

Dane County Exec. Parisi: Introduces 2022 Budget - “meeting the challenge”

Posted on Friday, Oct 1, 2021

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Today, Dane County Executive Joe Parisi introduced his 2022 budget proposal at Centro Hispano, where he laid out Dane County’s plans to continue addressing the impacts of COVID-19, while also prioritizing investments in mental health, public safety, conservation, human services, quality of life, efforts to combat climate change, and much more. The \$747.8 million dollar spending plan builds on successful county initiatives while exploring new opportunities to make a substantive difference for individuals and families in the Dane County community.

“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,” said County Executive Parisi. “Dane County government will continue to lead with progressive, innovative templates for public services that meet the needs of our communities and our people. I’m proud of the opportunity to present this budget and believe it reflects values and priorities of our community.”

Parisi was joined at today’s event by Centro Hispano Executive Director Karen Menendez Coller. The County Executive’s 2022 budget includes \$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 Dane County delivering direct services to the community’s fast growing Latino population. Under the leadership of Menendez Coller, Centro has been a key partner at providing immigrants in the Dane County 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 has embarking on 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.

Other highlights of Dane County's 2022 Budget include:

COVID-19

- Parisi is 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.
- Parisi is extending housing protections for those at risk of homelessness into 2022 and Dane County's popular Emergency Food Pandemic Response partnership with Second Harvest, which bolsters the production and distribution of locally grown foods. To date, Dane County has 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.
- The 2022 budget provides an additional \$6.5 million to continue hotel sheltering until June 30, 2022 to provide this important support as the Dane County community continues to grapple with the uncertainty of the pandemic.
- The number of people without a place to call home has increased during the pandemic, and additional supports are needed to assist people with connecting to community resources. Parisi's budget includes \$300,000 in new funding to support outreach services for people living unsheltered throughout Dane County.
- 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, more than 90 people have moved from hotel shelter and into permanent housing of their own. Parisi's budget continues this program through 2022 with an \$8.2 million investment.
- Parisi's 2022 budget continues Dane County's commitment to the Affordable Housing Development Fund with \$6 million to jumpstart affordable housing partnerships next year.

- The budget includes \$500,000 to support the development of a new tiny house village and \$2 million in new grant funding to support the purchase of a hotel or other facility for conversion into affordable housing.
- Protecting housing stability for households at-risk of homelessness continues to be a priority. Parisi's budget includes \$250,000 to fund legal services at court for families facing eviction or foreclosure. The 2022 budget also allocates \$3 million in capital dollars to help refurbish and modernize properties owned by the Dane County Housing Authority.
- Parisi is adding \$225,000 for development of a Regional Housing Strategy, helping communities across our county develop more affordable and 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

- Last November, Dane County opened the Behavioral Health Resource Center (BHRC), a facility that connects people with resources to address barriers in mental health care and those seeking treatment for substance abuse. Given increasing workloads, Parisi is adding \$440,000 in the 2022 budget for more staff at the BHRC. This will bring county government's annual commitment to this project to over \$1.2 million.
- Parisi's 2022 budget creates a brand new division of county government to oversee its expanding array of innovative behavioral mental health initiatives. He is including over \$500,000 in funding for a new administrator and staff to get the Behavioral Health Division started.
- The budget allocates \$10 million for site acquisition, planning, and development of the Crisis Triage Center. This one stop facility will help keep individuals out of the criminal justice system and directly link them with services customized to address the barriers they face. Parisi is dedicating an additional \$1 million to help meet service and operational needs when the Triage Center opens.
- Dane County's school based mental health teams are in 10 school districts, providing critical behavioral health resources in support of over-worked school counselors and mental health professionals. Dane County invests over \$1 million annually in Building Bridges. Parisi is allocating another \$500,000 next year for additional mental health professionals in schools to help educators and students navigate the unknowns of Covid-19.
- Parisi is allocating \$100,000 to explore the feasibility of pursuing a Youth Crisis

Stabilization Center in Dane County. Such a facility would stabilize situations for young people who need access to clinical mental health services in a residential setting.

- The 2022 budget also ups funding for mental health resource programs for seniors, which Parisi 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 will now total over a quarter million dollars in the county budget.

Public Safety

- Dane County is debuting new mental health response tools, trainings, and processes for Dane County Sheriff's deputies in this budget. Based on a successful model launched last December in Cook County, County Executive Parisi is putting \$250,000 in the budget to launch a new virtual mental health program. These dollars cover the cost of clinical staff, tablets, and remote WiFi modems so when deputies come upon a crisis situation they have the support they need to assist families.
- 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, Parisi is adding \$100,000 in the budget for more recovery coaches.
- The 2022 budget adds a position to the Sheriff's Office to focus on the heinous crimes associated with sex trafficking. At a total cost of \$119,000 annually, this new detective will be dedicated to investigating these crimes, bringing traffickers to justice, and preventing vulnerable girls and women from falling prey to these criminals.

Climate Change, Conservation, & Water Quality

- Dane County now has 100 CNG vehicles and 17 electric hybrids. Parisi's 2022 budget expands this initiative with over \$5 million for the purchase of CNG trailers to help fuel up the Dane County highway fleet in areas of the county where compressed natural gas filling stations are less available. Parisi is also 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 eight more CNG powered snowplows.

- As Dane County amasses its renewable energy credit portfolio, it is critical efforts be monitored in real time to maximize both the environmental and economic benefits of the investments Dane County makes. Parisi's 2022 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.
- County Executive Parisi is including over \$93,000 in his budget to jumpstart the creation of a Civilian Climate Corps. Modeled after Dane County's 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.
- A couple of years ago, Dane County launched the Continuous Cover Program, a first of its kind effort to help maintain the rural character and landscape of the fast growing county that helps reduce runoff and erosion, keep farmers and growers on the land, and helps trap carbon. Parisi is increasing this investment to \$2.5 million in his 2022 budget.
- Dane County's Conservation and Lake Preservation and Renewal funds have protected thousands of acres over the past decade. They are also critical to Dane County becoming a net carbon neutral community by 2030. Parisi is creating a new position in the Department of Land and Water Resources to help compile all of county government's carbon reduction accomplishments. An additional new position will design and implement conservation projects that both improve water quality and sequester carbon.
- County Executive Parisi is 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. Dane County's continued leadership on conservation will pay dividends far beyond this generation for quality of life, water quality, flood mitigation, and the pollinators and other species impacted by the fast changing world they call home.
- The 2022 budget includes \$300,000 for an updated energy efficiency audit of all county facilities.
- To date, Dane County's "Suck the Muck" program has 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. Parisi is 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.

- Parisi's budget includes \$3 million for the next phase of flood risk reduction dredging in the Yahara River from Lake Kegonsa to County Highway B. 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 the spring and will remove an estimated 65,000 cubic yards of run-off from the river bottom.
- The 2022 budget expands 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. 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.
- Funding will also go to expand Dane County's multi-year partnership with the City of Madison to develop Clean Beach Corridors to promote safer swimming for children and families. This budget includes \$85,000 in 2022 for the City-County Clean Beach Corridor at Tenney Park Beach.

Quality of Life

- Progress continues to be made on the North Mendota Trail, providing safer cycling along the Highway M corridor between Middleton and Waunakee. The City of Middleton has been working diligently to connect to the North Mendota Trail along Highway M at city limits. Given the many benefits of connectivity, Parisi including \$1 million in this budget to support Middleton's work to tie into the trail.
- Parisi's budget also includes \$750,000 for the multi-year rehabilitation of the Capital City Bike Trail, \$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, \$200,000 for ongoing improvements at Schumacher Farms County Park, and \$150,000 for the restoration of Black Earth Creek.

General Government

- Highway maintenance remains a high priority. The 2022 budget includes \$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. The county is competing for federal dollars for a series of projects, continuing its commitment to rural infrastructure.

- Parisi is adding positions to Dane County's 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. New positions are also being proposed to support Dane County's Division of Information Management, Employee Relations, and the Controller's Office.
- Given the national rate of inflation, County Executive Parisi is proposing a two-step wage increase for the Dane County workforce, consistent with the consumer price index (CPI). His budget provides a 3% wage hike the first of the year, with an additional 3% coming in July of 2022.

Budget by the Numbers

County Executive Parisi's 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 Crisis Triage 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.