



## County Executive Chris Abele's 2012 Budget Proposal Highlights

*County Executive Chris Abele has proposed a budget that will close a \$55 million budget deficit (due primarily to \$29 million in state cuts) without major service cuts or a property tax increase. Unlike prior-year proposals, Abele's recommended budget does not include the closing of swimming pools or major social service cuts. Instead, transit is being preserved. Mental health services will be increased by \$3 million. And the budget also puts Milwaukee County on a path to fiscal sustainability by beginning to retire debt and dedicating a portion of land sales to paying down debt. The budget is based on conservative revenue estimates and does not include unrealistic revenue assumptions from items such as land sales or from the potential savings on backdrop payments.*

- Erases an inherited \$55 million budget shortfall, including \$29 million in state cuts without major cuts to county services.
- Holds the current property tax levy – no property tax increase.
- Offers a realistic plan that would eliminate potential massive transit service cuts, without fixed-route fare increases, sparing freeway flyers and flyer service to Summerfest and the State Fair; creates new express routes.
- Retains border-to-border paratransit service for residents with disabilities, rejecting a proposal to shrink the coverage area.
- Adds \$3 million in additional tax levy funding to support moving mental health services out of hospitals and toward community care, including support to create up to two North Side crisis resource centers and to develop additional community-based services.
- Dedicates a portion of the proceeds from 2012 land sales to a new revolving loan fund to provide capital for businesses.
- Creates a new debt retirement program, allocating \$1 million in tax levy and a portion of land sale revenues to retire debt.
- Reorganizes county government for more efficiency and accountability by:
  - Creating a new Division of Economic Development to include real estate, economic development, marketing and the county land information office to serve as a central point for business and job development, retention and expansion.
  - Forming a free-standing Department of Human Resources, and creating a new Department of Transportation with Airport, Transit/Paratransit, Highway and Fleet Management Divisions.
  - Establishing a new Division of Facilities Management that will also house architectural, engineering and environmental services in order to achieve stronger efficiencies.
  - Consolidating county procurement activities in a new division, providing more consistency and accountability.