



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

November 12, 2020

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 2021 Budget, a balanced proposal that reflects the priorities of my administration and the residents of Columbus in what has been an unprecedented and tumultuous year.

The public health, economic and human impact of COVID-19 has been devastating. Despite receiving significant relief through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Columbus residents, employers, social services agencies and institutions have suffered significant financial losses. The City of Columbus was forced to reduce the 2020 general fund budget by \$41.5 million to account for lost revenue, and the 2021 budget is less than the operating budget submitted just one year ago.

Despite declining revenue, through the hard work of the Department of Finance and Management and all city departments, I am submitting a balanced 2021 budget without depleting the Basic City Services Fund or the Economic Stabilization ("Rainy Day") Fund, and without contemplating a single layoff or furlough. The city's financial position, while challenged, remains strong, and reserves have been maintained to assure the city can continue to weather a pandemic that shows no signs of waning.

My proposed budget reflects the strategic investment of available resources to address the uneven and disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on those already marginalized. The 2021 budget reflects a commitment to closing existing gaps, advancing equity and making positive gains on our

community's highest priorities, including: police reform, affordable housing and neighborhoods.



In a year that has seen increased gun violence, homicides and a national reckoning over racial injustice and police brutality, it is imperative the city changes its approach to funding public safety. While funding the Division of Police remains a significant portion of the city's budget, the 2021 budget reflects increased investment in Public Health, Technology and Neighborhoods to reduce the burden on police and to formulate a more holistic approach to public safety.

The budget for the Columbus Division of Police includes funding for continued implementation of recommendations for reform made by the Community Safety Advisory Commission and Matrix Consulting, while fully funding the Comprehensive Neighborhood Safety Strategy, diversity and

inclusion efforts and strategies to develop a model of 21st century community policing for Columbus. In addition, \$825,000 will support the expansion of ShotSpotter technology, a proven gun-fire detection system, to the Near Eastside.

The budget also includes funding to establish and staff the Civilian Police Review Board and Office of the Inspector General for the Division of Police, overwhelmingly approved by voters through passage of Issue 2.

The Department of Technology budget includes funding for software systems to improve police investigative case management and to warn of officers struggling with stress so the city may offer assistance to promote physical and emotional wellness.



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New investments in Public Health will also support law enforcement, including an expansion of the Mobile Crisis Response program to address addiction, mental illness and people in crisis. In addition, social workers will be embedded with police and fire to better address behavioral health and advance public health strategies to address poverty and trauma allowing officers to focus on violent crime.

The city will continue to invest in the Department of Neighborhoods and neighborhood crisis response that addresses physical barriers to crime. A total of \$10.6 million is dedicated to Recreation and Parks programming and \$2.2 million for youth violence intervention programs. The department will also collaborate with the Departments of Neighborhoods and Public Safety to develop a new youth diversion program.

The Department of Development has budgeted for a new director-level position to focus exclusively on the city's affordable housing strategy, coordinate efforts across departments and to implement action items identified in the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission Affordable Housing Strategy. The Housing Division will encourage development of housing all Columbus residents can afford, and leverage the city's capital investments to increase the number of affordable housing units.

The Department of Neighborhoods will lead our efforts to invest in the communities that make Columbus special, and to implement strategies developed by Columbus residents, and outlined in the One Linden and Envision Hilltop plans, that focus on education, health, housing, safety and small business development. The city will also continue to invest in our youngest residents, maintaining our commitment to CelebrateOne and our Birth to Five initiative. We will continue our work to ensure all babies born in Columbus and Franklin County – regardless of race, ZIP code or family income – are able to celebrate their first birthday. And, we will continue to earmark funds for Early Start Columbus to ensure all children are able to enter kindergarten with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive.

The last year has underscored the importance of the work of Columbus Public Health (CPH). CPH

will continue to lead COVID-19 response through testing, monitoring and enforcement of state and local public health orders, and education to slow the spread of the virus. Because of the continuing human services impact of COVID-19, the city has increased general fund support to social service agencies to a total of \$3.64 million. This is in addition to support for the Community Shelter Board and the Permanent Supportive Housing program, focused on homeless veterans and pregnant women.

Through Sustainable Columbus, the city is optimizing internal city operations and working with external stakeholders throughout the community to enhance and promote policies that build stronger, healthier, more sustainable neighborhoods. In 2021, the city will continue to invest in efforts to become carbon neutral by 2050, work to fulfill our commitments under the American Cities Climate Challenge and implement the voter-backed consumer choice aggregation program that will provide Columbus residents 100% clean, renewable energy by 2022.

Diversity and inclusion remains an integral part of every decision we make. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) will aggressively implement recommendations contained in the 2019 Disparity Study, including a new Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise program. We will also advance the ODI 30x30 Challenge to better understand how race and other factors contribute to workplace disparities, eliminate workplace discrimination and improve workplace culture.

Balancing our operating budget for 2021 meant making tough choices, so we are not planning additional deposits into the Rainy Day Fund or Basic City Services Fund. However, both of those funds remain robust and intact, a testament to sound investing and financial discipline.

On the following pages, you will find additional details of my proposed 2021 Operating Fund Budget. It is a balanced budget that addresses the needs of our community equitably, while maintaining fiscal responsibility and securing the financial future of Columbus.