



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

November 14, 2018

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 2019 Budget, a balanced proposal that reflects the priorities of my administration. These priorities mirror my multi-year plan to best use city resources to ensure the safety and prosperity of Columbus residents, strengthen neighborhoods, and make sure every resident in every neighborhood has the opportunity to succeed. This budget also represents my commitment to strengthen Columbus' financial position in times of increasing fiscal challenges.

Our city continues to experience unprecedented growth, with a booming housing market, record low unemployment, and triple A bond ratings from all three rating agencies. We are the 14th largest city in America, and home to a diverse mix of nearly 900,000 residents, spread over 225 square miles.

Two-thirds of our residents in Columbus are doing very well, but it is important to remember that another third are struggling to make ends meet. In this time of prosperity, we must use every tool we have to make the vision of thriving, prosperous neighborhoods a reality.

Stable, safe, and affordable housing is key to family stabilization and neighborhood resiliency. While the city cannot control development, we can influence it. The city has been working on ways to leverage abatements

and incentives to best serve our residents. New policies now in place prioritize neighborhoods based on the greatest opportunities for development, to make public-private partnerships work for residents.

Safety of Columbus residents remains the highest priority and single largest financial investment the city makes each year. In 2019, more than \$622.5 million of the general fund budget is dedicated to the Department of Public Safety, including the Divisions of Police and Fire. This investment allows the city to fund new police and fire recruit classes and to invest in the tools, technology, and training to keep residents and first responders safe.

In addition, investments in the Comprehensive Neighborhood Safety Strategy take a broad-based approach to safety by engaging law enforcement, public health, recreation and parks, businesses, community leaders, and residents to

reduce crime.

I am inspired by the recently launched One Linden Community Plan developed by the Department of Neighborhoods in partnership with the Neighborhood Design Center and The Ohio State University. This plan addresses both the physical challenges facing Linden – like transportation, housing, and retail – and also the social considerations such as education, workforce, health, and safety. While the plan will take time to fully implement,



THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR



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we have already begun the work with our support of the Linden Park Early Childhood Education Center, a new Linden Community Recreation Center, and the rebuild of Fire Station 16, the removal of blighted properties, and the continuation of the Safe Streets bike patrol.

The children of today are the future of tomorrow, which is why my administration is working toward growing the availability of high-quality early childhood education. More than \$4.7 million supports our community-wide effort to expand access to high-quality pre-kindergarten opportunities and work with local providers to improve the quality of early childhood educational opportunities. These investments are braided with state and federal funding to maximize city resources.

In the past year, CelebrateOne has sharpened its focus on reducing preterm births, preventing sleep-related deaths, and connecting the disconnected to a vital support system throughout Columbus. Incremental progress is being made. The number of infant deaths among both non-Hispanic whites and blacks is declining across the county. The City of Columbus leverages its \$1.8 million investment by partnering with hospitals, health care providers, Columbus Public Health, Ohio's Medicaid managed care system, The Ohio State University, faith-based organizations, community and social organizations, and nonprofits. At the same time, CelebrateOne has recruited, trained, and empowered residents, including more than 600 Safe Sleep Ambassadors, to serve families with compassion and knowledge in Columbus priority neighborhoods.

I have placed a high standard for the role of diversity and inclusion at the city, pushing for stronger recruitment strategies and tasking leadership to champion the value of diversity.

Each department has developed and implemented inclusion plans and strategies for ensuring that the city's workforce reflects the community we serve. To increase supplier diversity, we are adding value to the city's sourcing and procurement processes through intra-departmental collaboration and the integration of supplier diversity best practices, timely market research, and robust outreach and engagement.

Our city thrives when 100 percent of our residents have the opportunity to succeed. One year after the Columbus Women's Commission launched The Columbus Commitment: Achieving Pay Equity, more than 160 Columbus area companies have signed the pledge to participate in this voluntary, employer-led initiative to close the gender wage gap.

The Smart Columbus initiative continues to put the city on the cutting edge of the future of mobility. Through the decarbonization of our power supply, increased electric vehicle adoption, and promotion of alternate transit modes, Smart Columbus helps put residents on a pathway to a better life.

In addition to providing core city services, it is also my job to ensure that our city is financially sound. This budget supports my administration's commitment to a comprehensive review of city operations to identify greater efficiencies and to reinvest savings in critical city services and programs.

I have proposed a 2019 General Operating Fund budget that is balanced and maintains our commitment to safety, diversity, and neighborhood development, in addition to fiscal responsibility. This budget recognizes the changing fiscal landscape and puts our resources to their best use to ensure that Columbus remains on track to be America's Opportunity City.