program, if an employee retires with greater than 10 and less than 20 years of service with the county, he or she will receive \$5,000 per year for five years that can be applied toward the cost of health insurance or other medical costs in retirement. Employees retiring with at least 20 years of service will receive the \$5,000 payment for ten years.

Process

The budget I'm introducing will be reviewed in the coming weeks by the County Board of Supervisors. I look forward to working with members on crafting a final budget that reflects our communities needs while being mindful of the prospect that more challenging times could await given the political climate in Washington D.C. The memories of the last recession and the impacts those economic slides have on revenues the county depends upon to invest in people and places that we care about are all too fresh. The first budget I crafted was in the wake of the National Great Recession, with limited financial resources. We learned. Since then, the County Board of Supervisors and I have taken great care to establish a vibrant county reserve fund and human services reserve fund. We have safety nets in the event of another national recession but only if we preserve them.

This budget increases the county tax levy 3.9%, about \$21.85 more on the average home which this year is valued at \$300,967.

I'm grateful for the annual opportunity to set the vision for the coming year of work for the county that I've called "home" my entire lifetime. While growth has resulted in physical changes to our landscape, at our core we remain a people of shared principle and priority. I'm proud to go to work every day in one of the most incredibly special places in the country.