

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**STRUCTURALLY BALANCED 2015 RECOMMENDED BUDGET INCLUDES  
INCREASED STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION EFFORTS**

Today, Franklin County Administrators delivered to the Board of Commissioners a recommended budget for 2015 which is structurally balanced and includes increased investments in the Commissioners' top priorities of strategic economic development, supportive health and human services and good stewardship of natural resources, as well as provides for the continuation of community safety and fiscal sustainability.

The **Recommended All Funds Budget for 2015 is \$1.39 billion**, which represents a \$47.0 million or 3.3-percent decrease from 2014 projected actuals is driven by a decline of \$103.4 million in the County's Bond Retirement Fund as well as continued reductions in state and federal funding which began in 2011.

The Board of Commissioners evaluates budget requests from and establishes budgets for 35 County agencies. The **2015 Recommended General Fund Budget is \$399.8 million**, which is \$15.0 million or 3.6-percent less than the total requested.

The greatest and most basic priority in the County's budget continues to be **community safety and effective justice**. Over 64-percent of the County's General Fund will be spent on public safety, justice and security. Highlights include:

- \$42 million transfer to the Public Safety Center Fund for the construction of the new jail and morgue;
- \$114 million for the operations of the Sheriff's Office, \$65.8 million for the operations of the courts, and \$32.1 million for criminal and civil prosecution and legal defense services;
- \$200,000 in additional General Fund support for the Reception Center, a detention center diversion program which is a partnership among the Domestic and Juvenile Court, ADAMH, and the Columbus Police Department to connect offending youth and their families with resources to improve compliance with court requirements and reduce recidivism. Opened in 2013, 80-percent of the participating youth have had no new legal charges.

The Recommended Budget for **job creation, strategic economic development and fiscal security** includes \$17.1 million in grants, including \$7.9 million in grants funded by the state and federal governments and administered by the County. Over two-thirds of this money is devoted to providing affordable and safe housing.

In 2015, \$9.2 million in grants will be supported by the General Fund and include:

- \$5.5 million, the largest investment, to support Franklin County's suite of Smart Works programs, including the newly announced Infrastructure Works and soon-to-be announced green energy and workforce development programs.
- \$2 million for Experience Columbus to support efforts to attract tourism to our community;

- \$1 million for Columbus 2020 / Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce for business attraction and retention activities, including developing entrepreneurship and regional economic development collaboration.

Franklin County is the fastest growing metro county in the state of Ohio, adding over 16,000 new residents in 2013 alone. The **social and human services** category is the largest in the 'All Funds' budget, comprising 47.9-percent of the total. Another challenge that has accompanied the County's growth is the number of individuals and families living in poverty, 17.7-percent, which is more than 3-percentage points higher than 2005. In 2015, Franklin County will make the following investments:

- \$5.4 million in General Fund appropriations for the Veterans Service Commission to address increased demand for food vouchers, dental health care, housing assistance, utility payments and medical transportation services;
- \$300,000 for the Catalyst Program, a partnership between Child Support and Job and Family Services to assist non-custodial parents with workforce development services, job placement assistance and barrier removal services;
- \$5.2 million in Community Partnerships for Access to Health Care initiatives, a 4.6-percent increase over the 2014 budget, including \$2.3 million for Nationwide Children's Ohio Better Birth Outcomes initiative aimed at aggressively reducing the rate and number of preterm births in Franklin County.

Promoting **good stewardship of natural resources and environmental sustainability** remain top priorities for the Board of Commissioners. The 2015 Recommended Budget includes:

- \$2.5 million from the General Fund to upgrade water and sewer systems including improvements to the Hilliard Rome water line, the Timberlake Water Treatment Plant, Cherrydale Pump Station and Century Acres;
- \$9.3 million in expenditures supported by Ohio Water Development Authority loans for other critical sanitary infrastructure needs;
- Consideration of green building techniques in order to aim for the highest LEED certification feasible as the County develops plans for the new Public Safety Center.

As part of the 2015 Recommended Budget, the temporary sales tax which the county began collecting this year is expected to yield \$55 million in 2015 and will be used to support the construction of a new jail and morgue (\$42 million), increased investments in economic development such as the County's newly created Infrastructure Bank (\$4.8 million), community partnerships to support health and human services (\$3.9 million), and good stewardship of natural resources (\$2.5 million). The balance of annual revenue received from the temporary sales tax will be added to cash reserves to meet any unanticipated needs in furtherance of the County's fiscal sustainability principles. The temporary quarter-cent sales tax increase will expire on December 31, 2018.

Franklin County takes great pride in being able to sustain economic development and invest in programs that communities rely upon for the growth and vitality they desire. **"Franklin County continues to be a strong regional economy, a welcoming and safe community for families, a top community for good jobs and affordable housing, and a forward thinking leader in our state,"** said Franklin County Administrator Don L. Brown.

Franklin County will hold a series of public hearings during November and December concerning the 2015 Budget recommendations. The hearing schedule, as well as the entire 2015 Recommended Budget, is available on-line at <http://budget.franklincountyohio.gov/budget/2015/>.

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