

LIPSCOMB REPORT

THE 1ST DISTRICT CONNECTION

WINTER 2010 • Volume 2



Theodore Lipscomb
Milwaukee County
1st District Supervisor

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Economic & Community
Development
(Vice-Chair)

Health & Human Needs

Parks, Energy & Environment

APPOINTMENTS

Milwaukee County Task Force
on Economic Stimulus
(Chair)

Milwaukee County Research
Park Corporation Board

Milwaukee Public Library
Board of Trustees



Dear 1st District Resident:

Our nation and its citizens have endured a number of difficult economic events recently, and it is not over yet. Every day the news is full of more reports of the distress, but many of us know the crisis more personally. Our incomes are down, layoffs are real, and we are managing, at least short-term, to cut costs and maintain our way of life.

Many people think that County Government should face this tough economic time in the same way that for-profit corporations often confront a downturn – cuts, cuts, and more cuts. Milwaukee County government is clearly not immune to the downturn but we have a mission to manage and mandates to follow. Our focus is not on maintaining a profit margin. Unlike the widgetmaker down the block facing declining sales, excess inventory and credit challenges, Milwaukee County provides a wide-ranging set of mandated programs and quality of life services that constitute a civilized society.

Milwaukee County is largely subject to the overall economic cycle in terms of revenue, but the demand for public services is often the inverse of what the private market experiences. It makes sense if you think about it. Your Milwaukee County government runs public transit, a court system, two correctional facilities, a mental health hospital, community support programs, and buries the unclaimed bodies of indigent county residents who have died. In a downturn you can surmise that demand for many of these services will spike. Milwaukee County cannot simply slash and burn our way out of our fiscal challenge through short-term maneuvers.

Our task as a County Board is to be responsible in the creation of the budget, and I stand behind all of the votes I cast. The final budget resulted in a tax levy increase of 2.18%. It is difficult to forecast the impact on individual taxpayers because it depends on whether you live in Milwaukee or Glendale and the assessed value of your house. City of Milwaukee values are down overall and the average taxpayer there will actually pay less. Taxpayers in the City of Glendale will collectively pay a greater share of total County property tax levy because values were relatively strong there in comparison to other municipalities.

Milwaukee County needs to think strategically and plan long-term in order to prepare for the future. After a long hiatus, a strategic planning process that was abruptly shelved earlier this decade was restarted at the urging of the County Board. I hope this effort will bring out new ideas, challenge the status quo, encourage better policy debate, and move us toward a more sustainable government for Milwaukee County.

I certainly value the role Milwaukee County plays in establishing and maintaining a high quality of life for our citizens. I am proud to serve as your representative on the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors. Please contact my office if you are interested in improving Milwaukee County and have ideas or issues that we can work on together.

Sincerely,

Theodore Lipscomb
Milwaukee County Supervisor, 1st District

Join eNotify for My eNewsletter:

Would you like to receive updates from me on issues and events concerning Milwaukee County? If so, I invite you to enroll in eNotify. You can join by visiting my website www.county.milwaukee.gov/Lipscomb and clicking on the E-news link on the right side menu.

Estabrook Dam Repair Moves Forward

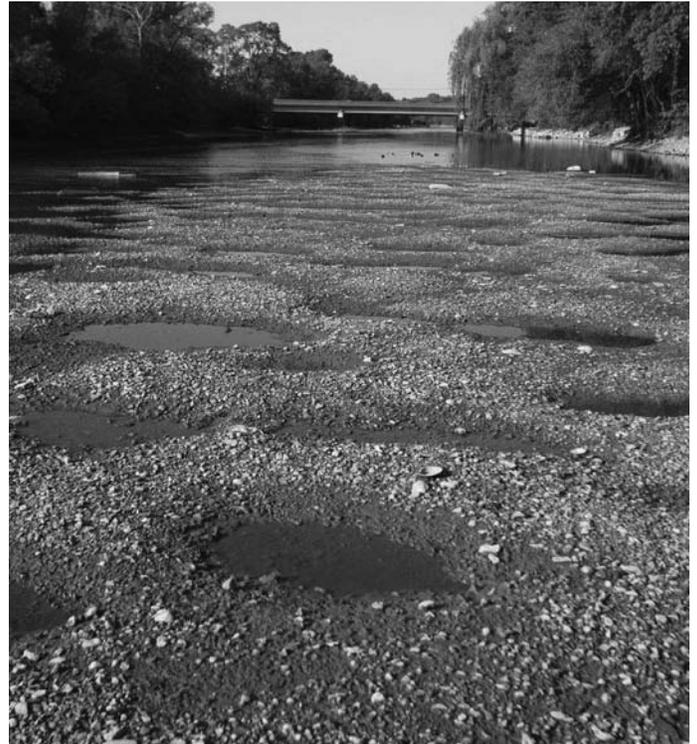
Supervisor Lipscomb continued his fight in 2009, working alongside concerned residents and river enthusiasts, to save the Estabrook Dam. The dam was constructed in 1938 as one element in a massive flood mitigation project, which alleviated the chronic annual flooding that ravaged Glendale and Milwaukee neighborhoods near the river. The dam, which is owned and operated by Milwaukee County, fell into disrepair due to neglect, accumulated debris over the years, and recently attracted the stern attention of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR).

A Long Debate

Vigorous policy debate raged for well over a year, and several small steps were taken during that time to help resolve the problems at the dam. Some minor repairs were paid for by an anonymous donor. Volunteers, led by Glendale resident and tree removal business owner Lance Wallace, extracted many tons of logs and debris from the river near the dam. This debris was creating an uncontrollable “natural” dam as garbage and trees piled up behind the Estabrook Dam’s icebreakers. The work of the many volunteers saved Milwaukee County more than \$15,000 over the cost of hiring a private contractor.

2010 Budget Action

Supervisor Lipscomb led the effort to resolve the dam issue by pushing for a cost effective 25-year fix as outlined by a professional engineer in a 2006 report. The Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors established a 2010 capital project in the amount of \$2.1 Million for repair of the Estabrook Dam, removal of contaminated sediment, and shoreline stabilization. This action settles the policy question and moves us closer to resolution. Removal was also estimated to cost about \$2 Million even before considering some



The water level of the Milwaukee River fell dramatically this summer because the dam gates were left open under orders from the WDNR, leaving a muddy mess in the area.

of the other costs and impacts that decision would have created. The Board took the appropriate action.

Next Steps

Early in 2010 the Parks Department will contract with an engineering firm to conduct a more detailed stability analysis of the dam. The intent of this new study is to better define the scope of work necessary to make the dam safe even under extreme conditions. The WDNR determined that a similar study conducted in 2006, that placed the cost at less than \$800,000, needs further refinement. The new analysis will explore various options for making the dam stable in an effort to find the most cost effective solution. After that analysis is complete, Milwaukee County can finally put the project out for bid. The water level of the river is likely to remain low until all work on the project is complete.

Do you want to learn more? Check out the Milwaukee River Preservation Association website: (www.milwaukeeiverpreservation.org).

WHERE DOES YOUR PROPERTY TAX DOLLAR GO?

Milwaukee County represents 16% of your tax dollar



39¢ Milwaukee Public Schools (\$295.8 million)	32¢ City of Milwaukee (\$246.8 million)	16¢ Milwaukee County (\$124.3 million)	8¢ MATC (\$57.3 million)	5¢ MMSD (\$39.7 million)
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* State of Wisconsin share is approximately one cent
* Total may not add to \$1.00 due to rounding

County Budget

Milwaukee County faces a growing crisis. We cannot continue to provide all of the services that the State of Wisconsin mandates and our residents expect without making dramatic changes. Expenses, including both current and legacy costs, are growing faster than revenue (taxes, fees, etc.); this is often referred to as our "structural deficit." We started the 2010 budget process with an estimated \$80 Million shortfall in the cost to continue current operations. Strategic Planning and action is necessary to confront this challenge and thrive long-term.

Wage and benefit concessions are the hot topic of the 2010 Milwaukee County Budget. County Executive Walker outlined a package of cuts that would have sliced nearly 16% of the wages and benefits of the average employee. The County Board amended the budget to reflect a pay freeze, furlough days, increased employee contributions to healthcare premiums, and pension benefit concessions. These actions assume savings of approximately \$20 Million if effectuated for the full year. These changes cannot be implemented unilaterally; most County employees are represented by one of several unions and labor laws require negotiation. If we do not reach agreement, an arbitrator will settle these issues based on a final offer from the County and the unions.

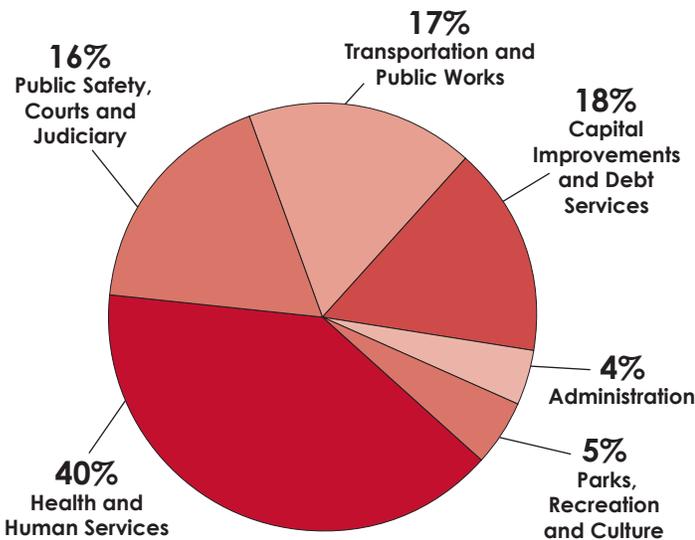
Common thinking in some political circles assumes that local government can simply slash spending through dramatic cuts. This simplistic approach ignores a number of internal and external realities. Many of our largest financial obligations (pensions, health benefits, etc.) are commitments that cannot be ignored even if they were ill advised or are now seen as unaffordable and inconvenient. Most of the services provided by the County are mandated by the State of Wisconsin; Public Safety (courts, jails and the Sheriff) currently consumes about half of the County property tax levy.

I will continue to vote against spending that is wasteful and unnecessary, but I will not participate in gutting vital services, particularly for those who are least able to survive the cut.

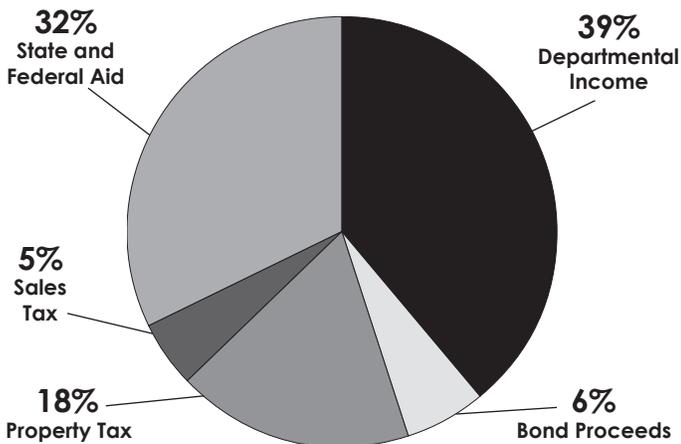
The Public Policy Forum, a local nonpartisan research organization, released a number of reports and studies outlining the financial challenges facing Milwaukee County.

(www.publicpolicyforum.org)

EXPENDITURES FOR 2010



REVENUES FOR 2010



2010 Budget Update *What did they do on issues important to you...*

BUDGET AND POLICY ISSUES

SAFETY NET SERVICES



Mental Health Services

Interim Disability Assistance Program

Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) Services

OUR PARK SYSTEM

Parks Maintenance



Parking Meters at the Lakefront

Pools and Aquatic Centers



Estabrook Dam

MILWAUKEE COUNTY

countyparks.com

OUR TRANSIT SYSTEM



Fares and Fees

Routes and Services



Call Center

Bus Rapid Transit



County Executive (CEX) **Scott Walker** (PROPOSED BUDGET)

Eliminated, reduced and privatized various services for those suffering from mental health issues who are trying to live safely and productively in the community.

Cut this successful program which loans money to those who are eligible for disability during the period of time when they are not getting other help.

Cut availability of AODA treatment and detox services despite a waiting list and a strong track record of effectiveness.

Eliminated 39.12 Parks Worker Maintenance II Positions.

Assumed \$450,000 in new revenue from Lincoln Memorial Drive and Lakefront parking lots without any details of rates, enforcement or costs.

Closed all indoor pools and all outdoor deepwell pools. Walker wanted to build an additional Aquatic Center for \$11.2 Million in the southern suburbs.

Allocated \$200,000 of the contingency fund for another stability analysis of the dam but no money to satisfy the current outstanding order of the Department of Natural Resources.

Raised cash fares by 12.5% to \$2.25, among the highest in the nation for a bus-only system. Created a new \$0.25 transfer fee which is rare among peer systems.

Cut service on the heavily used Route #12; the #27 to the Glendale Industrial Park; and #68 along Port Washington Rd., which serves Bayshore Town Center, Pick'n Save, and Cardinal Stritch University.

Eliminated the call center which provides route and trip information to thousands of callers all week long.

Proposed a new \$43 Million Bus Rapid Transit System along Wisconsin Avenue to serve the as yet unbuilt UWM Innovation Park on the County Grounds in Wauwatosa.

Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors (ADOPTED BUDGET)

Restored mental health services and overrode vetoes by CEX Walker.

Restored the IDAP program and overrode a veto by CEX Walker.

Restored the funding and overrode a veto by CEX Walker.

Denied the elimination of Parks Worker Maintenance II Positions.

Denied the proposal to install parking meters in recognition of the desire to keep the lakefront free and accessible to the public.

Maintained and upgraded the Noyes and Pulaski indoor pools while addressing deferred maintenance of the deepwell pools. Eliminated construction of another Aquatic Center.

Created a \$2.1 Million capital project to remove more than 12 years of accumulated debris and sediment, repair the dam, and stabilize the shorelines for a "25-year fix" as outlined in 2006 engineering report.

Eliminated the transfer fee.

Restored these routes using Joint Access Reverse Commute (JARC) grant funding and minimal property tax levy.

Originally restored partial funding to provide peak service but this provision was later vetoed by CEX Walker and sustained by the Board.

Eliminated the proposed BRT.

County Supervisor **Theodore LIPSCOMB** (1ST DISTRICT)

Supported the restoration of mental health services and fought against "savings" that cost more later when clients end up in the hospital or jail.

Voted to restore IDAP and to override a veto by CEX Walker.

Voted to restore the funding for AODA and Detox services and to override CEX Walker's veto.

Voted to restore positions in light of an estimated \$300 Million in deferred maintenance - cheaper to repair our assets than to replace them.

Voted to deny parking meters again, as he did in 2008, and voted to override a veto of CEX Walker on this issue.

Co-sponsor of the adopted Pools Amendment. We should provide low-cost high-volume recreational opportunities in underserved areas.

Authored the Estabrook Dam Amendment and fought vigorously and successfully to override CEX Walker's partial veto of the project, which jeopardized timely repair.

Voted to eliminate the transfer fee. A dedicated funding source is now the best way to build and maintain a modern transit system while stabilizing the fares.

Sup. Lipscomb co-sponsored the amendment to restore these bus routes which are a vital link for many citizens to school and work.

Voted to restore funding and to override the veto of CEX Walker. The loss of the call center will diminish the competitiveness of the system.

Authored the amendment that eliminated the proposed BRT and removed \$43 Million in expenditures from the 2010 budget.

TOTAL SPENDING FOR 2010

\$1,481,577,120 (PROPOSED)

MINUS

\$1,460,291,522 (APPROVED)

EQUALS

\$21,285,598 LESS THAN WALKER PROPOSED

Referendum UPDATE

Milwaukee County voters supported a November 2008 referendum requesting authority from the State of Wisconsin to impose a 1% sales tax to be used for at least \$67 Million in property tax relief and dedicated funding for Emergency Medical Services (EMS); Transit; and Parks, Recreation, and Culture. Our Governor and the legislature have not yet agreed to comply with the citizens' call for help, but separate action on both transit and parks is now under discussion by our elected officials in Madison.

REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Governor Doyle and some legislators are more focused on addressing the transit component of the referendum question due to an impending transit crisis. Up to one-third of the Milwaukee County Transit System could be eliminated in the next year without a new source of funding. Most observers believe that the solution is likely to include the creation of some form of Regional Transit Authority (RTA). There is currently only a draft bill available for review, but the hope is that real progress can be made when State leaders return to the Capital for legislative action in January. The issue is linked to the local politics of not just Milwaukee but also Racine and Kenosha Counties since they are our proposed regional partners. The RTA is largely focused on a proposed Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee (KRM) commuter rail project, but the more dire need is funding of the existing local bus systems.

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE

Supervisor Lipscomb recently spent a day in Madison to testify before the Committee on Ways and Means in support of AB504, an Assembly Bill that would authorize up to a .5% sales tax to be used for Parks, Recreation, and Culture. The legislation would mandate property tax relief by permanently removing those items from the levy. Cultural spending by Milwaukee County currently includes the Zoo, Museums, the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, and the War Memorial. Your Milwaukee County Parks are comprised of 15,000 acres of land, bike and pedestrian trails, golf courses, pools, ball fields, hundreds of buildings, pavilions, the domes and botanical gardens. There is an estimated \$300 Million in deferred maintenance within the park system and budget cuts have left the system with less money and staff today than it had 25 years ago. This situation is clearly not sustainable and requires a new approach.

The Milwaukee Justice Center

Need Legal Help?

The Milwaukee Justice Center is a partnership between Milwaukee County, the Milwaukee Bar Association (Lawyers), and the Marquette Law School. The center provides free self-help desks and legal resources to litigants who are not represented by an Attorney but need help to navigate the paperwork and filing process in the areas of family law and small claims; these resource are available in the Courthouse, Room G9. The center also operates a free Brief Legal Advice and Referral Clinic in Room 106 of the Courthouse; walk-in clients are eligible for a one-time consultation in 20-30 minute increments.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The private sector is the overall engine of our economy and small businesses provide most of the employment, but government still plays a vital role. When credit markets cease up and the private market is thrown into a tailspin, strategic government spending can be a key step in priming the engine before it is restarted. That is where we are today.

In 2009 we witnessed an intense effort by the Federal government, in concert with the States, to stimulate the economy. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (better known as the "Stimulus Bill") funded numerous programs including many which benefit Milwaukee County residents and taxpayers. Ultimately we wait for the private market to reinvigorate employment and sustain a recovery.

The stimulus is also critical to local governments that have struggled to provide resources for necessary projects. Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker built his 2010 proposed budget around various stimulus programs and bonding opportunities that were made available through the Obama Administration's plan.

I was appointed by the County Board Chairman to serve as Chair of the Task Force on Economic Stimulus; I took this charge very seriously. Through action of the taskforce and support from the County Board, even over the objection of the County Executive, we were successful in ensuring a more vigorous and effective pursuit of stimulus funding. In the upper right corner of this page, you will find a summary of some of the funding that is coming to Milwaukee County.

MILWAUKEE COUNTY STIMULUS PROJECTS By the Numbers:

TRANSIT	\$25,700,000
ROAD AND BRIDGES	\$8,000,000
PUBLIC SAFETY	\$2,760,000
ALTERNATIVE FUEL VEHICLES	\$210,000
ENERGY EFFICIENCY	\$732,400
CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT	\$2,859,000
AIRPORT-RUNWAY SAFETY	\$2,500,000
HOUSING	
HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION	\$712,755
VETERANS	\$465,341
ELDERLY MEAL SERVICE	\$332,056
BONDING (CAPITAL) PROJECTS	\$3,000,000
(Estimated savings over the life of the bonds)	

TOTAL VALUE = \$47,271,552

*Re\$ources for
Entrepreneur\$*

Wisconsin Entrepreneur's Network
(www.wenportal.org) Find new resources.

Biz Starts Milwaukee
(bizstartsmilwaukee.com) Get connected.

Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (wwbic.org) is not just for women. They offer seminars, counseling, and business financing to aid the startup or expansion of your business.

MillerCoors has offered the **Urban Entrepreneur Series**, a business plan competition, for 10 years. Applicants compete for annual prizes of up to \$100,000 to invest in their businesses. Find out more online at millercoorsmues.com.

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**TOXIC
MUD**

KEEP AWAY!

The Milwaukee River in Lincoln Park contains high levels of PCB's and other dangerous toxins. Due to the unnaturally low water levels, there is a higher risk of exposure. Warning signs are posted in the area but people are still fishing in the area and children are frequently playing in the mud. This picture was taken just west of Milwaukee River Parkway and north of Hampton Avenue, the most heavily polluted section. If you have children, tell them to stay away from these toxic mud flats, and if you see children in this area, please alert them too!

