

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

July 7, 2015



Dear Fellow Residents:

Miami-Dade County has turned the corner! Better days are ahead because we came together during difficult budgetary times, made the necessary sacrifices, and now have a much better outlook because we have always been guided by our principle of fiscal sustainability.

I am pleased to submit the FY 2015-16 Proposed Budget and Multi-Year Capital Plan, which includes first and foremost enhancements to your services, investments in equipment, facilities and reserves, and resources to address critical issues facing our community: public safety and transportation. Our five-year forecast remains balanced and we have virtually eliminated the use of one-time revenues to support services. In other words, our FY 2015-16 Proposed Budget is the foundation for a sustainable financial future.

You elected me because I promised to transform the way Miami-Dade County government serves its residents, businesses, and visitors. For the past four years, my administration has worked diligently with all parties to keep that promise to ensure that we are utilizing your tax dollars as efficiently and effectively as possible. We have reduced the total number of budgeted positions within County government by 1,439, saving \$982 million in taxpayer dollars. In fact, if the flat tax rate I am proposing for FY 2015-16 is approved by the Board of County Commissioners, the average homeowner will have saved nearly \$1,000 in property taxes over the past four years.

My Proposed Budget is a plan to promote our economic development while continuing to focus on our core mission. The best way to ensure economic development and prosperity in our community is to provide excellent public services to our residents and further enhance Miami-Dade County as a place where people from all over the world want to visit, to make their home, and transact their business.

As my administration developed the budget this year, we were pleased to learn that our property tax roll performance was beyond our estimates. For most of our residents, this means that your investments in your home, business, or other properties have appreciated in value and you are better off than you were just a few months ago. This also means the restoration and enhancement of services that were affected during challenging budgetary times, investment in new technologies to improve service delivery, and strengthening our organization so that we may continue to provide critical services for residents as we move into the future.

My administration has successfully negotiated new labor contracts with five of our ten collective bargaining units which represent more than half of our approximately 26,000 employees. A major component of these new contracts included a health plan redesign for our employees that improved access to healthcare, reduced dependent premiums, and saved the County more than \$30 million this year. If that plan were available for employees in the five bargaining units that do not yet have new contracts with my administration, savings would climb to roughly \$60 million. My administration continues to work with all labor partners so that we can have new labor agreements in place as soon as possible.

This Proposed Budget will put more police officers on the streets and equip those officers with body cameras. In addition to this new technology that has proven to reduce frivolous complaints against our officers and may even lead to improved relations between law enforcement and residents, my administration will also procure over 400 new vehicles for the Miami-Dade Police Department. We will have more correctional officers and meet the federal mandates intended to ensure officer safety while protecting the rights of those in custody. By the end of the year, we will have enhanced marine service for Miami-Dade Fire Rescue. Programming for children and capital funding in our parks will be expanded, and libraries will be open more days and with a larger budget for the purchasing of materials. Funding to increase our tree canopy has been allocated. Our new Animal Services Shelter

will open with a significant increase in the number of pets that can be housed, along with funding for innovative programs to target areas that lack easy access to animal services. Funding cuts have been restored to cultural programs and community-based organizations that will compete for funding under a newly constructed competitive solicitation process. Voting precincts have been realigned to alleviate long wait times and ten additional early voting sites will be opened. Additional funding has been provided for meals and home care services for our seniors.

For the first time in five years, there will be a \$5 million contribution to the County's Emergency Contingency Reserves. When combined with contingency reserves in the general fund, Library district, and Fire Rescue district, our balance totals nearly \$60 million. Reserves equal 4.3 percent of general fund operations. All proprietary funds include reserves as required for bond covenants.

Details regarding these enhancements and the resulting service improvements are included as part of the Executive Summary, as well as described within each departmental narrative in the Proposed Budget documents.

We have been able to accomplish all this while keeping overall tax rates flat. The total rate paid for all four taxing jurisdictions remains 12 percent below the rate in place when I was first elected Mayor in June 2011. Residents have been getting much more out of their tax dollars than they were before I was elected. And we are not done.

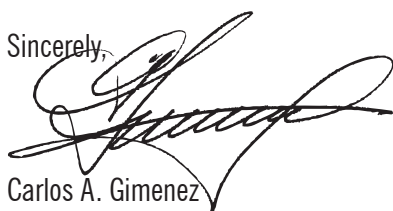
The FY 2015-16 Proposed Budget also includes details of the funding available to extend our rail corridors. The Board of County Commissioners already authorized funds to bring Tri-Rail to downtown Miami which will establish the anchor for a Northeast rail corridor. We are working with the City of Miami Beach and the City of Miami to establish plans for the Baylink, connecting downtown Miami with the beaches. Our financial forecasts for the People's Transportation Plan Surtax will fund not only needed maintenance and repairs to existing infrastructure, but also potential revenue to attract private partners to bring their resources to the table to address transportation issues throughout the County. We have initially funded an account to allow us to take advantage of the many Public Private Partnership opportunities being presented to us. This account will help pay for the expertise needed to ensure these Public Private Partnership agreements include the needed protections to ensure the delivery of new facilities and services far into the future.

Finally, in addition to the aforementioned efforts, my staff analyzed all available resources to support future transit corridor development and operations. Preliminary figures indicate that more than \$2 billion in excess funding could be available over the next 30 years. Those dollars may be used to issue debt or make availability payments. Based on this analysis, my administration is developing options to improve mobility in our community in the near future. In fact, the Proposed Multi-Year Capital Budget includes an additional \$45 million identified for the final phase of the automated traffic management system and \$98 million for traffic control devices and signalization to improve capacity on our roads. Staff will continue to identify available funds to address priority mobility enhancement projects.

I appreciate the Board of County Commissioners' engagement in the budget development process and look forward to working towards our collective goal of economic prosperity throughout Miami-Dade County. The submission of my Proposed Budget is just the beginning. We will continue to work hard over the next two months as we approach the final approval of the FY 2015-16 Budget. I look forward to spending time with you to discuss this budget and what it means for you and your families.

Miami-Dade County has indeed turned the corner. Together, we will continue to improve the quality of life for all of our residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carlos A. Gimenez', written over a horizontal line.

Carlos A. Gimenez
Mayor