

Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners 2018 Policy Agenda

The Year 2018 provides Hamilton County the opportunity to continue the path initiated by the Board of County Commissioners with the adoption of the 2017 Operating Budget. The gains we are poised to make in 2017 will result in an exciting, action driven year that involves a series of new initiatives that are laying the groundwork to make Hamilton County more prosperous, healthy, and safe.

In 2018, the Board will continue the progress made in 2017 by focusing on the following:

1. **Stabilizing County Finances** and ensuring budget compliance
2. **Assuring the governance and operating stability of the Metropolitan Sewer District** with an emphasis on transparency and affordability for ratepayers
3. **Growing Hamilton County** through the Expansion of Hamilton County's Economic Development Efforts **and** strategically prioritizing the major infrastructure and capital project needs of the region
4. **Fostering a More Inclusive Hamilton County** by committing to openness and inclusivity so all residents enjoy the opportunity to participate in the growth of our economy
5. **Transporting the County into the 21st Century** with new investments in transportation infrastructure
6. **A Safer Hamilton County** with a new crime lab, creative solutions to jail overcrowding, and a commitment to 911 services
7. **Continuing Efforts to Abate the Heroin Epidemic** by giving law enforcement and first responders improved tools for fighting the Heroin Epidemic, expanding access to addiction treatment, and reducing overdose deaths
8. **A Healthier Hamilton County**, continuing the right prescriptive processes to make Hamilton County safer, healthier, and more environmentally secure
9. **An Environmentally Sustainable and Secure Hamilton County**
10. **A Protective Hamilton County**, Honoring our community's commitment to seniors, vulnerable children, and people with disabilities
11. **Investing in a quality, motivated, and productive county workforce** by ensuring all county employees earn a living wage, enhancing efforts to attract and retain an excellent workforce, and improving employee morale

Our 2018 policy agenda calls for continuation of the same objectives that we funded in 2017 and that have become adopted priorities as articulated in our 2017 General and Restricted Fund Operating and Capital Budgets.

Our 2017 Budget has created a strong foundation in which to begin reorienting county spending toward addressing these objectives. In 2018 we will need to continue our work in these areas and may need to continue to reorient spending in ways that guarantee we are utilizing available funds and sources of funds to accomplish multiple needs. Every penny of available dollars must be evaluated to see whether it can be spent to accomplish a multitude of good as opposed to being viewed for just one single priority use and function. In doing so, we will fashion a 2018 Budget that embraces the policy objectives described below.

Accordingly, our 2018 Agenda continues this focus as follows:

1. Stabilizing County Finances

In 2017, the Board began a strong effort to gain a handle on budget overruns by individual county departments. The first quarter departmental reviews have spurred collaborative conversations between the Board and County agencies, have sent a strong signal across all departments, and have provided important information about departmental budgets. The Board has adopted an ambitious agenda to improve quality of life and economic prosperity in Hamilton County, but those efforts are only possible to the extent county departments adhere to budget and to the extent the Board is able to prioritize and carefully monitor the expenditure of county resources. 2018 will provide an ongoing test to the Board and County Administration in ensuring that the county shall:

- Continue to adopt structurally balanced budgets which facilitate the provision of the County's mandated core services.
- Continue quarterly reviews of County revenue and expenditure projections.
- Require business case justifications for supplemental budget requests.
- Assess shared service opportunities by and between county departments and with vendors of county purchases
- Continue the shared services committee work with the city of Cincinnati and expand the concept with other local jurisdictions, including the possibility of cost sharing with local school boards through new or existing partnerships.
- Monitor business investments in terms of their ability to spur growth in county revenues.
- Maximize partnership opportunities with local, state, and federal government, as well as the private sector

- Develop a sustainable solution to continue funding to subsidize 911 costs for local municipalities

2. Assuring the governance and operating stability of the Metropolitan Sewer District with an emphasis on transparency and affordability for ratepayers

The sewer district will remain a priority focus of attention in 2018. While its funding is maintained within a rate base, the MSD Operating and Capital budgets shall remain within the purview of the Board of County Commissioners regardless of the outcome of the current negotiations between the city and the Board. Accordingly our priority policy focus in 2018 should include:

- Collaboration with the City of Cincinnati to transition to a County-approved sustainable solution to the governance structure of MSD and the efficient and effective management of the District in a post-2018 environment.
- Application of county policies to lawfully utilize the billions of dollars of work required under the Consent Decree in a manner that will provide greater contracting opportunities for local businesses and jobs for local individuals to reduce poverty, unemployment, under employment and joblessness.
- Expedient implementation of the recommendations of the MSD Rate Affordability Task Force on an accelerated timetable.
- Completion of work with legislative leaders on Clean Water Act Affordability legislation; and EPA Departmental policy Amendments to ensure rate affordability and regulatory tolerance and flexibility toward sustainable/integrated project approaches.
- Continued implementation of a Zero Tolerance Policy toward odors at MSD facilities.
- Assessment and pursuit of new facilities dealing with MSD Sewer Sludge to enhance Clean Water Act compliance, create efficiencies in disposal of solid waste, and save ratepayer dollars.

3. Grow Hamilton County through the Expansion of Hamilton County's Economic Development Efforts

Our ongoing work with our economic partners: HCDC, REDI Cincinnati, all Chambers of Commerce and Urban Development; the Port Authority and the County Land Bank are generating important economic gains. We have budgeted sustainable amounts in 2017 to continue this work and, in addition, budgeted for enhancements in 2017 to our funding for development and site access and acquisition coupled with the previously discussed TID funding that will help to spark growth throughout the county.

While we will continue our partnership with these organizations in order to sustain the growth they are creating in the county, including the generation of jobs and wealth, we must strive to expand their impact in the county across a wider and disparate area geographically and socio-economically. Accordingly, the County will:

- Ensure our 2018 budget includes specific ways in which to grow the impact and benefits of our partners identified above
- Ensure the new Office of Economic Inclusion works to expand access to economic opportunity relating to County procurement activity, major capital projects, and the associated work of our economic development partners.
- Develop standards and criteria that will allow us to calculate the impact of our investments on job creation; reduction of un- and under employment; along with reductions in joblessness in Hamilton County.
- Authorize the HCDC Office of Innovation and Creativity to drive the creation of new industrial and manufacturing growth in the county and the creation of new jobs generated by each such venture.
- Plan for a public input around the implementation of the Hamilton County Major Infrastructure and Capital Project Plan, including:
 1. Completion of the Banks phases III and IV including finalization of the possible expansion of Banks' projects to the south and west of Paul brown Stadium;
 2. The decks over Ft. Washington Way;
 3. Downtown Intermodal Transit Center;
 4. Western Hills Viaduct;
 5. Brent Spence bridge
 6. Duke Center Convention center expansion
 7. Sharonville Convention center Expansion
 8. Queensgate Yard expansion and access improvement
 9. County participation in regional transportation authority development and operations
 10. The future relationship with the Cincinnati Bengals and Cincinnati Reds including ongoing investments in Paul Brown Stadium and Great American ballpark
 11. The future of US Bank Arena
 12. County involvement in the future of FC Cincinnati
 13. Addressing any Capital needs to handle jail overcrowding including the potential expansion of off site treatment facilities

4. Foster a More Inclusive Hamilton County

Hamilton County will encourage inclusive efforts to provide the opportunity for all Hamilton County residents to take part in the growth of the economy and promote a qualified, local workforce. Accordingly, Hamilton County will:

- Budget for the full and broad implementation of the county Office of Inclusion to implement practices to maximize inclusivity in county hiring, procurement, and on Boards and Commissions. The office will ensure that the County lawfully utilizes the billions of dollars of work anticipated in the future across all county construction in a manner that will also provide greater contracting opportunities for local businesses and jobs for local individuals to reduce poverty, unemployment, under employment and joblessness.
- Ensure that the appropriate County offices (including Human Resources, County Facilities, and the new County Office of Inclusion) are sufficiently funded and staffed to be able to oversee and act, when necessary, to enforce all laws and Board developed and adopted policies around inclusion, prevailing wage, prevention of wage theft, and the like.
- Support our various new Boards to better guarantee that they function to create new opportunities for business growth and development.
- Revisit and adopt, if necessary, new policies regarding our ongoing evolution as a county in becoming more welcoming and inclusive to all people including people with disabilities
- Through the newly formed, Hamilton County Commission on Women and Girls, promote the economic prospects of women in our community, encourage women to attain positions of leadership, and empower girls to grow into fulfilled adults

5. Transport the County into the 21st Century

We have taken great steps in preparing to move toward accomplishing this goal by funding the county transportation improvement District for the first time ever. Doing so will provide the County the beginnings of matching the kinds of leveraged transportation infrastructure improvements that Butler, Warren and Clermont Counties have been doing for decades.

In addition, it is important that the County confirm its support for, and identify the manner in which it will play its role in, the funding of:

- Major Transportation Projects such as the Brent Spence Bridge and Western Hills Viaduct
- Leveraged Transportation Infrastructure enhancements

- Continued improvement of freight and Port Intermodal Terminal infrastructure consistent with the OKI Freight Recommendations;
- Smart Road infrastructure leveraging federal and state funding
- Advancement of a 3 state and 8 county Multi State Regional Transportation Commission and secure alternative supplemental funding measures for SORTA.
- The TID's priority policy project list
- Completion of the Fort Washington Way project including Full Build-out and utilization of the downtown Inter-modal Transit Center and construction of the Decks over Fort Washington Way
- Interstate Higher Speed to High Speed rail development
- Non-emergency ambulatory service for people with disabilities and to benefit the ability of people to live independently in their own homes for as long as they can.

6. A Safer Hamilton County

A local government has no greater responsibility than to ensure the safety of its residents. During 2018, Hamilton County will strive to ensure its resources are leveraged to promote and enhance public safety by:

- Continuing progress on the construction of a new Crime Lab
- Securing an agreed-upon funding plan for 911 emergency calls and dispatch that represents an appropriate cost-sharing allocation between the county, callers and local jurisdictions.
- Full consideration of all available options to mitigate against jail overcrowding.
- Working with the judiciary, Sheriff and outside agencies to ensure the ability to divert appropriate populations into treatment versus incarceration.
- Continuing the work of the Hamilton County Office of Reentry to reduce recidivism.
- Addressing any capital needs to handle jail overcrowding including the potential expansion of off-site treatment facilities.

7. Continuing Efforts to Abate the Heroin Epidemic

In 2017, the Hamilton County Heroin Coalition reorganized and expanded to include officials from state, federal, and local jurisdictions, our region's hospital systems, and the faith community. The HCHC has set expanding regional capacity for addiction treatment and eliminating barriers to treatment as its primary policy objective. To that end, the HCHC focused its efforts in the first half of 2017 on building partnerships with federal, state, local governments, and the hospitals. HCHC members advocated for, and secured, additional funding in the 2018-19 Ohio State Biennial Budget for the heroin epidemic in our region, including additional

funding for child welfare, increased funding for treatment, and funding to expand the implementation of Quick Response Teams throughout the county. The City of Cincinnati partnered with HCHC to allocate funding in its budget to fight the epidemic. HCHC is also currently pursuing several new state and federal grant opportunities. The board of County Commissioners created a new position within the county administration devoted to pursuit and management of those grant opportunities, as well as staff support for the HCHC. Looking forward to 2018, the Board will leverage the partnerships within the HCHC to pursue the following:

- Working with area hospitals, through the Health Collaborative, to increase access to treatment, train more doctors in addiction treatment, and develop a best in class regional standard of care for patients with Opioid Use Disorder
- Developing new tools for law enforcement to reduce the incidence of re-occurring overdoses including implementation of a pre-arrest diversion program and advocating for improvements to Ohio's "Casey's Law" statute
- Expanding capacity for addiction treatment
- Coordination of a "no wrong door" collaborative effort to ensure patients have access to treatment when they need it, regardless of the point of contact (police, EMS, courts, emergency rooms, primary care physicians, Jobs & Family Services, non-profit agencies, places of worship, friends, family, and other referral sources).
- Reduction of secondary infections and health complications through implementation of the Blood-borne Pathogen Prevention Program in partnership with Hamilton County Public Health, the City of Cincinnati Health Department, and the University of Cincinnati
- Massive scale distribution of Naloxone (Narcan) in an effort to determine best practices and reduce overdose deaths
- Convening a community conversation to decrease the persistent stigma surrounding addiction and opioid use

8. A Healthier Hamilton County

The vibrancy and productivity of a community is driven, to a large degree by the health of all segments of its population. Recognizing that residents of a community cannot achieve their fullest potential without basic health needs being fulfilled, Hamilton County will:

- Continue to invest in and expand the development of county initiatives that are finally beginning to reduce Infant Mortality through Cradle Cincinnati
- Continue efforts to abate the heroin epidemic in Hamilton County.

- Adopt a healthy tax levy plan that ensures the comprehensive utilization of available funding and work to ensure that such funding is used by all beneficiaries of the same consistent with adopted county policies
- Adopt the Hamilton County Oral health Access Initiative.

9. An Environmentally Sustainable and Secure Hamilton County

During 2018, Hamilton County will continue to take steps to ensure the appropriate stewardship of the the natural resources and environment of our community.

Accordingly, the County will:

- Revisit the Hamilton County Climate Action Plan and take steps to reactivate all appropriate measures given today's pressing issues
- Review, and where appropriate, implement key recommendations set forth in the Hamilton County Solid Waste Management plan update and amendments including looking for ways to increase office paper waste recycling; handling of difficult to manage waste streams; the reduction of food waste county-wide
- Examine ways to conserve water use and to offer incentives to the public for appreciative water conservation measures;
- Continue energy conservation work throughout County owned facilities to reduce cost and the environmental impact of County operations.
- Work with the County Soil & Water Conservation District, County Stormwater District and County Engineer to better handle water conservation and to reduce the number of county landslides
- Support initiatives that will result in Cleaner Air and Water
- Prudently assess sustainability initiatives for new County construction projects.

10. A Protective Hamilton County for Youth, Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

Hamilton County seeks to ensure it is a community which provides a supportive and nurturing environment for our most vulnerable populations. To that end, the County will:

- Work to ensure that County funded programs include sufficient dollars properly placed to ensure that at risk developmentally disabled and all disabled persons, seniors and children live in loving, safe and secure environments
- Support for the work of the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services, especially in the area of child welfare, and development of strategies to respond to increasing caseloads.

- Provide for the support of policies which promote a path to permanency for at risk youth. This may include lobbying for additional State and federal support for kinship care and the adoption of policies that prioritize keeping families whole, siblings together, the return of Foster Youth to Hamilton County and the reunification of families
- Support those measures, including transportation investments and the adoption of transportation related policies, that better ensure the ability for at risk developmentally disabled and all disabled persons, seniors and children, to live independently and in more safe and secure environments in their own homes
- Increase access to affordable housing and establish a full time housing court.

11. Investing in a quality, motivated, and productive county workforce

Governing a multi-billion dollar organization requires a commitment to the stewardship of the resources which make that organization function. In that regard, it is recognized that County employees are, in fact, the most important resource in terms of delivering quality service to the public:

- Seek to ensure all employees earn a living wage
- Enhance efforts to attract and retain a quality, motivated workforce
- Seek to ensure the workforce is compensated competitively with industry standards
- Work with the newly formed Hamilton County Commission on Women and Girls to guarantee that women employees are compensated with parity to male counterparts and to guarantee that Hamilton County maintains a family-friendly working environment
- Enact workplace policies that motivate the workforce and move Hamilton County closer to its ultimate goal of becoming an employer of choice in the local government and broader community.
- Prudently invest in those capital infrastructure, maintenance, and systems needs critical to the functioning of County operations.



Adopting a County Policy Agenda is significant under any approach. To accomplish an approach as broad as ours requires focus, attention and discipline. Accordingly, the utilization of such tools as a management dashboard with detailed benchmarks; stated goals; specific objectives and criteria by which we measure our progress and success that is discussed at regular intervals will also be critical to our efforts in 2018.