



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

November 13, 2019

Dear President Hardin and Members of Council:

Today, in accordance with Section 26 of the Charter of the City of Columbus, I am pleased to present the 2020 Budget, a balanced proposal that reflects the priorities of my administration – neighborhood safety, inclusive growth, shared prosperity, and a commitment to assure every resident in every neighborhood has the opportunity to succeed.

Columbus continues to experience unprecedented growth, record low unemployment, and rising wages. Our strong economy and sound fiscal management will allow the city to continue to invest in Columbus neighborhoods, especially in our opportunity neighborhoods that have not yet fully shared in the success that defines Columbus, while also setting aside resources to maintain essential city services should the economy decline.

The 2020 budget invests in the implementation of One Linden, a master plan to address the physical and social challenges facing Linden, including transportation, housing, education, health, and safety. In addition, my budget will fund the implementation of a new community-driven plan for the Hilltop that focuses on the people as its greatest

resource, leveraging the strength of the community to create an environment where businesses and residents can thrive. This includes investing in our youngest residents, preparing for the opening of the new Hilltop Early Childhood Center while pressing forward with our community-wide effort to expand access to pre-K to assure every child is prepared to succeed in school – and in life. This effort builds on the success of CelebrateOne, and our continued efforts to reduce infant mortality and improve life expectancy for premature births through an expansion of evidence-based home visiting programs.

As the population of Columbus continues to grow, we will continue to leverage the city's investments, align our incentive policies, and form public-private partnerships to increase access to housing Columbus families can afford, and keep residents from being priced out of their

neighborhoods. In addition, the city is committed to making sure current housing is healthy and safe through increased proactive code enforcement, enhanced efforts to crack down on illegal dumping, and a heightened focus on predatory evictions to prevent family homelessness.



THE CITY OF COLUMBUS ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR



## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Public safety remains the single largest financial investment the city makes each year. In 2020, 67 percent of the general fund is dedicated to the Department of Public Safety, including the Divisions of Fire and Police. My budget will fund new police and fire recruit classes, and place more police officers and firefighters on the street than at any other point in our city's history. We will also invest in additional police and fire cadet classes to prepare young people to become Columbus police officers and firefighters, while helping to increase the diversity of our safety forces in the future.

The budget continues to fund the Comprehensive Neighborhood Safety Strategy – a broad-based approach to neighborhood safety, focused on improving community-police relations which is making Columbus neighborhoods safer. In 2020, funds will again be directed to the expanded Safe Streets bike patrol and ShotSpotter gunfire detection system, as well as intervention programs to reduce gun violence through the Departments of Public Health and Recreation and Parks. The 2020 budget also sets aside resources for the implementation of the police operations review and to advance the recommendations of the Columbus Community Safety Advisory Commission to provide public safety services that are transparent, accountable, and responsive for every person in every neighborhood.

The 2020 budget places a high value on diversity and inclusion in all city programs

and offerings. The city continues to work to improve human resource practices, press for stronger recruitment strategies, and I have challenged directors to become models of inclusive leadership. In 2020, we will begin to implement recommendations of the 2019 disparity study to expand access to city contracts for minority and female-owned businesses. My budget also continues to invest in the Columbus Women's Commission to advance the economic well-being of women in our community – including closing the gender wage gap.

The strength of the Columbus economy coupled with sound fiscal policies have placed the city in a strong position. Not only are we able to invest in Columbus neighborhoods, we are also able to continue to save for our future. In 2019, we will reach our goal of \$80 million for the Rainy Day Fund a full year ahead of schedule and set a new goal of \$90 million in savings by the end of 2024. In 2020, we will deposit \$5.6 million into the Basic City Services Fund, bringing its total to \$20.4 million to be used to weather sudden, unexpected financial challenges and preserve essential city services.

In the following pages, you will find additional details of my proposed 2020 Operating Fund Budget. It is a balanced budget that invests in the safety of our neighborhoods, inclusive growth, and shared prosperity, while maintaining fiscal responsibility and securing the financial future of Columbus.