



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

March 17, 2021

The Honorable Members of the
Common Council of the
City of Milwaukee
City Hall, Room 205

RE: The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

Honorable Council Members:

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 provides an unprecedented opportunity for the City of Milwaukee. As we begin the process of analyzing the legislation and beginning to implement a plan, I believe it is important that we have a coordinated approach that addresses the needs of our community and includes residents, the Common Council, City departments, State of Wisconsin, Milwaukee County, and other key stakeholders to maximize the benefits of ARPA assistance.

Full details are pending on how the federal government will distribute the \$405 million in ARPA funding to the City of Milwaukee and on the parameters for allowable uses. I have directed the Department of Administration Director to establish a collaborative process to develop a comprehensive plan. I have also set preliminary guidelines for prioritizing ARPA projects:

- 1) The project will increase housing options, economic growth, and employment opportunities for city residents.
- 2) The project will meet the City's racial equity and inclusion goals.
- 3) The project will improve a major infrastructure replacement cycle or service level deficiency.
- 4) The project will not create unsustainable future costs or increase our structural deficits.

The Budget Director and the Director of Community Development & Grants Administration in the Department of Administration will be contacting you soon to get your input. The Office of Equity and Inclusion will also play a key role in aligning our ARPA efforts with racial equity and inclusion goals.

As a matter of transparency, I have identified some potential priorities for ARPA funding and have directed my Cabinet to develop ideas and plans for the following areas:

- **Housing:** Increasing homeownership and housing affordability is key to helping families build economic stability and resilience. Accelerating the 10,000 Homes Initiative with ARPA funding will increase affordable housing availability by building or improving housing units. My forthcoming Bloomberg Global Mayor's Challenge proposal is an innovative model and provides an opportunity to develop affordable and climate-ready housing at a local production plant in the 30th Street Industrial Corridor.
- **Eviction Prevention:** The work done in recent years on eviction prevention and the partnerships created to support renters during the pandemic are a solid base to build on to keep families in stable housing.
- **Lead Abatement:** Healthy housing is critical to children's health and improving health outcomes for Milwaukee youth and families. I want to expand the significant investments of recent years in reducing lead risks on all fronts. This includes both lead paint and lead service lines. New home construction and home renovation will also play a role in lead abatement.
- **Early Education:** Expanding access to high-quality early childhood education will help Milwaukee families and build a strong foundation for Milwaukee's economic future.
- **Workforce and Small Business Development:** It is important to utilize ARPA funding and leverage other workforce funding to connect city residents to jobs. This is a huge opportunity to prepare city residents to thrive in our local economy and grow our support for small businesses in the city.
- **Century City:** There are approximately 75 acres of land available for new development in the Century City Business Park located in the 30th Street Industrial Corridor. The City has worked with neighborhood residents to identify more than 45 projects that should be considered for ARPA funding to grow business and employment in and around Century City.
- **Broadband:** There is a critical need to expand broadband access for every Milwaukee resident.
- **Critical Infrastructure:** ARPA provides opportunities to accelerate work on water, sewer, street lights, bridges and other key infrastructure systems.
- **Pandemic Recovery and Resilience:** Quality of life, business support, and other programs to help Milwaukee emerge from the pandemic and thrive in the future. Milwaukee can also grow and expand our climate change and sustainability programs.
- **Streetcar System:** Streetcars are a proven catalyst for significant economic growth in cities. ARPA presents an opportunity to capitalize on progress already made and take steps to expand the economic impact of the system to more neighborhoods.

This is not a final or exhaustive list. DOA will work with the Council and City departments on compiling other potential ARPA projects. Our planning will be mindful of pending Congressional action on infrastructure and transportation funding, so the City can maximize the impact of Federal funds for our residents.

In order to enhance ARPA decision making, the City will leverage ongoing community engagement and inclusion initiatives. Public engagement in the process provides an opportunity for the City to highlight ARPA funding and hear the views of City residents on programs they would like funded.

I look forward to working with you on a plan for allocating ARPA funding and ensuring we have accountability in how we spend these funds. With a coordinated approach we will maximize the impact of ARPA funding and continue Milwaukee's positive trajectory as we come out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Barrett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T".

Tom Barrett
Mayor