



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Jodie Tabak
(414) 286-8504

Mayor Barrett Presents 2019 City Budget to Common Council

Proposes significant investment to City's lead program and replacement of service lines

MILWAUKEE—Today, Mayor Tom Barrett presented his 2019 proposed executive budget to Common Council members. Despite severe budget constraints created by the state, the budget proposal includes significant additional resources to address shared priorities among City officials, community leaders and residents. Among the highlights of this year's budget is a significant investment in the City's lead poisoning reduction programs and lead service line replacements. A continued focus on improving housing opportunities, public safety, libraries and other City services were also emphasized throughout the proposal.

“The budget squeeze we face – compounded by pensions, public safety costs, and disregard from Madison – seems daunting,” said Mayor Tom Barrett. “Yet, great things are taking place across all Milwaukee. Enterprising people, community-minded neighbors, and organizations that work to make our city better, are all defining the future of our Milwaukee. This budget supports their vision – and our vision – for a city that is inclusive, safe, and economically vibrant.”

Mayor Barrett emphasized a resounding commitment to the health and safety of residents by adding staffing resources to the Health Department's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. This budget also includes an investment of \$20 million for efforts to reduce lead risks and abate lead problems. In 2019, Milwaukee Water Works will support the work of the Health Department by continuing to scale up its lead service line replacement program with

plans to remove 1,000 more lead connections. Positions in the Department of Neighborhood services (DNS) were also created to conduct more lead abatement inspections in homes.

“Children in Milwaukee are safer, and the hardworking front-line workers at the Health Department deserve credit for that,” said Mayor Tom Barrett. “We all know there have been problems in the Health Department, but we are refocusing our efforts to make sure the department continues to move in a positive direction.”

The Strong Neighborhoods Plan remains a priority and will support the Mayor’s 10,000 affordable households commitment announced earlier this year. \$9.6 million is included in this budget to continue the initiative’s efforts toward improving the accessibility, affordability, and quality of housing options for Milwaukee residents. An additional \$500,000 is included for strategic site acquisition to maintain affordable housing in areas facing potential displacement.

In regards to public safety, Mayor Barrett touted the work of both the Milwaukee Fire Department and the Milwaukee Police Department. In the Fire Department, two positions were added to the community paramedic program to continue efforts to connect individuals with the appropriate medical resources and reduce call frequency to 911. In order to support diversity recruitment efforts in the police department, Mayor Barrett proposed adding one position to the Fire and Police Commission recruitment team.

This year Milwaukee Public libraries saw the construction of the Mitchell Street Library and the ground breaking of the Good Hope Library. The 2019 budget will continue the successful strategy of mixed-use library developments for Capitol Drive and Martin Luther King libraries. “Libraries are not a luxury. They’re valuable resources that improve lives, create economic opportunity and bring neighborhoods together. Libraries are a fundamental part of the fabric of our community,” said Mayor Tom Barrett.

The anticipated start of operations for the streetcar later this year was also mentioned in the Mayor’s remarks. The project is on time, and on budget with no direct impact on the city’s operating budget or tax levy.

In the coming weeks, aldermen will review the Mayor’s budget and consider amendments. Next year’s financial plan will be finalized in November.

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