

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



July 9, 2019

To the Residents of Miami-Dade County:

When I was first elected Mayor of Miami-Dade County, I pledged to you, the residents, that our community would be better – safer, stronger, more financially secure and prepared for challenges – when my term was completed than when I took office. We have made great progress towards these goals in the last eight years. Fiscal Year 2019-20 will be my final full fiscal year as Mayor and the FY 2019-20 Proposed Budget remains focused on the future resilience of Miami-Dade County.

Over the last eight years we have fed more than 3.3 million meals to elderly citizens through congregate meals programs and home delivery, provided more than 5,000 additional Head Start slots since fully delegating the federally-funded program in FY 2012-13 and added more than 500 emergency homeless beds.

We have funded in excess of \$16 million each year for the last four years for programs targeting youth violence and intervention. Just since 2014, juvenile arrests have gone down nearly 40 percent and 12,500 youth diverted from the traditional juvenile justice system. Each year, the Youth Sports Champions Series involves more than 9,000 participants and since they were created, the Fit2Play and Fit2Lead programs have impacted more than 1,500 kids.

More than 1,000 new Police Officers have graduated from the academy and we have deployed approximately 1,600 body worn cameras. We have built eight new fire stations and added 13 new fire rescue units. We have been able to close three correctional facilities and hired 826 Correctional Officers to meet the requirements of the Department of Justice consent agreement.

More than 2,700 vehicles have been replaced in our fleet and we have put into service nearly 250 compressed natural gas (CNG)-powered buses. Capital development has surged at our ports, with projects completed at both the North and South Terminals of Miami International Airport and agreements in place with major cruise lines to expedite the development of new cruise terminals at PortMiami. The Automated Traffic Management System (ATMS) has been installed along the 10 most congested corridors in Miami-Dade County.

The County has completed more than \$1 billion of BBC-GOB projects since 2011, including parks, museums and other facilities, renovations to courthouses and jails, and more than 1,800 affordable housing units through Commission District allocations. More than \$1.5 billion of water and wastewater pipe replacements, pump station improvements and treatment plant upgrades have been completed and eight LEED silver or gold certified buildings have come on line. The Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) program has purchased almost 1,800 acres of land and beach renourishment projects have added 1.3 million cubic yards of sand on 13 miles of beaches. To restore the tree canopy in our community, almost \$2 million has been spent so far on the “Million Trees Miami” campaign.

We responded to the Zika virus and became the only community within which the virus was completely eradicated. We prepared for and recovered from Hurricane Irma. To address illegal dumping and litter in our community, we implemented four additional bulky waste crews. The Animal Services Department achieved No-Kill status in 2015 and opened a new pet-friendly shelter in 2018.

More than \$118 million in funding has been invested in the arts and cultural activities through competitive grants and programming. Library hours have been expanded to 2,509 a week at 50 locations and annual spending on books and materials has gone up by more than \$1 million each year. A Television, Film and Entertainment Production Incentive Program was created to attract production to our community and create new jobs.

Last week we held the ribbon cutting for Phase One of the Liberty Square project. The entire plan involves demolishing the existing 709 units and replacing them with 1,455 new units as part of a mixed-use development that includes public housing, affordable housing and market-rate units. Phase One includes demolishing 73 units and building six buildings with 204 new units.

We have implemented paperless time reporting and payables processing and began implementation of a full Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. We train 12,000 employees a year on subjects such as ethics, diversity, management, and addressing unconscious biases. We re-precincted voting districts and opened additional early voting sites. Government meetings are now digitally streamed on Facebook and Twitter.

All this was done while reducing taxes by more than \$1.887 billion, saving the taxpayer more than \$1,722 and putting away an additional \$50 million in reserves. The beginning of this process was not easy. Employee pay and benefit concessions were necessary and certain services were reduced. We reorganized the government, combining certain functions in order to improve coordination and promote efficiency. We have now stabilized. Employee pay and benefits have been restored and we are able to provide the level of service our community desires and deserves. We are on sound financial footing.

The FY 2019-20 Proposed Budget continues these trends. We will hire more correctional officers, firefighters and police officers, increasing the total sworn contingents in each of these departments. Funding for youth intervention programs will be increased, emphasizing family intervention and diversion programs for at-risk youth, rather than waiting for children to enter the juvenile justice system to have issues addressed.

The redevelopment of Liberty Square will continue, transforming the area into viable, energy efficient, sustainable neighborhoods. We will open a new animal services facility in Liberty City to provide services for pets in this underserved area of the County. Work will continue on our water and wastewater infrastructure as well as the capital improvement plans at our Airports and Seaport. Additional funding to help support the planning efforts of the Resilient 305 Strategy is included, as well as funding to attempt to mitigate new impacts of climate change, such as the presence of large amounts of seaweed on our beaches.

We will continue to enhance our digital resilience, employing resources to protect our data from daily threats. More vehicles will be replaced, introducing new, more energy efficient and clean-running buses, sedans, vans and trucks to the County fleet. Funding has been included in the budget to enhance our reserves and also to complete the current round of negotiations with our unions and begin the next round.

A renewed focus will be placed on our infrastructure: County facilities. A Countywide Infrastructure Investment Plan has been developed and funding identified through a number of sources to bring our facilities up to code, repair and renovate the exteriors and interiors of our buildings, replace elevators and building management systems, renew parks and cultural centers, improve security throughout our facilities and do many other needed repairs to make our buildings and other assets more efficient, more comfortable places to visit, work and conduct business. The 20-year plan totals more than \$1.8 billion and we anticipate kicking the program off with \$120 million in spending the first year. Funding to support these efforts has been identified by redirecting funds that had been earmarked for emergency repairs or intended to supplement projects for which other funding has not been identified. Proceeds of the Homestead Exemption Mitigation Reserve seeded the plan beginning in February when we directed a portion of that reserve be utilized to replace elevators and enhance security in the Stephen P. Clark Center, expand the Shotspotter program and repair County-operated cultural centers. We will be treating the CIIP as a major capital campaign, with dedicated staff to advanced goal and objectives and focus on expedited completion of these critical projects.

Another campaign I will be initiating is to activate the ever-increasing carryover funding for affordable housing that has been allocated, but unspent. The FY 2019-20 Proposed Budget includes \$263.3 million in total for affordable housing, which includes \$194 million in carryover. I will be convening a working group to develop proposals to get the projects moving or reallocate the funds to projects that will deliver much needed workforce and affordable housing units for our community.

The FY 2019-20 Proposed Budget not only eliminates the use of the Transportation surtax proceeds to fund services in place prior to the passage of the People's Transportation Plan (PTP), the subsidy from the General Fund is now supporting \$5 million worth of those services authorized by the voters when the PTP surtax was approved. This subsidy will increase each year. By 2023, these services will be completely supported by the General Fund. This year we will continue the replacement of Metrorail trains, which will lead to service reliability improvement, as well as put 260 new buses on the road allowing for older buses to be retired.

We will do all of this without increasing the property tax rates and with only a few targeted and limited fee increases. On June 18, 2019, the Board of County Commissioners approved a \$20 per year increase to the residential household solid waste fee. The Proposed Budget also includes fee adjustments for Water and Sewer retail and wholesale fees, generating an additional 4.7 percent in revenue that is necessary to support the capital investments in the coming years to support consent decree, capacity and ocean outfall requirements. These fees adjustments actually reduce charges for the residential tiers containing the highest instances of poverty (the lowest and highest residential usage), a modest adjustment for other residential tiers and higher increases for commercial customers. Pursuant to Resolution R 924-08, transit fares will be increased by 25 cents as called for as a result of consumer price index increases.

Also included in the Proposed Budget is your first glimpse of our refreshed and resilience-focused Strategic Plan concept. All departmental narratives are re-organized, improving the flow of information regarding our budget and performance measures, categorized not only by the elements of the County strategic plan, but also by the resilience dimensions promulgated by the Rockefeller 100 Resilient Cities initiative. As one of the first communities engaged with the Adrienne Arsht-Rockefeller Foundation Resilience Center, we wanted to make a statement regarding our dedication to the resilience of our community. By the end of the calendar year, we will roll out a newly designed performance measurement application – as one of the first applications of the Enterprise Resource Planning implementation effort – with a first of its kind Resilience Scorecard. Departments and activities will no longer be measured just by the traditional elements of the balanced scorecard, but also by the resilience dimensions which will highlight our employees continued efforts to prepare our government and our community for the future.

I look forward to spending the next few weeks working closely with the Board of County Commissioners and our constituents to review the Proposed Budget and discuss any adjustments that are warranted. I am proud of this plan, its focus on the resilience of our community and its dedication to helping the most vulnerable segments of our community.

Sincerely,



Carlos A. Gimenez