



## County Of Dane Office Of The County Executive

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County Executive

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Today I am introducing my 2023 Dane County budget, ***Opportunity Out of Adversity***. Like its predecessors, this budget continues **progressive investments in our quality of life paired with visionary approaches to confronting our challenges**. The model in which our county government sets priorities and budgets is the recipe for our continued vitality and success. In recent years we have built the template for resiliency and vibrancy. The work we do prioritizes quality of life. We approach our challenges with a focus on solutions. This budget builds upon the years of work we've done and advances our approach of putting people and this special place we call home, first.

We have a proven track record of creating opportunity out of adversity. We face our challenges with a creative *can do* approach. The solutions we craft become the framework for how county government operates. We are continuously looking to raise the floor on service delivery and serve as a steadying presence, regardless how unpredictable the times.

When faced with a once in a generation pandemic, we tested and vaccinated tens of thousands, built a small business support program that infused millions into our local economy and saved jobs, and developed a farm to food bank partnership that raised the bar on addressing hunger and meeting basic needs in our community. When record rains fell and waters flooded our homes and communities a few short years ago we got to work on a robust, multi-year sludge removal project in our waterways to expand flood storage capacity and reduce the risk of future flooding. As behavioral health challenges mounted in our schools and beyond we funded teams of mental health professionals to work with young people and teachers and built a new community-wide Behavioral Health Resource Center to walk with people facing some of life's most vulnerable times. When faced with difficulty, we create opportunity. The result is lasting change, woven into the fabric of who we are as a county government and the community we work for.

The past few years of a pandemic, and more recently poverty exacerbated by inflation, serve as frank reminders of the need to always plan for tomorrow. When I started as County Executive, Dane County government was reeling from the effects of a

nationwide recession. Our *rainy day* fund was depleted and the starting point for the first budget I sat down to work was the county with a negative fund balance. Step by step, we incrementally re-aligned budget lines to reflect closer to actual expenditures and revenues, worked with county departments and community partners on smarter service delivery models, and positioned us to benefit from healthier economic times. Today, the fund we rely upon to insulate county services from economic peril is the highest it has ever been and sits millions of dollars higher than it did prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This is important – the ability to pay for the work county government values across our community is very contingent on how smartly we plan and the national economic condition. It is imperative that we continue to seek partnerships and be smart about how we run government. Our social safety net is part of what makes Dane County a highly livable community. It's imperative that we always look to strengthen that fabric and look for ways to make it even more resilient.

We've invested in quality of life – our people and the places that make us special. We are responsive to the moment and unafraid to lead. We're innovative, thoughtful and take great care to position ourselves for sustainable successes. This county continues to grow because of our vision and our willingness to be bold and try approaches others haven't ventured into. Our results are self-evident. We will soon be **the first unit of government in our entire region to achieve 100% renewable energy status**. We are within a few years of fully offsetting our carbon emissions with a deliberate, achievable plan, well on our way to finishing a job that most others are now only talking about starting. A year from now we will be talking about how to open our new **Crisis Triage Center** to get those suffering from behavioral health emergencies or addiction the help they need – without them sitting in jail or hospital emergency rooms.

My 2023 budget builds upon the work we've done over the past decade and offers a roadmap to further improve the care and well-being of our most vulnerable, accelerate efforts to combat climate change, advance new reforms to address disparities, and protect our incredibly valuable land and water resources. The operating budget totals \$712.6 million while I'm proposing a capital budget of \$121.4 million.

## LIFE'S BASICS

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For many living in poverty, this year offered exceptional adversity. There were lines of cars outside of food pantries while inside the shelves were empty. Some ran out of gas while waiting for food because prices at the pump prevented them from filling their tanks. The cost of basic necessities grew to new extremes this year, exacerbating income disparities and an economic divide worse than we've seen in decades. There's no disputing the impact of inflation of our community's most vulnerable families. Demand for food exceeded what

these pantries saw during the peak of the pandemic. Food pantries reported seeing a shift in clients over the course of this year with more elderly and more families of color. The cost of goods, rent, and housing risk the wellbeing of many in our community. There's little indication the economic conditions of today will ease in the coming months, further straining overworked social service supports and systems still weary from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

My budget is responsive to this moment. I'm continuing the *Dane County Farm to Foodbank* program through 2023 with **\$6 million to Second Harvest Foodbank of South Central Wisconsin** and providing another **\$1.5 million to help The River Food Pantry build a new facility**.

Created initially to help families meet basic needs at the start of the pandemic, our *Farm to Foodbank* program has opened new doors to what is possible when Dane County growers connect with the agencies in our community who keep people fed. Under the direction of Michele Orge, I can't say enough about the work of Second Harvest to administer this highly successful



pipeline of healthy, locally sourced products to area pantries. Since debuting in the spring of 2020, our partnership has brought in and boxed up over **\$20 million in food for families** across this community. This provides economic security for our local agricultural producers and healthy meals for those struggling to meet the cost of filling a grocery cart.

Under Dane County's *Farm to Foodbank*, **Second Harvest has placed over \$16 million in food orders with Dane County farmers and producers**. That food has been allocated to 165 partner agencies for distribution of **over 10.7 million pounds of locally grown and sourced product**. Over 200 types of produce have been provided under our partnership. Through August of this year, Second Harvest distributed an average of over 45,000 pounds of Dane County goods per month, numbers that will certainly climb this fall with the ongoing harvest. In fact, last fall produce orders neared 90,000 pounds each month. That is a lot of healthy food grown right here at home, staying to feed families in this community. We are not only feeding people in need, we are providing nutritious foods that many families may not otherwise be able to afford.

I recently announced a **\$2 million emergency food grant assistance program** to help area pantries stock shelves for the remainder of this year. Supply chains are being tested like never before so this infusion into our community's emergency food system will help re-stock shelves into the coming colder months when needs will only increase.

The \$1.5 million in this budget for The River Food Pantry will help our community's largest pantry grow and meet increasing needs. The River serves well over 2,000 people each week through its various programs. In 2021, The River helped over 90,000 people with household grocery needs through curbside pick-up, delivery, and ePantry orders. This facility also runs a **food recovery program** with over 50 local retailers each week, rescuing **more than 1.6 million pounds of food in 2021**.



All of this takes room for staff and volunteers to work and The River is on the lookout for a new facility. It has started a capital campaign to acquire land and construct a building that can host the wide variety of food systems work The River does. I'm providing funds to jumpstart fundraising for a new home to coordinate the basic needs it helps meet in our community.

This **\$7.5 million in the budget to help eliminate food insecurity** among low income and underserved communities is the single largest area of new dollars infused into the community in my 2023 operating budget. The fundamental focus of Second Harvest and the River on caring for others reflects the community we are and I'm grateful for their resilience through the past couple of years.

Dane County was recently notified the rental assistance program we established with the City of Madison and other community partners, *Dane CORE 2.0*, during the Covid-19 pandemic will receive an **additional infusion of nearly \$27 million in federal support**. This means our work to help families struggling with poverty keep up with rising



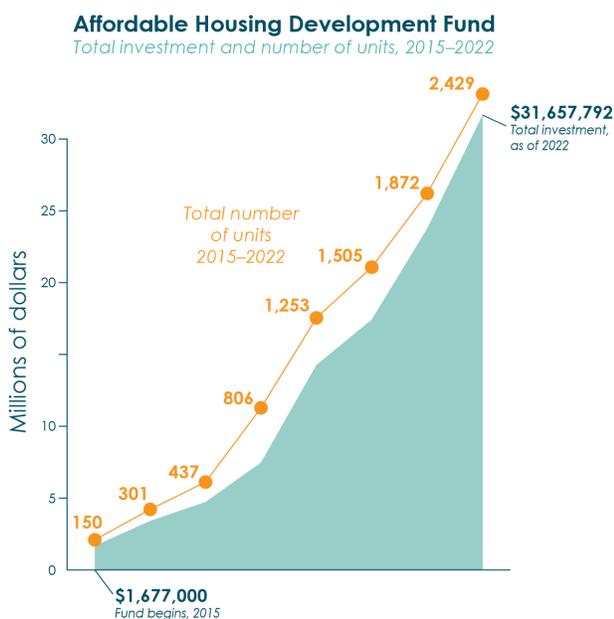
rent costs will continue into 2023. Administered in partnership with the organization Urban Triage, this program has helped provide greater housing stability to over 2,508 families with nearly \$16 million in assistance distributed as of mid-September.

A resolution that accepts federal funds to extend *Dane County CORE* is before the County Board and its approval will sustain a critical housing lifeline for families battling the impact of inflation on housing costs.

Our multi-faceted approach to housing security is having success at connecting individuals with more stable living situations. As of mid-September, our *Hotels to Housing* initiative has **helped more than 200 individuals and families move from emergency shelter and into a home of their own**. Funds remain in this program for housing and the very time intensive case management required to stabilize living situations on a case-by-case basis.

Another innovative housing program, *The Heart Room*, will receive an additional \$20,000 to expand this successful initiative to serve more families. Another great example of the power of a public-private partnership, The Heart Room helps families find housing stability with case management and rental support. The project came together through the efforts of a local congregation, Orchard Ridge Church, in partnership with Dane County’s Joining Forces for Families (JFF) program and non-profit housing provider The Road Home. The church helps raise money for rental support, and Dane County assists with funds for case management, provided by The Road Home. Program development assistance and connection to other County programs are coordinated in part by JFF.

While the largest new operating budget initiative is focused on food security, my largest new capital expense centers squarely on the basic right of having a safe place to lay down one’s head at night. The budget has a **\$6 million investment for a new permanent shelter for men experiencing homelessness**, increasing the county’s share for a new shelter to a total of \$9 million. That figure matches the contribution to the project by the City of Madison. Construction could start this coming year on the new night shelter at 1902 Bartillon Drive in Madison.



The current temporary men’s shelter recently served 188 men on a single night. The men’s shelter operator, Porchlight, reports that is the highest single total of men served in the organization’s 35-year history. It’s a stark example of the growing need for shelter and for housing in our community. When complete the new shelter will provide more room – enough to serve at least 175 individuals with additional dedicated space to accommodate another 25 people who may have special needs. In addition to safe, comfortable shelter a number of community partners are coming together with Porchlight to provide a variety of services to assist our neighbors

experiencing homelessness with connections to housing, health care, behavioral health resources, and more. Dane County led the way, in partnership with the City of Madison, Catholic Charities, and United Way, to develop our community's first day resource center, The Beacon. We're pleased to partner with the City of Madison in their efforts to lead a path forward on the development of a new, purpose-built overnight shelter for adult men experiencing homelessness.

My capital budget will also include **\$6 million for the Dane County Affordable Housing Development Fund**. Over the last 8 years, the fund has invested over **\$31 million dollars in projects to support the creation of 2,429 housing units, including more than 2,201 units of affordable housing** across Dane County.

Housing is the number one issue Dane County's Joining Forces for Families (JFF) face. JFF is funded by the county and is an extension of our Department of Human Services. Joining Forces is a community-based support system, intended to help stabilize living situations for families. The work they do is



time intensive and tailored to each individual family they work with. JFF has a proven track record of helping with everything from finding work, to developing parenting skills. Because of the impact housing has on the overall success and wellbeing of families, a couple of years ago I added a housing specialist position to JFF. This individual has helped with everything from rent applications to identifying affordable housing opportunities but the demand for this work far outpaces the lone individual in the JFF program dedicated to it. I'm **adding an additional housing specialist with Dane County's Joining Forces for Families** in this budget at a cost of \$91,700.

This budget also prioritizes emergency shelter for those facing the fear and uncertainty of how to get away from abusive living situations. The recent tragedy of an apparent murder/suicide on the Interstate on Madison's east side raised the profile of a hidden peril too many face from domestic violence. The extreme nature of that incident highlights the need for a strong community support system for those looking to escape troubled environments before things escalate and in some cases turn tragic.

Domestic Abuse Intervention Services (DAIS, as it's commonly known), has provided a safe respite for decades for victims of intimate partner violence. We helped DAIS construct its new shelter with county capital funds in 2014. Unfortunately, the need for the agency's services is no less great today than it was back then. With domestic violence, the ability to move quickly and get support to individuals in a timely fashion can be the difference between a close call and a tragic outcome. These situations can quickly become emergencies. Often times the path to safety is narrow, within a limited

time frame. It's critical that DAIS has the around the clock resources it needs that when the window of opportunity presents to get people removed from danger, professional help is available.



I'm including a **\$1 million grant in this budget for DAIS to expand its crisis intervention, prevention, outreach, and education work in our community.** These funds will help DAIS add staffing and resources, improving the ability to respond to those in crisis. DAIS is launching a **new text line this fall, providing a new confidential way for victims to reach out for assistance** on everything from safety planning to the services the organization offers. This new \$1 million will help DAIS add

a Crisis Intervention Services Coordinator along with three new Crisis Intervention Advocates. More staff means more in-person support to victims and ensures the new crisis text line is monitored around the clock. These positions along with others focused on prevention, outreach, and education will bolster DAIS' case management services for those in need of long-term support due to the barriers they face in finding safe distance from abusers and better serve those at greatest risk in the DAIS *Homicide Prevention Shelter*.

DAIS and the hundreds of other non-profit social service agencies Dane County partners with each year to deliver basic services to those of all ages have faced a very challenging few years. The pandemic and most recently a lack of available workers has made it harder for them to help people. We refer to these community organizations as our purchase of service agencies. We contract with them each year to help meet the frontline needs and sadly they have not been immune to the worker shortages we've seen in both the public and private sectors. I'm including **\$4.82 million in this budget to raise the county's funding support to all of these groups with an across the board 9% inflationary increase.** Our non-profit partners are an extension of county government and are front and center in service delivery on everything we do from reducing the harm of opiates and fentanyl to providing mental health services. I'm hopeful this increase – likely the most substantial one-year jump in funding in the county's history - will help these agencies fill vacant positions, retain existing workers and enhance core service delivery.

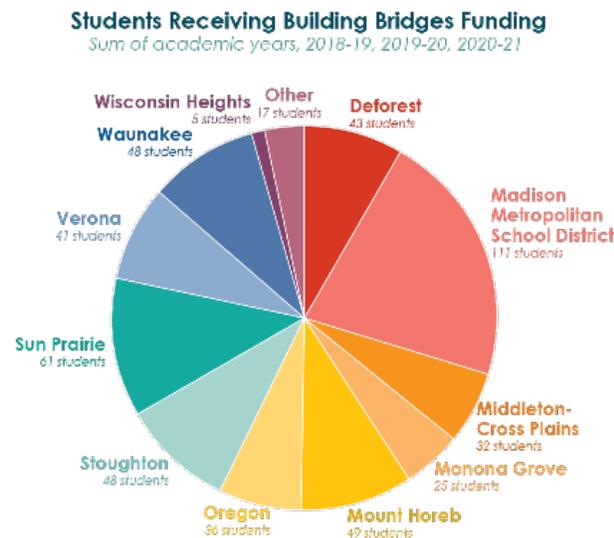
Poverty continues to be a barrier to opportunity while at the same time there remains a shortage of workers within many sectors of our economy. The Boys and Girls Club of Dane County has pulled together a partnership to develop a new *Skilled Trades Training Center*, creating a new pipeline in our community to connect and train young people with jobs in the trades. This labor market has highlighted the challenges posed

by a lack of workers. The Boys and Girls Club looks to help bridge that widening gap by developing a skilled training and entrepreneurship center known as the *McKenzie Regional Workforce Center*. It is slated to open in Fitchburg in the fall of 2023. This project is consistent with the county's goals outlined in our *2015 Access to Opportunity* initiative. That's why I'm including \$1.5 million in the capital budget as Dane County's contribution to the success of the work that's underway.

I'm also including dollars in the budget for two other incredibly compelling visions. Mount Zion Church on Madison's south side is developing a new *Community Life Center* that will include a food pantry, mental health services, areas for youth programming – including those aging out of the foster care system – and senior services. Under the guidance of Reverend Dr. Marcus Allen this neighborhood church will truly be a new service hub and destination for families. I'm allocating \$1.5 million for this project along with \$1.2 million for Dr. Alex Gee's ongoing work to develop the Black Excellence Center, also on the city's south side.

## MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTION SERVICES

Anyone who's called for a therapist in the past couple of years knows demand and wait times for behavioral health supports have reached new highs. The Covid-19 pandemic only exacerbated needs and waitlists, further discouraging those who need help and their advocates. For someone in crisis, weeks and months of wait can be some of the most tenuous times. When it comes to mental health, windows of willingness for treatment can be narrow and elusive. When they present, waiting can present a perceived insurmountable barrier, perpetuating feelings of hopelessness and despair.



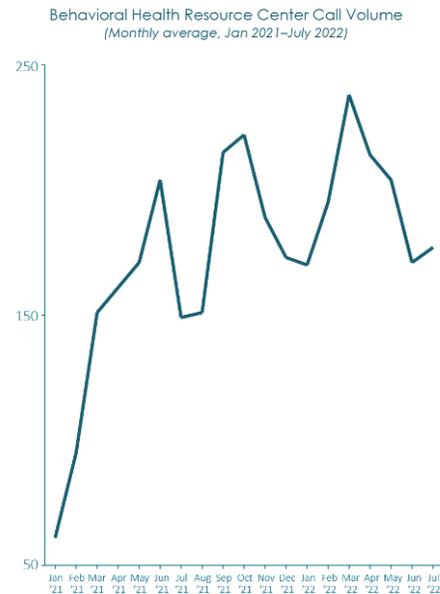
The solution to dire mental health provider shortages needs to be at the top of the list of the national health care conversation. While county government alone can't resolve this, we can continue our decade of consistent leadership on behavioral health. Next year will mark 10 years since I announced creation of partnership to imbed school based mental health teams in area schools. Today, the county supports these teams in 10 Dane County school districts with an **investment of over \$1 million a year to an initiative known as *Building Bridges***. A couple of districts – Sun Prairie and Madison – have

interest in adding more teams of mental health professionals under this program starting next school year. My budget includes \$185,000, the county's share to expand this partnership. Behavioral health needs in our schools remain great. *Building Bridges* staff dedicate their time to working with young people, their families, and educators, which

improves learning environments and student outcomes. This program is making a real difference.

Nearly two years ago, Dane County opened its Behavioral Health Resource Center (BHRC), a first of its kind, unprecedented expansion of county government’s frontline response to increasing behavioral health needs across our community. The **BHRC saw a 19% increase in calls for help from its first to its second year and just this March** marked a new record for calls in one month. This entirely county run facility walks alongside consumers and their families – regardless of insurance coverage, financial status, age, identity, ability, or legal status – to help them navigate the challenging process of connecting with help until it becomes available.

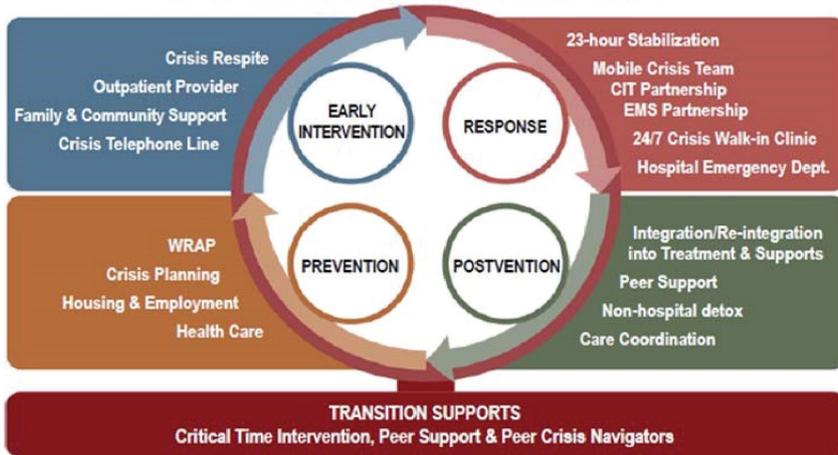
We opened the Dane County Behavioral Health Resource Center in 2020 with three staff. Since then we built a bigger team of professionals who, to date, have walked hand in hand with nearly 3,500 consumers and their advocates. At any point in time these nine individuals balance almost 175 open, active cases.



My 2023 budget recognizes the role county government can continue to meet in bridging the gap between patient needs and the ability to see providers and access services in a timely fashion. I’m **adding over \$484,000 in new money to further increase staff at the Behavioral Health Resource Center**, enhancing our excellent response time and customer service standards and increasing our presence in the community. Three of the positions are new case managers, including a bilingual Hmong position to help keep pace with increasing service demands. A clinical lead will support staff day to day and focus on developing specialized clinical functions and improving integration of existing county behavioral health intake functions. A new IT specialist will help the BHRC better organize processes, including intake.

We are a community who builds upon our successes. The Dane County Behavioral Health Resource Center is a unique model nationally. The same is true for our next venture aimed at improving access to and quality of behavioral health care. A year ago I stood with a number of members of the Dane County Board to introduce our shared support for development of the **Dane County Crisis Triage Center**. At \$10 million, this project was the most substantial capital budget initiative in our 2022 Dane County budget. Today, thanks to the tireless work of many, we have a better sense of how this Crisis Triage Center could benefit our community including enhancing ongoing reforms to the criminal justice system.

### A CONTINUUM OF CRISIS INTERVENTION NEEDS



The concept behind a Crisis Triage Center is simple. It will provide around the clock, short-term observation, assessment, treatment, and planning for those experiencing a behavioral health crisis as a result of their mental health, substance use, and/or disability. It will take walk-ins and referrals including

those in need of involuntary care and those experiencing intoxication or incapacitation due to alcohol or other substances. The average stay will be generally less than 12 hours and Crisis Triage staff will help individuals in resolving their immediate crises and help develop discharge plans that connect clients with appropriate ongoing support. This facility will serve those who don't require emergency department care or jail.

Staffing a multi-disciplinary team trained to address mental health and substance abuse needs around the clock will not be an inexpensive nor easy venture. Of its many upsides, this project will ease emergency room bed demands for local hospitals, provide a relief valve for health care systems, and could evolve in a nearby drop-off for law enforcement. Ideally a venture with such clear shared benefit would be the result of robust shared investment and partnership. Absent that support from our health care systems, the county will have work to do in the coming years to identify the necessary financial resources to bring our Crisis Triage Center to reality. To help us prepare, I'm including over \$1.3 million in this budget to inform next steps, once we complete a request for proposals this fall to evaluate different models, for how the Crisis Triage Center could operate.

I'm also funding a new partnership between Anesis Therapy and Journey Mental Health who have come together to create a new *BIPOC Mental Health Coalition*. The budget includes \$135,000 for the agencies to team together to address mental health needs of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and advocate for systemic changes needed to reduce disparities and improve care. The coalition will include BIPOC individuals with lived experience and dollars in this budget will help get the group up and running.

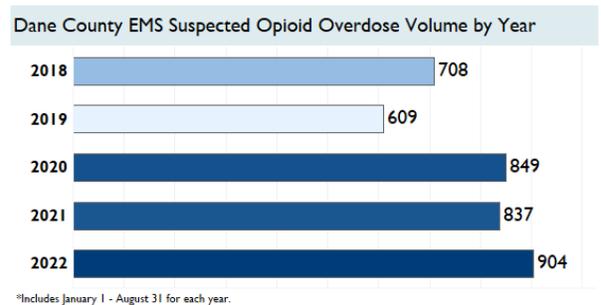
Mental health caseloads aren't just burgeoning within local provider and health care networks. Public safety agencies across the county are feeling the firsthand effects of growing behavioral health needs. Mental health was a contributing factor to over 800 incidents the Dane County Sheriff's Office responded to in 2019. By 2021, that number approached nearly



1400. This budget includes \$500,000 for the Sheriff's Office to expand its team of mobile crisis workers and an additional \$190,000 for civilian vehicles and equipment so they can directly respond to incidents where a mental health professional, not a law enforcement officer alone is what's needed to defuse a situation. The goal is clear – to remove uniformed officers from calls where the real need is mental health, not law enforcement. Adding more Dane County Sheriff mobile crisis workers to cover peak times of behavioral health incidents – the data shows this is 11am to 7pm – will reduce interactions with law enforcement when it's unnecessary. Additionally, Sheriff Barrett has agreed to reassign more community deputies to work exclusively on mental health. These deputies will work in tandem with the new mobile crisis workers, allowing for teams of professionals trained in this subject matter to improve outcomes of calls involving behavioral health.

Programs like the *Madison CARES* program offer one template for how to ensure the right resource is responding to calls for service in which a mental health emergency is the emergency. The city's full time fire department is instrumental in the success of *CARES*. The primary jurisdiction of the Sheriff's Office is the county's unincorporated areas which are served by nearly two dozen emergency medical services and fire agencies, many of which are volunteer based. Building a Dane County *CARES* will take partners and the support and cooperation of these entities. The Sheriff's leadership on bolstering mental health resources and commitment to dedicating more staff to this work will aid in building out a *CARES* like mental health pilot project in the county.

We also know the co-morbidities between behavioral health and those who suffer from addiction related afflictions. In 2021, 149 people in Dane County passed away due to opiate related overdoses – reflecting 86% of all overdose deaths in the county. Meanwhile, overdose deaths involving fentanyl are up close to 70% in that same time frame. Fentanyl was determined to be a contributing factor in over three quarters of the county's overdose deaths in 2021.



Our county was a national leader at responding to the opiate epidemic long before litigation was brought nationally against manufacturers. In partnership with organizations like Safe Communities we developed a template now used statewide for how recovery coaches can intervene at critical junctures when individuals are most open to seeking treatment for this highly addictive substance. County dollars born through this budget process have funded recovery coaches to work in hospital emergency rooms across our county, within our jail, and at various community organizations. County government already allocates around \$1.6 million for various prevention and opiate addiction treatment services; it's clear there's more we can do.

Just a couple of weeks ago I introduced the Dane County *Emergency Harm Reduction and Prevention Act*, a **more than \$700,000 investment into education, treatment, and prevention related to opiates and fentanyl**. In a world where even one pill can kill, young people and their families are facing even greater risk than ever before. One doesn't have to be an addict to feel the impacts of these substances. The *Emergency Harm Reduction and Prevention Act* will invest hundreds of thousands of dollars into the community with groups like the African American Opiate Coalition, the Recovery Coalition of Dane County, and the Pride in Prevention Coalition targeted at increased awareness along with wide distribution of fentanyl testing strips, and Narcan kits. We will work in our schools to educate young people early about the wide ranging dangers of these substances.



The 2023 budget includes \$283,500 to expand our efforts, including funding a new full-time position at the organization Outreach and a new prevention specialist within Dane County Emergency Management. Under the direction of Charles Tubbs, who lost a son to an overdose a few

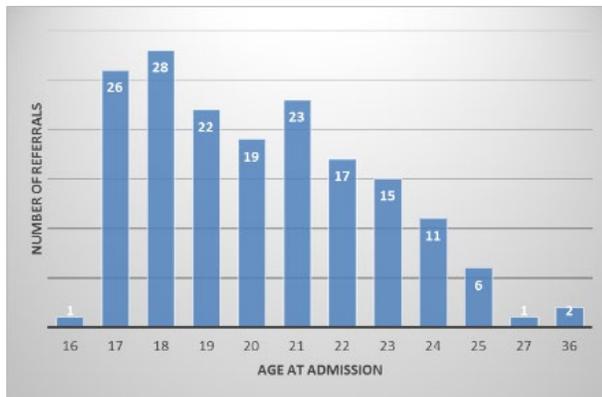
short years ago, this additional capacity within the county will help build out a *Narcan Leave Behind* program. Among its many duties, Dane County Emergency Management provides coordinating support for EMS agencies across the county. This new prevention specialist will help develop and administer the distribution of *Narcan Leave Behind*, life-saving kits for ambulance crews as they depart the scenes of overdoses and other “close calls” involving these highly addictive substances. The county and our community partners who go to work every day to stem the impacts of these societal challenges need the resources to help win this fight and keep saving lives. This budget adds valuable resources at a critical juncture.

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

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Similar to other parts of this budget, Dane County is far from starting from scratch on the issue of criminal justice reform. Our investments in diversion, addiction treatment, and other programs that address the root causes of recidivism have made progress. The *Access to Opportunity* initiative I launched in 2015 created what we now know as the Dane County Office of Equity and Inclusion. We decriminalized marijuana and created paths for individuals who lost their drivers' licenses to earn them back so they can get to work and helping their families. We fund tens of thousands of worth of drivers' education training for young people in poverty across our community each year. We have added juvenile justice staff to work directly with young people at risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system and funded various mentoring program

designed to show alternatives to these risky behaviors. Thanks to the leadership of former Supervisor Shelia Stubbs, Dane County's Community Restorative Court (CRC) continues to provide sound alternatives to incarceration for those ages 17-25 who commit misdemeanor crimes or receive municipal citations. What started as pilot project on Madison's south side is now available countywide to repair harm, reduce risk, and rebuild community in a way that focuses on the victims of these incidents.



This summer the Sheriff wisely moved those sentenced to *Huber Work Release* out of the jail and back into the community. Thanks to former Sheriff Mahoney and now Sheriff Barrett, Dane County has been on the cutting edge of electronic monitoring and other means of utilizing technology and smarter processes as alternatives to putting people behind bars. The new Dane County Crisis Triage Center has the potential to be one of our most comprehensive reforms to date of our criminal justice system. Those who may otherwise find themselves in jail for issues with substance abuse, addiction, or mental health needs will have a secure alternative in this new crisis center. In short, we have done a lot and continue to do so at addressing disparities and the drivers that result in people falling into a system that can be difficult to detangle from. We also know any given challenge we face as a society requires multiple approaches.

The time has come to cement our commitment and state clearly and unequivocally **criminal justice reform work must forever be a priority for county government**. My budget **creates the new Dane County Office of Justice Reform and Equity**. Through a combination of new staff positions and realigning existing capacity, this new department is the dedicated, independent resource we need to bridge agencies within the criminal justice system and lead our next steps on data driven reforms. Similar to any other county department, assigning a full-time team to this work, organizes our resources and sends a clear statement that we are in this for as long as it takes to improve processes and reform systems that reduce disparities. I built this new county department based on other models utilized nationally, including Pima County, Arizona which just this summer created its own independent county department to lead similar work. In addition to the staffing needed to jumpstart this new department, I'm including funds for the agency to administer a micro-grant program to support community-based reforms.



This budget also has \$85,000 to help those leaving jail re-integrate in the community. I brought the organization Project Big Step to Dane County a few years ago to address workforce development shortages. At that time, the organization had been successful in the Milwaukee area linking those in underserved

neighborhoods with job training and opportunities in the building trades. This summer we learned Project Big Step partners with the Racine House of Corrections and also works in the Milwaukee County Criminal Justice System to link those leaving jail with job skills training and apprenticeships that eventually lead to full-time employment. Integrated with the re-entry team within our Dane County jail, we can do the same here and **provide additional stability for those leaving the criminal justice system, reduce recidivism, and increase opportunity.**

Much of the conversation about changes needed within the criminal justice system has centered on funding disagreements over the proposed consolidation of the new Dane County Jail. In some ways that's unfortunate as the need to prioritize reforms that reduce racial disparities exists regardless of how the county addresses its 70 year old jail space. We should both be funding criminal justice reforms and urging partners within the system to approach them with a solutions-based open mindedness while figuring out the smartest way to design jail space that eliminates solitary confinement as we now know it and focus instead on treatment.

Several new members of the County Board brought new energy, vision, and ideas to this work this year. I've set aside a half million dollars in this budget to help bring some of those visions to reality and implement the next phase of our county's criminal justice reform work. This **\$500,000 is allocated into a fund established for work to reduce disparities** so those who have helped lead this conversation with the County Board can best determine how to most effectively appropriate it in the coming year. I've set aside the funding for County Board budget amendments dedicated to criminal justice reform.

The success of any ongoing reforms depends upon willing partners. The judiciary was very purposely set up as its own independent branch of government at the local, state, and federal levels. The judges and other partners will need to support envisioned reforms for them to succeed. They will need to be brought along collaboratively; aspiration alone won't result in substantive reform. Our **new Department of Justice Reform and Equity will convene partners and operationalize the work of the existing Criminal Justice Council.**

Building on the successes of the Community Restorative Court (CRC) I'm also jumpstarting creation of a new Dane County Community Court pilot in this budget. **Community Court increases collaboration between the criminal justice system and other established systems – mental health, substance abuse, human services, housing, employment and education.** It's designed for ages 17-35 as an alternative to spending time in jail – which can lead to job loss and housing challenges. Community Court is intended to address underlying issues that contribute to criminal behavior. Unlike the CRC, this new Community Court will include a judge along with wraparound supports and pretrial monitoring. As the title suggests, it will be held within the community at a yet to be determined location. For the pilot start-up phase, this Court will operate a couple of afternoons a month and serve around 60 individuals in its first year. The budget has funds to help the county set up a new Community Court, including hiring a full-time coordinator, within the new department of Criminal Justice Reform. This coordinator will convene community leaders and those with lived experience to establish a list of offenses eligible for consideration within the new Community Court and help pull together how this alternative to incarceration can best help drive down disparities.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

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Anyone watching the news will know that climate change and its effects are accelerating. We see unprecedented and catastrophic flooding, extreme heat events and devastating wildfires around the world. The [UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued a report](#) this February acknowledging that the impacts of climate change are being felt more widely and



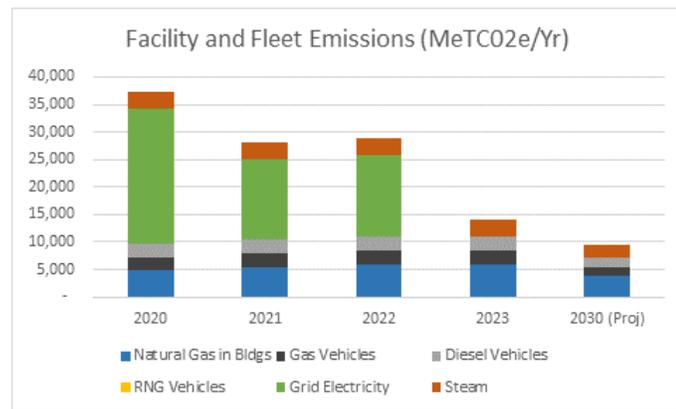
more severely than climate scientists had predicted, increasing the risks for mass extinctions, accelerated climate migration and ever more extreme weather events. All of this only reaffirms our long-standing commitment to climate action and reinforces the urgency of our efforts here in Dane County. We know that embracing clean energy technologies will improve lives here while also reducing emissions—a core theme of our *2020 Climate Action Plan*.

We're ahead of our counterparts because we started this work over a decade ago. Now, we are a matter of months away from those efforts culminating in Dane County becoming the **first county government in the state to achieve 100% renewable energy status**. Work is progressing on our newest solar effort, *Yahara Solar*, a 17 megawatt partnership with Alliant Energy and Sunvest Solar. When added with our 9 megawatt array we did at the Dane County Regional Airport, in partnership with MGE,

along with county government's additional 17 rooftop solar installations, Dane County is supplying all of our operations with 100% renewable electricity.

We took the county landfill and built a first of its kind renewable natural gas production facility next to it so we can capture and convert gas from garbage (and now cow manure) into cleaner burning fuel for vehicles, reducing carbon emissions and earning millions for taxpayers. County government now runs 100 vehicles using renewable natural gas (RNG). That's not only good for the air we breathe, but also the public's pocketbook. With this year's surge in fuel prices, **we saved more than \$300,000 in fuel costs by going green with RNG.**

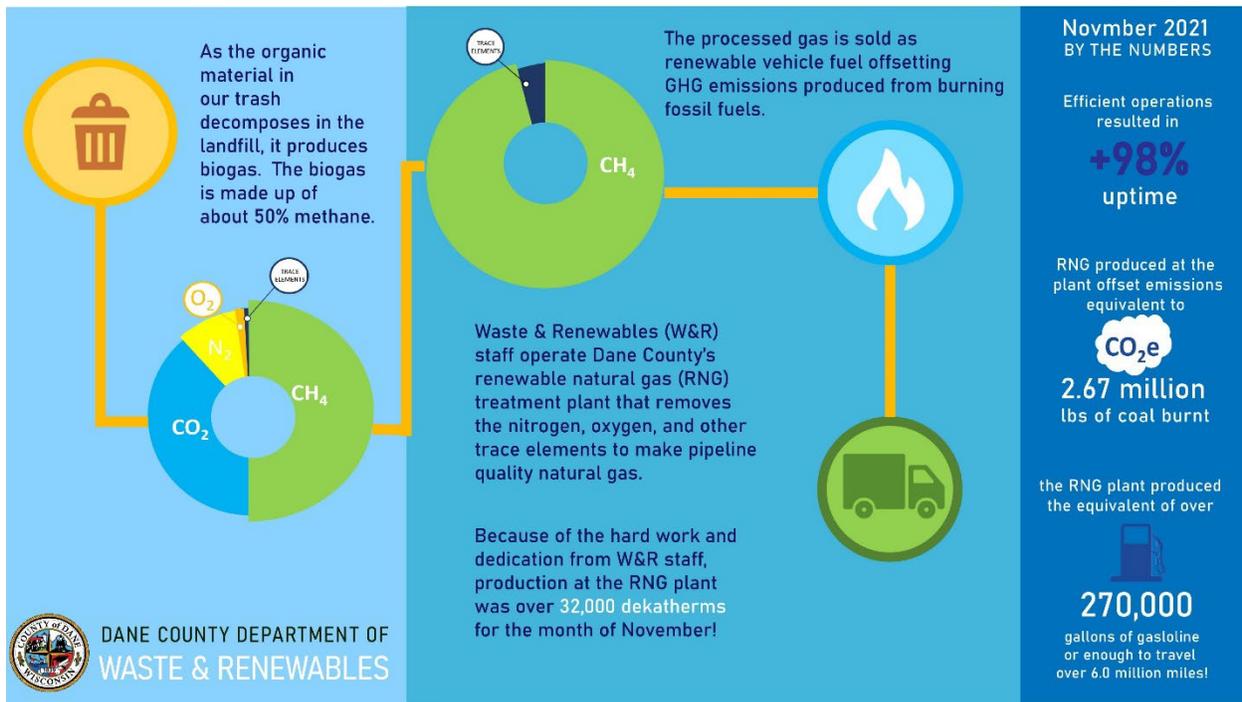
Our next goal is clear: that **all County facilities and our fleet be carbon neutral when coupled with our carbon sequestration efforts.** I'm proud to report we are well on our way. As illustrated, we have already made substantial progress toward carbon neutrality. Replacing grid electricity with 100% renewable electricity will reduce our emissions by 24,500 metric tons of



carbon dioxide equivalents annually compared to 2020. We project our emissions in the coming year will be 38% of what our emissions were just two years ago. Our land conservation efforts and the natural carbon sequestration that results from that work offer confidence that **by 2030 we can achieve carbon neutrality in our facilities, fleet and carbon sequestration efforts.** We are on our way. This year we added staffing capacity to our Departments of Land and Water Resource and Waste and Renewables to help oversee our carbon reduction efforts and account for the incredible work we do.

To continue and expand our leadership in the coming year we will increase the capacity of the RNG facility and venture into a **new mission: capturing carbon emissions from the gas plant itself.** We've never shied away from emerging technologies when there's upside for the health and wellbeing of the place we live. I'm including \$4.5 million for the development and installation of carbon capture technologies along with a new position in the Department of Waste and Renewables to work on accelerating our path toward carbon neutrality. Monitoring equipment in place at our landfill routinely tests and tracks gas that enters our RNG plant. This work – along with a series of county lead initiatives – can earn us carbon credits. To capitalize on this opportunity, I'm including funds in the budget to register the carbon reduction and sequestration work we do on a national registry. I'm also bolstering resources for the Office of Energy and Climate Change (\$92,600 in new funding) to further ramp up our focus on becoming carbon neutral, track emissions and energy data. This action-oriented approach demonstrates

once again Dane County's desire to lead and reset the standard for what is possible within both the public and private sectors to confront the crisis facing our planet.



I'm also including nearly \$900,000 in my capital budget to start work on three energy saving projects at county facilities next year. These dollars will help design a **campus-wide geothermal systems for the East District Campus** (Medical Examiner and Highway Garage) along with the Badger Prairie campus in Verona. Additional dollars will upgrade the heating and air flow systems and cooking equipment at the county's Consolidated Foods Services building. When complete, this work will further reduce our natural gas usage and emissions. The budget also has millions for energy conservation and air quality improvements at the Alliant Energy Center. This will make lighting, control, and mechanical upgrades possible that conserve energy. Our countywide Comprehensive Energy Assessment is ongoing and will help continue to map out further ways to reduce energy use and emissions for county facilities.

## CONSERVATION

The work done by our Department of Land and Water Resources under the direction of Laura Hicklin is unrivaled by any county in Wisconsin and beyond. We continue to lead - in many instances at a national scale. Other communities come to ask how we do what we've done. Our leadership on water quality, conservation, and outdoor recreation are exemplary and should be the standard bearer for any community that prioritizes clean

air to breathe and clean water to drink and recreate in. This budget raises the bar even further.

### **The road to ending the winter spreading of manure begins with my 2023 budget.**

We have done an awful lot over the past decade to address the root cause of what causes excessive algae growth in our beautiful Yahara Chain of Lakes. As we stepped up our efforts at phosphorus reduction and containment on lands throughout the watershed, the more intense rains of climate change became even more frequent.

I'm including **\$3 million in capital funds for feasibility work and acquisition of a site to develop a commercial scale manure treatment facility**. There are tens of thousands of cows in the Lake Mendota Watershed that produce hundreds of millions of gallons of manure each year. We have ways as a society to manage human waste at a community wide scale. If we apply the same principles to animal waste we can substantively move the dial on cleaning these lakes in a way never previously conceived was possible.

Such a project will not be inexpensive. It will require millions of dollars in public investment over the next few years, but it's clear we need a grander scale solution to address the challenge at hand if we want to reach our phosphorus run-off reduction goals. Similar to many other challenges we confront, I believe the County can and should play a leading a role in this work.



With the \$3 million for feasibility and site acquisition in this budget, I've asked staff in the County's Department of Land and Water Resources to begin the work necessary to determine how much manure we could process along with the potential environmental and financial benefits of converting that into renewable energy. **Here's our goal: if we treat and process manure made by 40,000 cows, we**

**can find better uses for 400,000 gallons of manure each year.** This project is the path to a future where we see **fewer winter time pictures of manure coated, snowy farm fields in high run off areas**. We know as that snow melts each spring, it heads into our lakes. At least half of the annual total phosphorus load into our lakes comes in late winter and early spring. Treating manure at a grander scale will give farmers an alternative to spreading and precariously storing manure. We can create a one-stop service for their waste. We can also provide incentives for participation in a true community scale solution, but we will also need accountability.

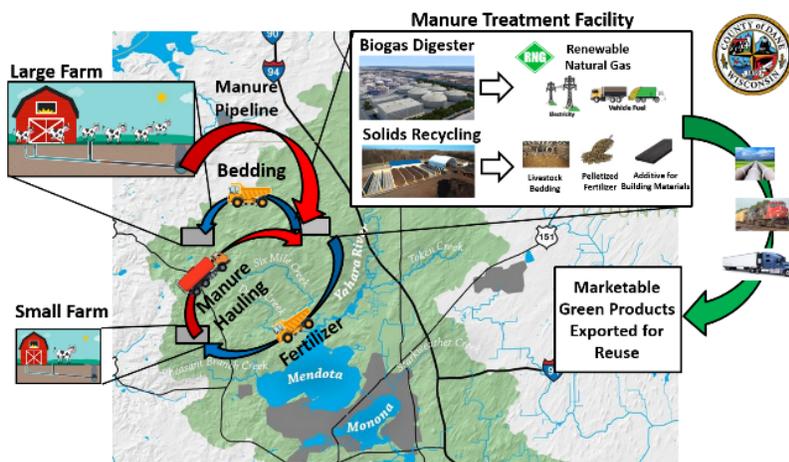
A community manure treatment plant will be an asset to not just our lakes but also our climate goals. By **reducing manure storage and replacing raw manure with fertilizer pellets we could collect methane and reduce greenhouse gas emissions**. This could very well be Dane County's most substantial initiative to date at stopping methane. Initial estimates show a commercial scale manure processing plant could reduce emissions by more than 100,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent. That's comparable to **removing emissions of nearly 255 million miles driven by passenger vehicles**. This investment isn't just about our lakes and streams. It's also about our air and substantively limiting emissions harmful to the planet and changing our climate.

Renewable natural gas and excess nutrients that contribute to algae growth could be exported out of the watershed. The feasibility analysis I'm funding will look at options for manure transportation, handling, possible pipeline needs and what components would be needed process large volumes of waste in the smartest way possible.



Community manure treatment is a priority action identified in the *2022 Renew the Blue: A Community Guide for Cleaner Lakes & Reach in the Yahara Watershed*, which was developed through a coalition of the partners including the Clean Lakes Alliance, Dane County, Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin, Dane County Cities & Villages Association, Dane County Towns Association, Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District and 12 other partners.

We can have a substantive conversation on this without counterproductive finger-pointing. Here's the reality – some of the mostly highly productive farmlands in this county exist within the headwaters and watersheds of our most sensitive rivers and lakes. Agriculture is an enormous part of our local economy and we want farms here. **We can keep multi-generational family farms farming while dramatically reducing run-off of nutrients like phosphorus that in high quantities harm our water quality.**



If the project is publicly financed and operated we can build the project we need to balance those interests. We remain one of the top counties for milk and commodity production in the entire country. We can protect that legacy while embracing the kind of bold solution that's needed to help the lakes that also serve as economic drivers for this

community. This type of a project also offers smaller producers an opportunity to better manage animal waste streams with technical solutions they may otherwise not be able to afford on their own.

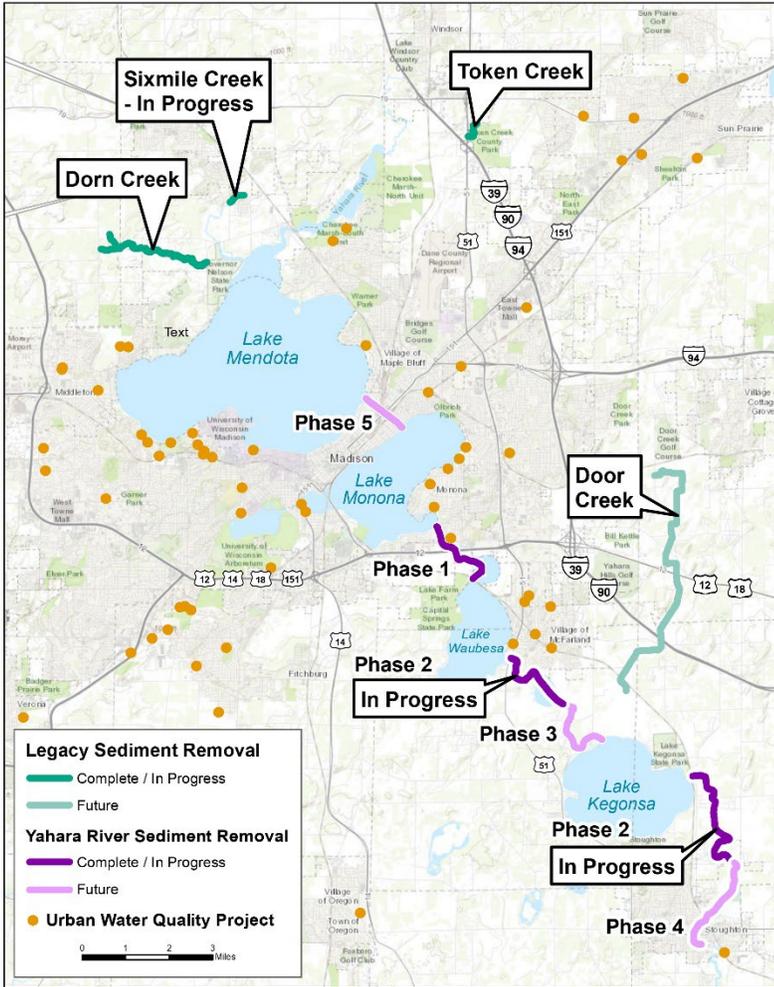
There's precedence for this. The county played an instrumental role as a partner spurring development of two digesters in the North Mendota Watershed now almost 15 years ago. Located just outside of Middleton and Waunakee, those facilities have helped farmers manage manure application. Just this year the project outside of Middleton began converting manure collected into renewable natural gas (RNG) and trucking it to our Dane County RNG Plant for use as cleaner burning vehicle fuel.

Our other water quality work will continue in the coming year as well.

When the floods of 2018 struck we crafted an innovative multi-year hydraulic dredging project to eliminate decades of accrued silt and sludge that ran off into our waterways, reducing the risk that future climate change induced rains



would ravage our communities. As our waters turned green more frequently in summer, county staff turned to old fashioned scientific sampling and determined one of the causes of the blue green algae we see sat in the muck that lined the bottoms of our waterways. *Suck the Muck* was born and since then we've tested and cleaned miles of stream and river bottom that feed our lakes. **We've removed 180,000 pounds of phosphorus and 56,000 tons of sludge from four miles of Dorn, Token and Six Mile Creeks that all flow into Lake Mendota.** Tests have shown this work has staying power. Dorn Creek alone has seen an 850 pound annual reduction in phosphorus delivery to the lake. I'm including \$2 million in the budget so we can *Suck the Muck* next within Door Creek and its wetlands in southeast Dane County. Planning for the project will occur next year with construction slated for 2024. This project will increase flood storage – allowing us further ability to better manage lake levels during periods of high water – trap runoff and sediment and improve fish and wildlife habitat.

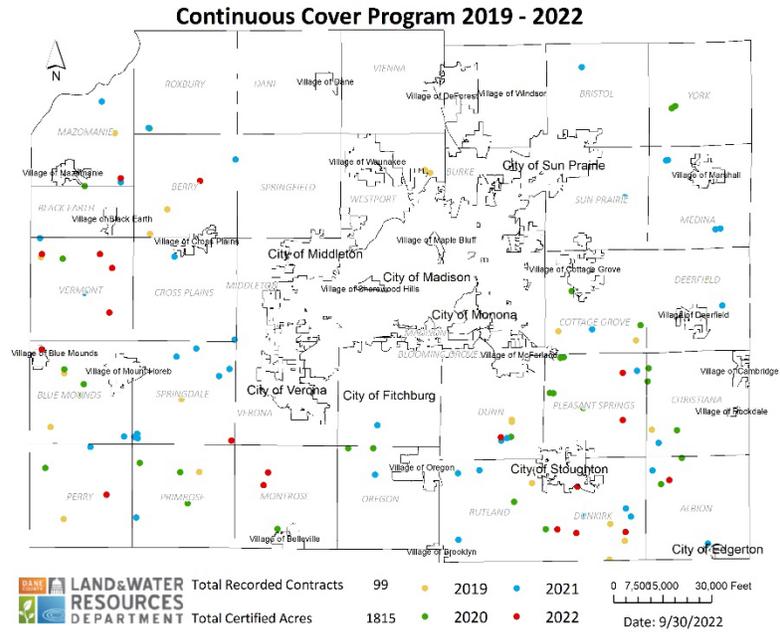


The success we saw with *Suck the Muck* paved the way for another innovative solution to managing the monsoons of climate change rains. Our flood risk reduction dredging within the Yahara River continues to progress and we are on track by the end of next year to have removed close to 200,000 cubic yards of sediment from the bottom of the river through the project's first two phases. That's over 40 million gallons of debris and dirt removed that contributed to our lakes rising faster when it rains. Think about that – in just a couple of short years **we have removed the equivalent of 13,400 dump trucks – or put another way: 400,000 bath tubs worth of built up sludge.** Sediment has been sucked out of the Yahara River between Lakes Monona and Waubesa and continued this year (and will

extend into next) from Waubesa through Lower Mud Lake and then Lake Kegonsa. I have \$3 million in the capital budget for this work in the coming year and I'm adding two more full time dredging positions to ensure we have the bodies necessary to continue prioritizing this work. The successful continuation of this project is imperative before another flood event like the one we experienced in August of 2018 recurs. Images from Kentucky, St. Louis, and parts of the south from this summer all serve as reminders that we need that our preparation and focus on climate resiliency remain undeterred.



We know that how we manage the land is another determinant in our overall risk of flooding. We also know that where we prioritize conservation and restoration we contribute greatly to our goal of reducing carbon emissions. Prairies and wildlife areas trap carbon. In 2019, I started the Dane County *Continuous Cover Program*. To date, we have converted nearly 2,000 acres into perennial vegetative



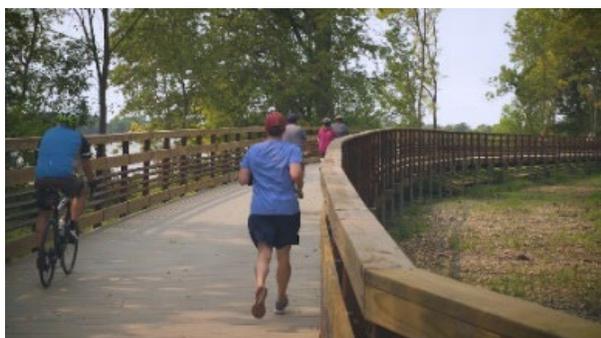
**cover.** We've helped create pastures for grazing, cool season grasses, native prairies, and pollinator habitats. Those lands alone have helped trap 800 tons of carbon dioxide and stop the flow of over 15 million gallons of rain run-off from racing toward our lakes and rivers. That's kept over 4,000 pounds of algae-growing phosphorus on the land instead of in the water. Dane County's *Continuous Cover* program has enormous environmental benefits and I'm continuing next year with another \$2 million in funding. I'm also including \$10 million for the Dane County *Conservation Fund* for further acquisitions that help improve water quality and allow opportunities for prairie and wildlife restoration.

It's important we quantify our continued progress at trapping carbon made possible through our conservation efforts. The Department of Land and Water Resources will collect and track data of the impact of our work through a new program area known as *Ecosystem Services*. This year, the department started collecting soil samples to establish a carbon baseline – this provides a sense of where we are starting from. With new staff on board



the department will begin to quantify our work on phosphorus reduction, carbon sequestration, runoff retention, along with stream and wetland restoration. All of these efforts result in quantifiable, tangible points of data for us to map our progress. I'm including \$75,000 for the department to build upon its carbon trapping and tracking work in 2023.

The Department of Land and Water Resources recently secured a \$1 million, five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to establish what's called a *demonstration farm network* in Dane County. The federal grant funding will start next year and pay for an agronomist, research, education, and outreach activities focused on conservation practices that reduce erosion, sediment build up and nonpoint runoff. This will test the effectiveness of the work that's underway and help inform additional on farm strategies consistent with our shared goals.



Some of the most popular work the county does is the development and maintenance of our regional bike trails. The Lower Yahara River Trail between Lake Farm County Park and McFarland has wowed users since day one with its picturesque views of Lake Waubesa and the wildlife that inhabit it. With as many years that have passed since this popular boardwalk trail

opened, this project remains a major parks and recreation destination. That's why I'm including \$2.5 million next year to construct phase two of the Lower Yahara River Trail, a section from Fish Camp County Park through Lake Kegonsa State Park. Construction is slated to start in July of 2023 and be complete sometime late fall of 2024. We are nearing the day where you can get a bike in Madison and pedal along the water to Stoughton. I'm also **adding \$500,000 for what's known as the Waucheeta Connector Trail**, a connector to the Lower Yahara River Trail that will serve as an alternative to riding along Lake Farm Road. The budget also has a half million dollars for the PARC and Ride bike trail grant program for local governments and non-profits to continue developing trail projects.

Work will continue in the coming year meanwhile on trail projects funded in previous budgets including the multi-use bridge crossing of the Wisconsin River in partnership with Sauk County, linking the remaining gaps of the North Mendota Trail from Mendota County Park working east to the North Mendota Wildlife Area, and the "missing link" of the Glacial Drumlin Trail between Madison and Cottage Grove.

## EMERGING NEEDS

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My 2023 budget recognizes Dane County faces a few emerging challenges confronting every local unit of government in the state and beyond.

Our community like others learns more every day about the presence of what's known as PFAS in our water. This artificial substance was used in manufacturing processes for decades and science is showing it may be incredibly harmful. Much of the focus about PFAS to this point has centered on higher concentrations found in sampling done on soil and groundwater near the airport where firefighters trained for years using foam fire suppression products made of the chemical.



In 2020, the Dane County Regional Airport (DCRA) helped fund an innovative pilot project to address PFAS at the airport site resulting from use of the FAA-mandated fire-fighting foam. While there are nationwide efforts to discover the most effective means to remove PFAS from impacted sites, research into PFAS specific remediation strategies is, to a degree, in its early stages. That's why the DCRA backed pilot project testing a new removal strategy is so important. The recently released initial results of that pilot are very promising and the 2023 airport budget includes funding to expand the pilot remediation program to more areas of the airport property, including the former firefighting training areas. Airports across the country are looking for solutions on PFAS and the DCRA team took a leadership role in finding a solution that could benefit the entire country.



Recently, the conversation about PFAS has shifted to its potential presence in groundwater in the broader county and whether the thousands of Dane County residents on private wells may be unknowingly exposed to it. First, we need to determine the scope of PFAS in private well drinking water. That's why my budget creates a **new PFAS private well testing program within the Department of Public Health**. With around \$186,000, we can help test wells countywide and get a better

sense of the prevalence of PFAS in private drinking water supply. That information will provide homeowners with valuable knowledge about the safety of their water. The primary testing phase of this work will occur in 2023. Thankfully solutions to this emerging challenge are developing and data collected in the coming year will better inform how our county approaches this in the years ahead. Given the extent in which

this chemical was used in manufacturing processes, it's unfortunately reasonable to assume it's very prevalent in our environment.



Another emerging need exists with how we deliver services to our military veterans. There was a lot of attention at the federal level this summer to what's known as the PACT Act, the largest piece of veterans' legislation since the original GI Bill done after World War Two. The PACT Act has created a new surge of calls, emails, and walk-in visitors to the Dane County Veterans Service Office (CVSO) and its counterparts across the state and country. The legislation impacts Gulf War and post 9/11 veterans, Vietnam veterans, and veterans even dating back to the Korean War timeframe, along with their survivors.

Unfortunately, this legislation did not include funds for local veterans' offices to administer these programs. In the past month alone, appointment wait times at our CVSO have increased to over 8 weeks.

**I'm adding 1.5 staff to the Dane County Veterans Service Office** (at a cost of over \$144,000), so we can meet this surge in service demand. Even before this critically important and long overdue veterans support legislation passed in Washington D.C. our Veterans Service Office already generated more federal Veterans Affairs (VA) disability claims into the VA System than any other county office in the state. **In 2021 alone, our CVSO was instrumental in helping Dane County veterans and their survivors obtain more than \$87 million in services.** We know these numbers will only increase with the passage of the PACT Act and our Veterans Services Office needs to be well-positioned to meet the increase demand for assistance that's already underway.

The staffing levels, working conditions, and morale of nurses at local health care providers were the focus of work by the County Board this year. The Health and Human Needs Committee received a report in recent weeks by a sub-committee created to examine potential solutions to the challenges raised. **This budget recognizes the county can provide a helpful role in a broader conversation that needs to include health care employers.** Out of respect to the Board's leadership on this issue, I'm funding a \$120,000 position in the County Board Office to continue this work next year. I'm also allocating \$500,000 that could be paired with funds from health providers who employ nurses to maximize impact on work that improves nursing retention, recruitment and the mental health and well-being of nurse caregivers. This challenge requires partnership for impactful, substantive, lasting solutions.

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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We've placed a premium in recent years on initiatives that diversify our county workforce. County government is in the business of direct service delivery therefore it needs to reflect who we work for. **Through a partnership with Latino Workforce Academy and the Urban League we created an apprenticeship pipeline in our Highway Department** that's help diversify that workforce in a way previously thought wasn't possible. Nearly 20 individuals have graduated the county's commercial drivers' license training program in just a few short years, one of our most tangible success stories to date of how county government can swing open its doors wider than we have been with our recruitment and training of new workers.

Luis Bixler, our Director of Public Safety Communications has had similar success **working with Centro Hispano on a establishing a workforce pipeline into our 911 Center**. I'm adding \$60,000 in this budget for a full-time career specialist at Centro to expand the organization's *Caminos Progreso* training program into more county departments. Two graduates



of *Caminos Progreso* are among those working full time now in our 911 Center and we know this is scratching the surface of what's possible. Having a dedicated career specialist at Centro who focuses on recruitment for county openings will accelerate our ability to diversify our workforce, creating opportunity for more in our community. I am also funding a **new language access coordinator position in our Human Services Department** to ensure all of the work that agency does across this community is looked at through a culturally sensitive lens. This will enhance communication and connectivity to available services.

This budget creates a new Dane County *Caregiver Leave* program. Many in our workforce find themselves as primary caregivers for aging parents, running to appointments and other obligations to help meet basic needs. **This new Caregiver Leave will allow employees caring for loved ones 80 hours of paid leave**, allowing them to focus on family without worrying about their economic security.

In response to inflation, **the budget provides an inflationary adjustment for our workforce**, sized near the most recent data available on the federal consumer price index. This 9% increase is substantial. It's also consistent with what we have seen countless employers across many sectors have to do to remain competitive with employee recruitment and retention efforts. Workforce shortages continue to impact employers. The extent of this increase is an anomaly but it's also important to recognize this moment. Costs increased substantially for all families this year. We also want Dane County to remain a competitive employer for those looking to get into public service.

This wage increase accounts for the most substantial portion of the new spending in this budget.

There are a few other initiatives I would like to highlight in the budget.

I'm proposing the county establish a policy on the use of its *rainy day* fund. We've been fortunate to have a series of years of financial stability. In that time we have grown our *rainy day* or reserve fund substantially, while meeting service delivery needs across our community. We know economies run in cycles and there are varying opinions from economists about what 2023 may bring. The day will come when we need a safety net to insulate against service reductions. That's **why this budget includes a brand new policy that sets our reserve fund balance to be no lower than 10% of the county's operating budget**. We've come a long way in the decade since the county had a negative fund balance. It's important we protect the investment we've all made in sound budgeting, to protect the budgets of tomorrow from the continued uncertain world we live in.



The fund budgets a series of new positions at the Dane County Alliant Energy Center (AEC). Our new AEC Director Adam Heffron has an extensive sales and event management background, most recently in his management role at Summerfest in Milwaukee. It's important we provide him the tools to succeed to retain existing business while adding new events at the Alliant Energy Center. The event and trade industry continues to undergo a recalibration after the Covid-19 pandemic. While a

number of event venues have seen a return in business, the future of this industry remains an unknown. Adding these new positions is a substantial investment but I believe it gives the Alliant Energy Center the best possible chance at building back from the fallout of Covid.

I am including **\$15.6 million for the county's share of road improvement projects**. The most sizeable individual project is for the reconstruction and widening of Highway M in the Town of Westport. I'm adding \$3.7 million, bringing the total budget to \$19.2 million for making Highway M four lanes from Oncken Road to Bluebill Parkway. Other highway projects slated for next year:

- Reconstruction of Highway A from Highway 14 to Highway 138 - \$4 million
- \$1.75 million to re-do Highway CV by the Dane County Regional Airport
- \$800,000 for redoing Highway MM in the Village of Oregon from Wolfe to Spring Street
- Funds to design and construct 11 different federal bridge projects across Dane County

## BY THE NUMBERS

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The **2023 budget I'm proposing totals \$834 million**. The operating budget is \$712.6 million while the capital spending plan totals \$121.4 million, with **substantial new investments in housing, services for the homeless, and conservation**. The budget raises taxes on the average Madison home by \$30.05, a levy increase of 5.97%.

These are uncertain times. There are indications another surge of Covid may impact our community this fall and winter. Economists are cautioning slower times are ahead with some going so far as to suggest we could be entering a period of potential recession. Some local employers have begun talk of restructuring and slowing hiring. Fuel prices will likely climb again this winter. We don't know what the next year will bring and the impact it may have on the budget situation we will face a year from now. In this moment, we have the ability to add critical services.

The past few years have taught us if nothing else the importance of planning, flexibility, and resiliency. We will continue to respond to the moment and do all we can for the well-being of all in our community. I look forward to working with the County Board in the weeks ahead on adopting a final budget for 2023 that maximizes opportunity for all.