



## County Of Dane Office Of The County Executive

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County Executive

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### **Meeting the Challenge: 2022 Dane County Budget**

Today I'm introducing the 2022 Dane County budget. I do so in the midst of what are no doubt uncertain, challenging, and yes, sometimes scary times. A year ago many of us looked ahead with great anticipation to what life might look like 365 days later.

Fast forward to today and the Covid-19 pandemic remains both prevalent and persistent thanks to a new infectious strain more virulent than what we faced last fall. Illness and hospitalization numbers across Wisconsin and the nation rival what we experienced last winter. While our county's vaccination rates far outpace our peers, we are not immune from a virus that remains unpredictable and evolving, in large part due to the high numbers of unvaccinated individuals in our region. Nurses, doctors, school children, the elderly and those with medical conditions remain at great risk. For our health care professionals, their emotional and physical well-beings are under duress as they continue to struggle with the trauma of needless loss and human suffering. Even those with the greatest empathy are rightly feeling frustration with the repetitive day after day care of those who find themselves in precarious health, sometimes as a result of their own choices.



The peril facing our planet as a result of the climate crisis is visibly evident on a regular basis in the form of ravaging wildfires, inundating flooding, and cycles of drought and heat that are changing our landscape with greater frequency and severity. This year is on pace to go into the books as the hottest in the planet's history. Prices of goods we commonly use are costly and sometimes less available. Disruptions in the supply chain are making

it harder to get certain goods and services. Help wanted signs are hanging in many door fronts and windows with some of shops and gathering places we used to depend upon now available fewer hours. Increased incidents of violent crime and the many faces of poverty – including substance abuse - only add to the sense that life is a bit unsettling right now.

This confluence of events can raise anxiety and create a sense of fear. To some this period may even feel chaotic, with it sometimes seeming there are no perfect options to resolve the quandaries we face. There are plenty of reasons to feel overwhelmed but as a lifelong member of this community I know moments that test our spirit are often the impetus for some of our greatest successes, innovation, and stories of human compassion. Our feelings of frustration right now are real. Behind the clouds remain in all of us a flickering light of optimism that this all too shall pass, that our prevailing optimism and concern for one another will see us through. That's the spirit with which I compiled this county budget. Dane County government will continue to lead with progressive, innovative templates for public services that meet the needs of our communities and our people, regardless the moment. My 2022 budget meets the challenges we face with a strategic focus on the health and well-being of our people and protection of the resources and places that define us.

## **Covid-19**

A year ago I talked at length of the resiliency of our community as we joined together to confront the mounting challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic. Today, sadly the pandemic remains a great threat to the health of too many in our community. As I write this, young people still aren't able to access a vaccine. Break thru infections as a result of the new Delta variant of Covid are mounting all while we carefully monitor still more new and emerging variations of the virus now on the horizon. In fact, numbers of Covid hospitalizations in our community are higher today than they were last October 1st. It's easy to look at these events and feel frustration, sadness, anger and/or fear. As our community does so often though, we have bound together with a shared willingness to get thru the continuing history being made in this moment. We do so with deep concern and care for our most vulnerable who remain at risk as a result of this seemingly unrelenting pandemic.



Along with vaccines and masks, it's true our patience may be one of the best tools at our disposal at weathering whatever chapters remain to be written by the Coronavirus. That patience has been strained for all of us as parents and grandparents, friends and coworkers, kids and caretakers. Only weeks ago we had reason to believe we had turned

the corner and were on a different trajectory. Life seemed on the verge of being the closest it had been to "pre-pandemic" in quite some time. It's imperative the optimism we felt with the early summer collapse of case counts transcend into a renewed, shared resiliency that we can answer whatever this unpredictable virus brings our way in the weeks and months ahead. No one thrives in the midst of uncertainty. While none of us know what or when the next turning point in this pandemic will occur, we can be certain of one thing; we are better positioned to respond if we start from a place of empathy and understanding and resist the urge to re-direct our frustrations at one another.



My 2022 Dane County budget recognizes that county government needs to be in it for the long haul against Covid-19. Sadly, this virus and its mutations aren't going anywhere soon. The best reflection of what's ahead is the decision by our Public Health Department to allocate \$5.8 million for 19 new positions dedicated to Covid response through the end of 2024. Just a couple of weeks ago I announced county government is investing over \$574,000 to install ultraviolet air purification and air filtration systems in 20 county facilities. I'm setting aside \$5.25 million in American Rescue and Recovery Funds in this budget process for the unknown pandemic related expenses that will no doubt emerge in the year ahead. This safety net is critical to county government maintaining its ability to respond to acute, sometimes unexpected needs from the pandemic as they arise. Additionally, I'm extending housing protections for those at risk of homelessness into 2022 and our popular Emergency Food Pandemic Response partnership with Second Harvest to bolster the production and distribution of locally grown foods. To date, we have allocated over \$23 million to stock the shelves of local food pantries with locally sourced products and this budget adds another \$1 million to that effort. Programs like this that we built at the height of the Covid emergency continue to serve our most vulnerable with a safety net not seen in other communities.

Preventing exposure to and spread of COVID-19 among households experiencing homelessness has been a pillar of Dane County's pandemic response. There's no doubt our bold approach saved lives. Beginning in March of 2020, Dane County funded non-congregate hotel shelter operations and assisted with other congregate shelter expansions to quickly create critical social distancing in the community's homeless shelter system. We partnered with numerous hotels to provide rooms, and with the City of Madison, Public Health Madison-Dane County, and frontline agencies to administer the programs. The County's total investment in this area was more than \$28 million in federal stimulus funds in 2020-2021. Next year's County Budget will provide an additional \$6.5 million to continue hotel sheltering until June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 to provide this important support as we continue to grapple with the uncertainty of the pandemic, most recently with the

unpredictable and more transmissible delta variant of COVID-19. People experiencing homelessness who are at higher risk of severe illness if they contract COVID-19 (informed by CDC guidelines), and people experiencing homelessness who are a close contact to a positive COVID-19 case or are symptomatic/positive for COVID-19 and need a safe place to recover will continue to have help. More than 600 people were served by this hotel sheltering program this year. The initiative we've taken to protect our most vulnerable neighbors has changed lives. Agencies that do this important work report that hotel shelter has enabled the people they serve to obtain employment, have a more consistent connection to medical care and non-emergency services, access behavioral health services, and more.

Shelter provides an essential safety net and plays an important role in our community's goal to end homelessness. So too do the services that are provided to people who are living outside in cars, or unsheltered for a number of reasons. Additional supports are needed to assist people with connecting with community resources like the ones outlined above. People who are living unsheltered outside of the City of Madison can be even more disconnected from centralized services, or reluctant to seek services out of fear of losing the space they are living in. To help, my budget includes \$300,000 in new funding to support outreach services for people living unsheltered throughout Dane County.



Having more housing opportunities and housing services are key to making a stay in emergency shelter, or unsheltered homelessness, brief and non-reoccurring. In 2021, I announced a historic investment that provides a bridge from hotel shelter to permanent housing. Known as the Hotels to Housing program, this multi-agency partnership aims to

assist up to 297 households experiencing homelessness with housing search assistance, case management, and funds to help pay housing costs for up to two years. Since the program began in late June of 2021, with the help of our case management agency partners, more than 90 people have moved from hotel shelter and into permanent housing of their own. My budget also continues this program through 2022 with an \$8.2 million investment.

Dane County's housing crisis is profound, persistent, and impacts many of our neighbors. A lack of stable housing makes life extremely difficult, impacting physical and mental health, the ability to learn, and the ability to maintain meaningful employment. We have made great strides as a community to increase awareness of the need for affordable housing, and to help support the construction of more affordable housing units.

Next year will mark the seventh year of the Dane County Affordable Housing Development Fund (AHDF). Since that time, Dane County has helped create 1,837 units of affordable housing. My budget continues Dane County's commitment with \$6 million to jumpstart affordable housing partnerships next year.

In addition to more affordable housing units, a variety of housing options are necessary to end homelessness and increase access to housing for more people. My budget includes \$500,000 to support the development of a new tiny house village and \$2 million in new grant funding to allow a developer to purchase a hotel or other facility for conversion into affordable housing. Many communities across the country have converted buildings like hotels into affordable housing. With construction costs rising due to the economic strain of the pandemic, acquisition and rehab of existing facilities provides an innovative way to increase available housing units in our community.



Protecting housing stability for households at-risk of homelessness continues to be a priority as well. My budget includes \$250,000 to fund legal services at court for families facing eviction or foreclosure. Many families going through these processes may not know their legal rights. Having access to professional legal support can help a family maintain their housing and prevent homelessness.

My budget also reflects the ongoing federal funding we have targeted for emergency rental assistance (ERA) support. In partnership with Urban Triage, the City of Madison, and other partner agencies, eligible Dane County tenants have access to financial support through the Dane CORE 2.0 program. Funds are available to assist with back-owed rent, forward rent, and utilities. Emergency rental assistance has been a lifeline for households who have been hit hard by the economic downturn spawned by the pandemic. This second phase of emergency rental assistance builds on the assistance provided by the

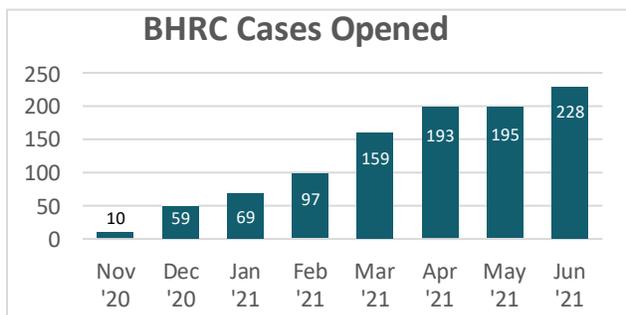
first Dane CORE Emergency Rental Assistance program. Launched in February of 2021 with the City of Madison and our community agency partners, Dane CORE processed over 14,000 applications and assisted households in paying over \$13 million dollars in back-owed rent.

This budget includes \$3 million in capital dollars to help refurbish and modernize properties owned by the Dane County Housing Authority. While the Authority itself is separate from county government, properties it owns left in disrepair are a poor reflection on more than just this independent entity and more importantly impact the quality of life for tenants.

I'm also the providing \$225,000 for development of a Regional Housing Strategy, helping communities across our county develop more affordable and workforce housing. Thanks to the coordination and leadership of the Dane County Department of Planning and Development, this work will bring municipalities across the county together to review ongoing affordable housing efforts and explore best practices and how everyone can come together moving forward to address the ongoing shortage of workforce housing. The Regional Housing Strategy will provide a roadmap for the future of housing in Dane County for the next 10-20 years.

### **Mental Health**

The continuation of the pandemic will continue to strain not only the physical health of far too many in our community but also their emotional well-being. One of the many long-term unknowns from this period of time is what the behavioral health impacts will be for decades to come, especially with our younger generations. Rates of anxiety and depression were on the rise nationally prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. The past 19 months have altered everything we hold dearly - the health of ourselves and loved ones, unanticipated changes to schooling, work, and routine for us and our kids, and for some, economic hardship, job loss, and uncertainty over life basics like food and housing. The disruptions were pervasive, as were the impacts on our mental health and well-being.



Over the past decade Dane County has bolstered mental health services across our community. Last November we opened the Dane County Behavioral Health Resource Center, a facility that connects people with resources to address the barriers in mental health care and those seeking treatment for substance

abuse. In its first seven months, the Center received over 1,000 contacts that resulted in

staff making almost two and a half times that number of follow-up calls to bridge service gaps, improving access to behavioral health care. Navigating the complex network of insurance, agencies, service providers, and waitlists is hard for anyone but this team of county mental health professionals are seeing success advocating for individuals and their families. Given increasing workloads, I'm adding \$440,000 in this budget for more staff at the Behavioral Health Resource Center. This will bring county government's annual commitment to this project to over \$1.2 million.

Our school based mental health teams are in ten Dane County districts, providing critical behavioral health resources in support of over-worked school counselors and mental health professionals. We invest over \$1 million annually in county dollars in "Building Bridges." We have spearheaded mental health work in community centers, another point of contact for young people and their families. We've also bolstered mental health services for our seniors thru our Aging and Disability Resource Center. Mental illness can affect anyone. Its impacts on learning, work, and family members are pervasive. It is one of the greatest barriers to happiness and success. This budget, like its predecessors, advances innovative solutions to our community's evolving behavioral health needs. Mental health is one area we can never become complacent.

To reflect the priority this issue must take now and into the future, I am creating a brand-new division of county government to oversee our expanding array of innovative

2022 Behavioral Health Initiatives	
Investment	Impact
Construct Dane County Crisis Triage Center <i>\$10 Million</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bridge service gaps</li> <li>Improve access to providers</li> <li>Keep individuals out of the criminal justice system, by directly linking to mental health services</li> <li>Stabilize individuals in crisis</li> <li>Stabilize situations for youth in crisis</li> <li>Reduce recidivism</li> <li>Increase access to mental health professionals for children in schools</li> <li>Support educators, mental health professionals, and students in the increased demands for mental health as a result of Covid-19</li> <li>Assist older adults with severe or long-term behavioral health issues</li> <li>Pair mental health workers on mental health emergencies in which law enforcement is called</li> <li>Mental health support that starts at the moment of de-escalation until in-person services can be administered</li> <li>Connect more people in crisis to mental health experts as a first resort</li> <li>Reduce the number of people involved in the criminal justice system</li> <li>Provide an advocate for someone struggling with addiction to help them through recovery</li> </ul>
Fund Triage Center Operations <i>\$1.5 Million</i>	
Create Dane County Division of Behavioral Health <i>\$500,000</i>	
Increase Behavioral Health Resource Center staff <i>\$440,000 (total annual commitment: \$1.2 Million)</i>	
Building Bridges - School based mental health <i>\$1 Million</i>	
Building Bridges - COVID response <i>\$500,000</i>	
Additional Recovery Coaches <i>\$520,000</i>	
Crisis Response service <i>\$400,000</i>	
Virtual Mental Health Program for law enforcement <i>\$250,000</i>	
Youth Crisis Stabilization Center feasibility <i>\$100,000</i>	
Aging and Disability Resource Center <i>\$250,000</i>	

behavioral mental health initiatives. The new Dane County Division of Behavioral Health will become part of our Department of Human Services beginning in 2022. This budget includes over \$500,000 in funding for a new director and staff to get the Behavioral Health Division started. It's important we dedicate the resources necessary to this evolving work and have the capacity to continue the county's role at coordinating mental and behavioral health services.

One of the primary initiatives of the county's Behavioral Health Division will be overseeing development of a new Dane County Crisis Triage Center. This is the single largest item in my 2022 capital budget. I'm including \$10 million for site acquisition, planning, and development of this one stop facility that will help keep individuals out of the criminal justice system and directly link them with services customized to address the barriers they face. This stabilization center will provide mental health services, keeping people out of jail and in the services suited to address the barriers they face. I'm also dedicating an additional \$1.5 million to help meet the service and operational needs when the Triage Center opens. Ours will become among a handful of such crisis centers in the country dedicated to stabilizing individuals and improving outcomes in such a comprehensive manner. Individuals will be able to get help from the crisis center by a referral from community partners, be brought in by law enforcement, or just walking in themselves. This is our most significant initiative to date at improving our community's behavioral health.



We know prevention and early intervention works and the "Building Bridges" school based mental health program we created several years ago is an effective template at helping our young people address mental health challenges before they have a chance to manifest into deeper end barriers to success later in life. That's why I'm allocating another \$500,000 next year for additional mental health professionals in schools to help educators and students navigate the unknowns of Covid-19. These dollars will be available to school districts interested in expanding the existing "Building Bridges" model and get more mental health professionals, social workers, and counselors into our schools. My hope is that these American Recovery Program funds can help schools add mental health staffing capacity over the next three years when we know there will be greater demand for this work given the unknowns of the ongoing pandemic. Classrooms this year could be subject to temporary quarantines, stops and starts, and sadly positive cases among students and staff. This budget recognizes the continuing need to partner with schools and support our young people. History books will no doubt talk about this time as being transformational to the mental health of many. We have to make sure our young people - kids who are susceptible to some of the darkest reaches of Covid - have the resources they need to first cope, and then heal from the

trauma of this time. This brings total funding I'm making available for "Building Bridges" to over \$1.5 million next year.

My budget also recognizes that some of our young people may need more intensive services. I'm taking the first step toward creating a Youth Crisis Stabilization Center here in Dane County. Such a facility will stabilize situations for young people who need access to clinical mental health services in a residential setting. It will provide them a safe, supervised environment to de-escalate from crisis, begin to heal, and learn strategies to help prevent future recurrence. Currently there is only one Youth Crisis Stabilization Center in Wisconsin. The \$100,000 included in my budget will explore the feasibility of pursuing one here. This feasibility analysis will help develop cost estimates and consider how such a facility could operate. On the other end of the age spectrum, I'm upping funding for a mental health resource programs for seniors I first created in 2020 by over \$58,000. These senior mental health caseworkers work closely with senior focal point managers across the county to assist older adults with severe or long-term behavioral health issues. This program now totals over a quarter million dollars in the county budget.

### **Public Safety**

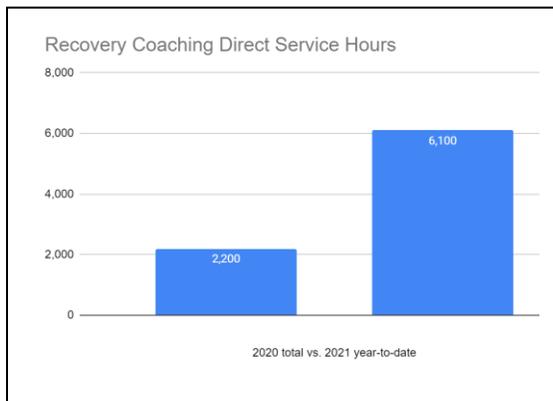
Unfortunately, mental health emergencies can escalate into incidents that precipitate a law enforcement response. In areas where this involves domestic violence or drug/alcohol abuse, this can create very volatile, tenuous situations. While our deputies are trained and certified at crisis response, it's important we match the right community resource with the challenge at hand. For calls in which mental and behavioral health are at the root of what's occurring, we've partnered with Journey Mental Health on an almost \$400,000 Crisis Response service. These mental health workers are available to respond to scenes to help de-escalate situations and right now two of these positions are dedicated to responses by the Dane County Sheriff's Office. We know the increasing prevalence of this call type and that we can do more.



Working with Sheriff Barrett and his counterpart in Cook County, Illinois, we're debuting new mental health response tools, trainings, and processes for Dane County Sheriff's Deputies in this budget. Mental health and substance abuse are at the root of countless emergency calls and can place our deputies in precarious situations where the focus of their work becomes de-escalation. This is easier said than done for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis or under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Based on a successful model launched last December in Cook County, I'm putting \$250,000 in the budget to launch this new virtual mental health program. These dollars cover the cost of clinical staff, tablets, and remote WiFi modems so when our deputies come upon a crisis situation they have the support they need to assist families. The program is quite simple

and is based on the lessons learned for telemedicine thru the course of the Covid-19 pandemic. Our deputies will carry tablets to virtually link mental health professionals to those experiencing crisis in real time. On the other side of the screen will be a trained social worker who can address whatever precipitated the law enforcement response. Once situations are stabilized this professional can stay connected to the individual in crisis and help refer them to the county's Behavioral Health Resource Center for follow-up on treatment. This will connect more in our community in crisis with services that are available as a first resort and hopefully keep more people out of the criminal justice system, instead providing access to the help they need. Of the many new initiatives in this budget I'm most excited about the prospect for this work and how through technology we can better link law enforcement and human services for the betterment of our citizens.

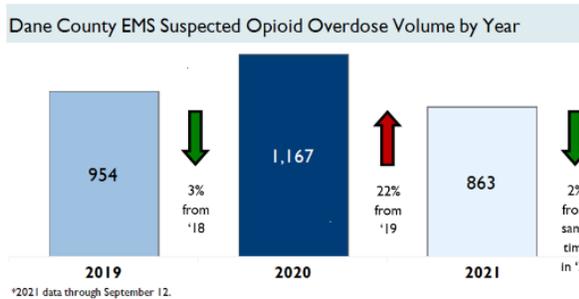
The scourge of addiction continues to pose significant hardship in our community. Deaths from overdoses hit an all-time high in 2020 and numbers through the first 8 months of this year are showing little decline in these tragedies. Through the end of August there were 833 ambulance calls in Dane County this year for suspected opiate overdoses. One in five of those calls were for overdoses among African American individuals, showing the disproportionate impact the opiate epidemic is having among certain communities. There's been a 23% increase this year over 2019 in the number of times EMS agencies have administered the overdose reversing medication "Narcan" to patients. The saddest data point on the prevalence of overdoses comes from the Dane County Medical Examiner's Office which reports 149 people died from overdoses in our county last year. That's two and a half times more than the figure from 2019 (60 deaths due to overdoses). We are not alone. Overdose deaths doubled in Rock County last year and were four times higher in Brown County than the year before.



One of our most impactful efforts at the fight against opiate addiction is the recovery coach program we partner on with the Safe Communities Coalition. An initiative that started in a couple of local hospital emergency rooms is now available countywide, including in our Dane County Jail. All told, we've invested over \$420,000 in county dollars each year on this meaningful, yet time intensive recovery work that links someone struggling from addiction

with an advocate to help them navigate the many pitfalls of the treatment, healing, and recovery process. Breaking the cycle of addiction with opiates is incredibly difficult because of how they change the body's chemical make-up. That makes it harder for individuals to find healing and peace and impacts the ability to work. For those with severe addictions who don't culminate in tragedy, their home and work lives can spiral as they

cycle in and out of the criminal justice system on numerous occasions. The Safe Communities “Recovery Coach” program saw a 55% increase in its work this year, in part because it was a leading point of referral for individuals who connected with the county’s Behavioral Health Resource Center looking for help. Given that, I’m adding \$100,000 in the budget for more recovery coaches, including the work needed in our jail, known as “Jail to Recovery.” This will help reduce recidivism and is another example of a diversion program where doing more could directly impact lingering questions about the size, scope, and cost of a potential consolidated Dane County Jail project.



Safe Communities continues to be an instrumental partner at driving the county’s “Ending Deaths from Despair Task Force.” Despite our strong local economy, active social networks, and excellent health care, Dane County has not been spared ‘deaths from despair.’ Opiate overdoses have increased. The risk of suicide and harm from

other substance use disorders, such as alcoholism, remain prevalent. The Task Force I convened started meeting in 2021 and is made up of Dane County health care leaders, youth and senior service agencies, public safety officials, large employers, along with mental health and substance use disorder treatment providers, LGBTQ, African American, and Latino Advocacy organizations. The group is developing a work plan to help prevent the irreparable pain brought on by suicide and other preventable deaths. This plan will launch in earnest in the coming year.

I’m also adding a position to the Sheriff’s Office in this budget to focus on the heinous crimes associated with sex trafficking. A few years ago I added staff in the Department of Human Services’ Neighborhood Intervention Program to help those at risk of falling victim to trafficking. This new detective will be dedicated to investigating these crimes and bringing traffickers to justice. At a total cost of \$119,000 annually, it will focus exclusively on preventing vulnerable girls and young women from falling prey to these criminals.

There continue to be far too many needless tragedies in our community resulting from gun violence. Madison had 250 shots fired incidents in 2020 in which 48 people were hit by gunfire. While those numbers year to date are on pace to be down a bit, far too many families are grieving and too many neighborhoods are living on edge. Several months ago Public Health Madison/Dane County convened its Violence Prevention Coalition, a community based group tasked with developing recommendations and a roadmap on ways to ramp up preventative efforts to help prevent situations from escalating into gunfire and other violent crimes. They’ve developed best practices for violence prevention that will help better organize the variety of initiatives underway to reduce the number of times conflicts escalate into tragedy.

This group found a few themes in its work which both the city and county are addressing through their joint funding of the Public Health Department in this budget. First, there are individuals in the community at risk of being involved in violent crimes who aren't being connected to available services. Similar to most services, there are existing limitations to capacity and the number of people able to be served. There are also pre-existing limitations in some programs. For example, one program that aims to better connect fathers with their children is currently only available to fathers in the prison system which means dads in jail aren't able to take advantage of this particular help. Another key finding of the group is the lack of a centralized place to collect and organize the data needed to interconnect existing services with those at risk. This will help collate referrals not just from law enforcement, but also social workers – like Dane County's Neighborhood Intervention Program – and community partners. That work will cast a wider, more cohesive net to identify individuals who may benefit from the help that is available and get them connected with it, ideally before they become part of the criminal justice system. The data systems will be developed and maintained by Public Health staff.

I'm proposing this roadmap to reduce gun violence include \$300,000 from the county so efforts to bridge resources extends beyond Madison's city limits. These dollars will help engage young people ages 14-24 who have been disconnected from school and/or work and help re-root them. It will also establish streamlined referral systems to services, crisis intervention, and help treat survivors who face very real trauma. These dollars will be awarded via contracts to community partners who have the peer mentoring skills to help make a difference. This is the right framework to bring people together, better connect services, and get that help to those at risk.

### **Climate Change/Conservation/Water Quality**



The flooding, fires, and extreme temperatures gripping the globe year after year offer irrefutable, tangible evidence we are in the midst of a climate crisis. June and July of this summer went into the books as the hottest months on record globally. The wide swings of extremes and unpredictability are self-evident of a climate that's changing. For much of this summer our area was about one foot below normal for precipitation. The U.S. Drought Monitor lists Dane County as being in a moderate drought and reports this May to July was the 13th driest on record for the Upper Midwest Climate Region. Just next door, the State of Minnesota saw its second driest summer in the history of weather record keeping which has impacted fish populations, crops, and even sparked fires near the beautiful Boundary Waters. A recent analysis found extreme weather cost U.S. taxpayers \$99 billion in the past year. An August report from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, penned by 234 scientists, projects repetitive severe weather occurrences over the coming

decades. We are living the evidence of a worsening climate crisis. The time for profound, substantive change - is now.

While we as a county government cannot solely course correct the trajectory of this emergency, we continue to be a bold, progressive, leading voice at what is possible for the public and private sectors to help alter what is otherwise a disturbing destiny. We are reducing emissions, increasing renewable energy generation and capitalizing financially on acting in the best interest of the planet we inhabit. Our leadership on this was recently recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency which named Dane County one of its five 2021 “Green Power Leaders.” We were the only public sector entity honored alongside Microsoft, Starbucks, the University of California, and Boston University.

Our Dane County Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) plant is on track for a record year producing clean burning fuel and revenue by converting methane gas from the landfill into compressed renewable natural gas for vehicle fuel. The facility is projected to displace 4,750,000 gallons of gasoline this year, reducing emissions equivalent to traveling 106-million less miles on the roads or sequestering carbon from planting 700,000 trees. Thanks to the courage of our innovation, that’s what we are accomplishing in just one year of operation.



The RNG drop-off station at our facility brought in more semi-trucks of compressed gas from dairy digesters, like the project Dane County started several years ago near Waunakee. The second, other dairy digester we partnered on outside of Middleton is rapidly converting operations to truck gas to our county gas plant as well. This facility is under new ownership as Wisconsin based EnTech Solutions and Northern Biogas are expected to have their gas production online by January 1st. The county constructing this gas unloading station at our landfill has completely remade the work we started a decade ago to improve water quality and reduce manure run-off. The economics of digesters now make more sense and in the coming years we will see more Dane County dairies bringing their manure to the digesters we helped construct. Capturing and converting these renewable fuel sources is not only good for our lakes but it also significantly reduces carbon emissions and earns county taxpayers millions of dollars.



The clean fuel injected into the pipeline at our landfill powers trucks and vehicles across the region – including our own county fleet - reducing diesel and carbon emissions. In fact, since we launched our compressed natural gas (CNG) initiative years ago, almost half of our fleet of 60 highway snowplows -literally dozens of heavy trucks - are now powered by CNG. Across all of county government we now have 100 CNG vehicles and 17 that

are electric hybrids. My budget expands that initiative with over \$5 million for the purchase of CNG trailers to help fuel up our highway fleet in areas of the county where compressed natural gas filling stations are less available. Additionally, I'm including nearly \$2 million for installation of a new CNG filling station at the Fish Hatchery Road Highway garage and \$3.2 million for the purchase of 8 more CNG powered snowplows. All told, this more than \$10 million investment in clean fuel infrastructure further reduces our reliance on diesel and expands the reach of renewables into more rural parts of the county. This will make our fleet of plows more efficient both in their energy consumption and reduced time needed for refueling.

As we amass our renewable energy credit portfolio it's critical we monitor our efforts in real time to maximize both the environmental and economic benefits of the investments we make. My budget creates a new Renewables Finance Officer position in the Department of Waste and Renewables to compile and manage the data that corresponds with this innovative work. We have led the way and paved the road to energy independence for units of government and private industry.

A little over a year from now Dane County will be on the cusp of being the first public entity of its size in the region to generate more renewable electricity than we use. Through a partnership with Alliant Energy and Wisconsin-based SunVest Solar,



construction is slated to begin early next year on a more than 100 acre solar farm on county land near our Renewable Natural Gas production facility off Highway 12. This project when complete will generate over 17 megawatts of electricity, enough energy to power 3,100 homes per year. Perhaps more importantly, this installation combined with the county's solar partnership with MGE at the Dane County Regional Airport, along with close to 20 solar developments at county facilities, will result in us producing more renewable energy than the total amount of electricity we consume for our operations. In

less than nine months, our solar project at the Airport generated enough carbon free electricity (12 million kilowatt hours) to power 1,200 Wisconsin homes for an entire year. County government will be 100% sustainable in a matter of months. If we want to move the dial on the climate crisis this kind of work can't wait decades or it will prove too little, too late. We all have a responsibility to act now and that's just what Dane County government is doing. That's why I'm also including \$300,000 in this budget for an updated energy efficiency audit of all county facilities. This work was last done a number of years ago and provided a framework for many of the initiatives now in place. Revisiting this for a progress report is integral to us remaining on the cutting edge of efficiency, leading by example, and doing all we can for the immense challenge at hand.



We know how we use and care for the land has an impact on carbon emissions. A couple of years ago I launched the Dane County Continuous Cover program, a first of its kind effort to help maintain the rural character and landscape of our fast growing county that helps reduce runoff and erosion, keep farmers and growers on the land, and yes, helps trap carbon. The program is quite simple.

Interested landowners voluntarily enter into long term agreements with the county to be paid for converting lands into grasses and prairies. I'm pleased to report Dane County Continuous Cover has been a resounding success. 2021 was the third year of this program that to date has helped protect 1,600 acres across the county. I started this effort with \$750,000 in 2019. I doubled it the year after and in this budget I'm increasing funding to \$2.5 million to help us convert and conserve more lands. To date, 40% of the lands in the program are used for grazing, 30% are in a cool season grass mix, and 30% have been converted to native prairie for pollinators and wildlife habitat. Interest in Continuous Cover remains high and I'm confident these additional dollars will help us move quicker on accomplishing our shared goals of reducing the risk of flooding and trapping more carbon.

Our Conservation and Lake Preservation and Renewal funds have protected thousands of acres over the past decade. They're also critical to us becoming a net carbon neutral community. This benefit is exacerbated in areas we preserve where development may have otherwise occurred. The path we took to being 100% renewable with our energy consumption is the blueprint for us to achieve carbon neutrality. Our conservation efforts will be integral to this next achievement, which I believe can be accomplished by 2030 or sooner. That's why I'm creating a new position in the Department of Land and Water Resources to help compile all of county government's carbon reduction accomplishments.

This scientist will lead development of a restoration plan that prioritizes initiatives that help us clean both water and air, directly countering climate change. I'm also creating a new Environmental Engineer position in the Department of Land and Water that will help design and oversee these conservation projects.

The County's 2019 investment in a 160-acre addition at the Pheasant Branch Conservancy is a good demonstration of how our Conservation Fund is the perfect vehicle to develop a carbon offset program and enhance water quality. Following the purchase, the County took on the duty of restoring the wetland function of the property, improving flood control and water quality. We are now partnering with the Friends of Pheasant Branch and the Clean Lakes Alliance to restore the surrounding uplands to an exceptionally diverse native prairie. Together, these projects will prevent 2.6 million gallons of rainwater and 500 pounds of phosphorus from running directly into Lake Mendota each year, while also giving the public a beautiful destination for hiking and other outdoor activities. I'm increasing funding for Dane County's Conservation Fund by an additional \$1 million, bringing the total to \$6 million available for land preservation work in 2022. Our continued leadership on conservation will pay dividends far beyond this generation for quality of life, water quality, flood mitigation, and yes, the pollinators and other species impacted by the fast changing world they call home.



The Dane County Office on Energy Climate Change completed our Climate Action Plan a year ago, our community's blueprint to getting the work done that's needed for the health of our planet. As the Office pivots toward implementation of practices beyond county government, I'm including just over \$93,000 in the budget to jumpstart creation of a Civilian Climate Corps. Modeled after our highly successful Dane County Conservation Crews, Operation Fresh Start will use these start-up funds to build partnerships and develop a team of young people dedicated to working on energy efficiency projects. This may include winterizing buildings or helping to make other modifications to reduce carbon emissions or increase renewable energy consumption. By launching this work now, Operation Fresh Start will be well positioned to become part of the new proposed federal Climate Corps, a 10 year, \$10 billion initiative to tackle climate change.

Our leadership to mitigate what's so adversely impacting our planet is second to none. So too are our adaptation strategies. "Suck the Muck" has another full year of work ahead removing phosphorus soaked sludge sitting in Six Mile Creek not far from Lake Mendota. Research by our county staff discovered that legacy phosphorus concentrations in the stream bed sediments flowing into the Yahara Lakes are seven times greater than nearby crop fields. These phosphorus concentrations are delivered to our lakes, fueling algae blooms that cause beach closings and the unsightly smells and sights to those who recreate in, on, and around our lakes. To date we have extracted 31,000 tons of sediment (about 2,500 dump truck loads) containing over 100,000 pounds of phosphorus from Dorn and Token Creeks. The next phase of sediment removal from Six Mile Creek, located in the Town of Westport, is expected to begin in the fall of 2021 with dredging to start in the spring of 2022. I'm putting an additional \$500,000 in the budget for "Suck the Muck" next year bringing the total invested on this water quality project to \$12 million since 2017.



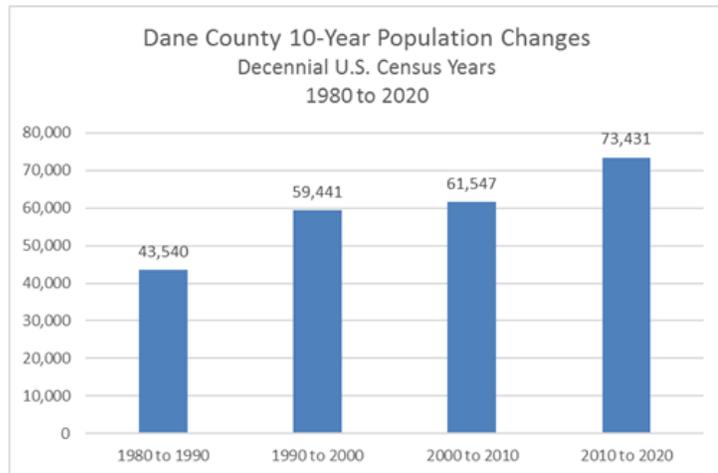
The third phase of our flood dredging efforts will move to the southern sections of the Yahara River in 2022 once work now underway between Lake Waubesa and Lower Mud Lake is completed. With countless flash flood warnings, mudslides, and deluges in other parts of Wisconsin this summer, the reminders of what climate changed induced storms can do - like 2018's devastation here in Dane County - lurks nearby. We know in an era of extremes these inundating rains are not a fear of the future, they're happening on a regular basis already. The only question is when this will occur again in our county. Any of the work we can get done in advance of that next flood will help limit future loss in our community and bolster our climate resiliency. My budget has \$3 million for the next phase of flood risk reduction dredging in the Yahara River from Lake Kegonsa to County Highway B. This work is seeing success. Dredging between Lakes Monona and Waubesa in 2020 removed 40,000 cubic yards of sediment, deepening the Yahara River by as much as four feet. Next year's phase is projected to start in spring and will remove an estimated 65,000 of run-off from the river bottom. County government has committed \$13.5 million to flood prevention dredging since 2019. We will be better prepared for the next round of record rains and more importantly, our communities will be safer.



My budget includes a couple of other notable water quality initiatives. I'm expanding the county's lake weed harvesting program, adding the equipment and staff to make it operational 10 hours a day, 5 days a week during summers. Currently our cutters work 8 hours a day. The budget includes \$225,000 for a new aquatic plant harvesting machine, \$35,000 to staff it, and a full-time mechanic to support the work of our expanding weed harvesting and dredging fleet. Additionally, I'm expanding the county's multi-year partnership with the City of Madison to develop Clean Beach Corridors to promote safer swimming for children and families. The county first developed these systems at Lake Mendota and Goodland County Parks and they've proven incredibly popular family destinations for fun in recent summers. This year we partnered with Madison to build one at Warner Park that will mark its grand opening around next Memorial Day. This budget includes \$85,000 next year for our next shared City-County Clean Beach Corridor, slated for Tenney Park Beach.

### **Quality of Life**

Data from the U.S. Census released this summer confirmed what we already knew; Dane County continues to grow at the fastest rate in the state. People are choosing to and want to live here. Our population increased 20% greater than it did in at least the past pair of ten-year census periods with over 73,000 new residents moving here to call our community home between 2010



and 2020. That jump represents 35% of the entire state's growth. New single-family housing starts this year are up 25% over 2019 and 2020. For all cities, villages and towns, there have been 927 housing/duplex starts so far this year. That's up from 823 in the same eight months of 2019. These numbers are indicative of the vibrancy and quality of life offered living here but they also require us to be continually mindful of how and where we grow so we don't lose what attracts people and jobs to come here in the first place. This means placing continued priority on quality of life markers county government can influence: safe communities, conservation, parks, clean lakes and streams, and places for families to recreate and make memories.

Destination projects like our Lower Yahara River Trail linking Madison with communities south along the water will take important steps forward in the coming year. Thanks to funding included in my 2021 budget, we are finalizing plans and permits for Phase 2 of the Lower Yahara River Trail that will extend almost 2.5 miles from Fish Camp County Park through Lake Kegonsa State Park to Williams Drive near Stoughton. This section of trail will have trailhead access points and similar to the first phase of the trail completed between Lunney Lake Farm Park and McFarland, will have nearly a half mile of boardwalk through the Door Creek wetlands. This next exciting trail project will be put out to bid early next year with construction to follow. We will continue to connect new segments of this trail in the coming years, with the finished product serving as the perfect showcase of our lakes and region.



On the other end of the county we continue to make progress with the North Mendota Trail, providing safer cycling along the Highway M corridor between Middleton and Waunakee. Dane County is partnering with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on planning and development for a segment of the trail running thru Governor Nelson State Park from North Shore Bay Drive to the existing bicycle/pedestrian underpass at Highway M. Construction on the latest section of this trail is slated to start soon and be completed by springtime. The City of Middleton has been working diligently to connect to the North Mendota

Trail along Highway M at the city limits. Given the many benefits of connectivity, I'm including \$1 million in this budget to support Middleton's work to tie into trail.

There's been discussion for years about the potential for a multi-use recreational bridge linking Dane and Sauk Counties over the Wisconsin River at Sauk City. This budget includes \$2 million for our share of planning and preparation of construction documents for this vision to link the "Great Sauk Trail" with the Walking Iron Trail near Highway Y in our county, in turn making it possible to one day hop on a bicycle here and pedal all the way to Devils Lake State Park. This funding matches the dollars put forward by Sauk County in its county budget for the coming year. Partnering with our neighbors to the north will provide a recreational, scenic gateway over the Wisconsin River, our latest investment in eco-tourism and the kind of project that makes our county a destination. My 2022 budget also includes \$650,000 to make improvements at Walking Iron County Park.

Our multi-work with the Cities of Madison and Fitchburg to prevent future washouts on the Capital City Trail at the Dunn's Marsh Bicycle Roundabout will also come to fruition in

the coming year. The trail has completely washed out causing unexpected closures twice in the last five years. The preferred alternative plan will redirect the majority of runoff through a clear span culvert under the center of the roundabout and eliminate future washouts. It will also provide for enhanced fish and other aquatic life passage through the waterway. Planning will wrap up this fall with final design and construction anticipated in 2022. This budget also includes another \$750,000 for the multi-year rehabilitation of the Capital City Bike Trail.

Additionally, my budget for the Department of Land and Water Resources includes:

\$800,000 for improvements to McCarthy County Park near Sun Prairie

\$750,000 for the implementation of conservation practices that reduce run-off and improve lake and water quality

\$300,000 for the restoration of Badger Mill Creek near Verona

\$222,000 for the PARC and Ride Bike Grant Program to Communities

\$200,000 for ongoing improvements at Schumacher Farms County Park

\$150,000 for the restoration of Black Earth Creek

### **Community Development**



Workforce development and the availability of workers was one of the reasons why I first created the Dane County Division on Workforce and Economic Development in 2013. Not long after that I helped bring Project Big Step to Dane County, a unique project that helps develop job skills and match those workers with opportunities in the trades. Through funding to Operation Fresh Start, we created the Dane County Conservation Crews which have helped

dozens of young people gain work experience in our parks and natural resource areas and go onto other career opportunities. In this budget, thanks to the leadership of Supervisor Carousel Bayrd, I'm upping funding for other county support youth employment programs by another \$100,000. Right now the Department of Human Services contracts with Operation Fresh Start, Common Wealth, and Briarpatch (around \$500,000 budgeted each year) to help young people obtain work permits, do pre-

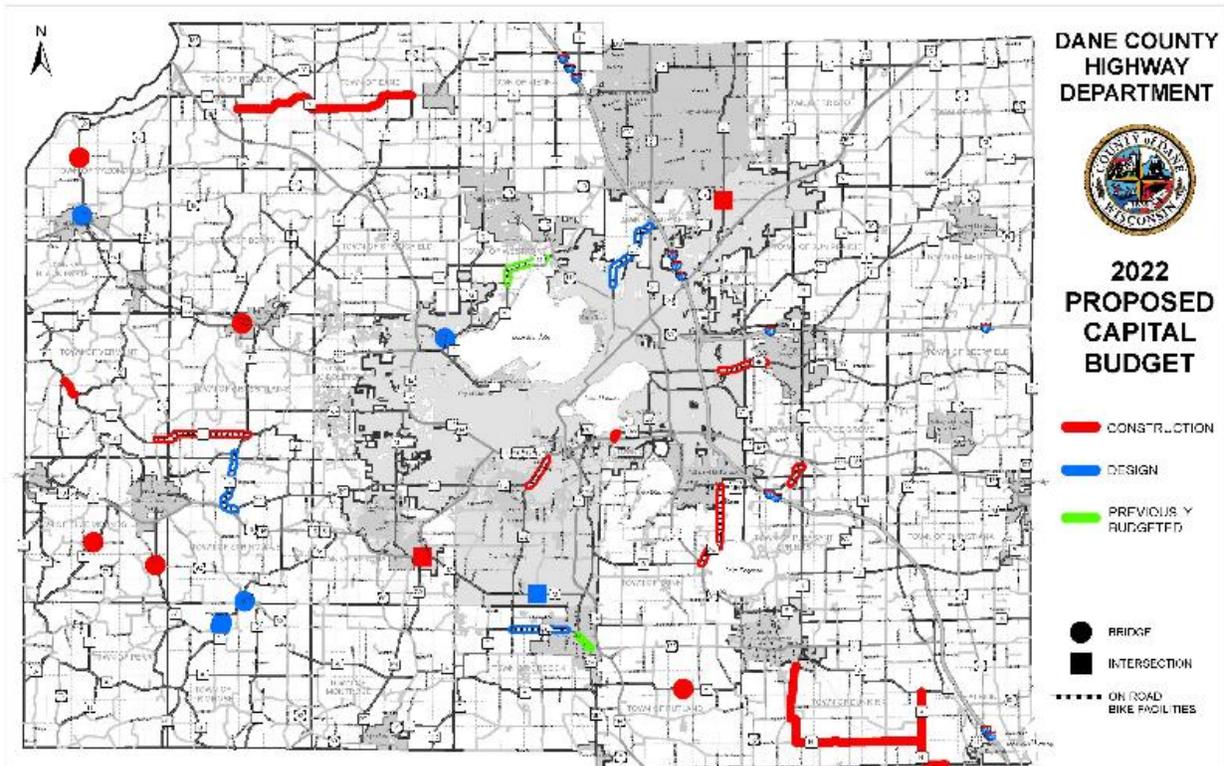
employment training, and connect with employers. This almost 20% increase in funding will help about 60 more at risk young people pursue employment opportunities.

I'm also including \$2 million to jumpstart construction of much needed new and improved space for Centro Hispano. Centro is the leading non-profit, social service organization in our county delivering direct services to our fast growing Latino population. Under the leadership of Karen Menendez-Coller, Centro is a key partner at providing immigrants in our community a sense of home, a place to gather, create, and celebrate. Centro helps thousands of individuals each year with everything from basic needs to job training and after school programming. The expansion project it's embarking upon is instrumental to its community-first focused mission. These dollars matched with other funding partners will help reconstruct Centro's home on Badger Road on Madison's south side and better meet the increasing needs of the Latino community. Groundbreaking is slated for next year

### **General Government**

While budgets offer opportunities to improve upon areas in which we wish to do more or better, the ability to do that comes from our many successes. S&P Global recently recognized the county's financial management practices by giving us the distinct AAA bond rating. In doing so, S&P commended Dane County for developing, "very strong reserves thanks to aligning budgeted expenditure with revenue growth carefully." When I started as County Executive, the county's reserves had been depleted by the U.S. Great Recession. Today, our reserve stands close to \$45 million and is critical to us being able to secure the lowest interest financing possible for critical infrastructure like construction of the new Behavioral Health Triage and Restoration Center or our work to improve the water quality of our lakes. None of these financial management best practices will capture headlines but they are the backbone to this and every budget we've done together which has helped our county navigate this pivotal (and incredibly difficult) period in our nation's history. I'm grateful to the County's Chief Financial Officer Chuck Hicklin for his leadership in helping restore our county's financial footing.

I'd like to call attention to a few other areas of this budget. Highway maintenance remains a high priority. I'm including \$15.6 million for a variety of projects across the county, the most substantial of which is \$2 million for the reconstruction of Highway M north of Lake Mendota. Significant work (\$1.95 million) is also planned next year for County Highway AB from Highway 51 to County Road MN (near McFarland). Improvements are also slated for Highway BB near Cottage Grove (\$1.5 million) and Highway N in the Town of Dunkirk (\$1.6 million). The county is competing for federal dollars for a series of projects, continuing our commitment to rural infrastructure.



I'm adding positions in this budget to our 911 Center, Department of Planning and Development, the District Attorney's Office, Department of Administration, and Medical Examiner to help meet increased demands for work in those areas. These will help manage overtime expenses in a 24/7 operation like 911 and better align staffing levels with job demands in these critical county functions. The five new positions in 911 will better free up 911 call-takers to prioritize emergency calls and improve the department's continuous improvement quality assurance review work. I'm also proposing new positions to support our county's Division of Information Management, Employee Relations, and the Controller's Office.



Given the national rate of inflation, I'm proposing a two-step wage increase for our county workforce consistent with the consumer price index (CPI). My budget provides a 3% wage hike the first of the year with an additional 3% coming in July of 2022. This significant bump reflects my gratitude to county workers for their patience and continued professionalism through times that were no doubt challenging for all those who provide direct services. These employees went without any wage modification one year ago and it's important that as the region's economy stabilizes that we recognize the work our public employees do every day. This is also inline with the national increase in Social Security premiums and consistent with the impact inflation has had on the CPI and the higher costs on goods and services.

### **2022 Budget by the Numbers**

My 2022 operating budget totals \$659.6 million while the capital spending plan comes in at \$88.2 million, with the largest expense being construction of the new Mental Health Triage and Restoration Center. The budget includes a levy increase of 3.9%. The taxes on an average Madison home total \$966.09, an increase of \$63.99. The budget for Dane County Human Services comprises the most significant piece of the operating budget, totaling \$273.9 million for next year, or roughly 42% of the entire budget. The budget includes a 4.5% contract increase for purchase of service agencies that assist the county with the programming it provides for individuals and families.

These times continue to test our resiliency as individuals, families, and community. This budget helps rise to meet the challenges of this moment, challenges that test our well-being, character, and in the case of Covid, one of life's most core fundamentals: our health. Even in this uncertainty we see innovation, optimism, and reasons to root our hope that our tomorrows will be just a bit easier than our yesterdays or today.

I'm proud of the opportunity to present this budget and believe it reflects values and priorities of our community. I look forward to working with the County Board on final adoption in the coming weeks.