



OFFICE OF MAYOR VIRG BERNERO
124 W. MICHIGAN AVENUE – NINTH FLOOR
LANSING, MI 48933

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CONTACT: Chad Gamble
(517) 285-7191

Mayor's 2018 Budget Puts Public Safety and Neighborhoods First

City Budget Raises Rainy Day Fund to 15-Year High

*Mayor Seeks Ballot Proposal to Fund a
Neighborhood Streets and Sidewalks Millage*

*Mayor Targets New Funding for
Youth Development and Crime Prevention*

(LANSING) – Mayor Virg Bernero today unveiled a proposed spending plan for the city's next fiscal year that includes strategic investments in local roads and sidewalks, neighborhoods and public safety. Bernero stated that the FY 2018 budget begins with a modest surplus for the fourth straight year.

“This is a no-frills budget with prudent investments where it counts,” Mayor Bernero said. Mayor Bernero's FY 2018 Executive Budget Recommendation outlines a \$128.5 million general fund budget, a 4.0% increase from FY 2017, and an all-funds citywide budget of \$207.6 million, 4.0% more than FY 2017.

Bernero said his budget plan allocates additional funds to repair city streets and sidewalks, but he was also critical of the state's inadequate solution to road funding.

“The state continues to divest away from road funding, even though they are directly responsible for providing local communities with road repair dollars through the state gas tax,” Bernero said.

[more]

Bernero will seek a ballot proposal asking voters for a 6-year, 1.0 dedicated millage (outside of the city's operating levy), targeted specifically for sidewalks and neighborhood street maintenance as a stopgap to the anemic funding from the Michigan Legislature. If approved, this millage would represent a \$50 annual increase for a home with a market value of \$100,000.

Engineering estimates indicate it will cost more than \$25 million to restore our neighborhood sidewalks and \$211 million to restore city streets to an average condition. Millage monies would be dedicated to put a larger dent in a growing backlog of streets and sidewalks needing improvement.

To continue strengthening the city's rainy day fund, Bernero's plan again allocates \$500,000 to General Fund reserves, helping the city close in on a target of 12-15%.

"We have effectively eliminated the city's structural deficit," Bernero continued. "Now we must continue making the strategic investments necessary to grow our economy, improve essential city services and strengthen the quality of life in Lansing."

Bernero said his FY 2018 budget plan highlights his administration's renewed commitment to building strong neighborhoods across the city, including the Block-by-Block neighborhood wellness initiative, the Financial Empowerment Center and the "My Brother's Keeper" initiative for youth development and crime prevention.

Also included in the budget recommendation is continued support for Groesbeck golf course, an asset to the entire region. In recognition of enhanced opportunities for event opportunities, funding includes the construction of a new patio and permanent canopy, as well as the transfer of operations for Groesbeck from the Parks Department to the Lansing Entertainment and Public Facilities Authority (LEPFA) with the start of the 2018 golf season. This move of operations will align golf course operations with LEPFA's mission of visitor attraction, marketing, and facility programming and will enhance synergies between tourists and conference attendees at the Lansing Center to recreation opportunities at Groesbeck golf course.

The proposed budget demonstrates Bernero's commitment to public safety, with police and fire department operations comprising 60% of the General Fund budget. FY 2018 initiatives include increased funding for important public safety training and recruitment efforts and further expansion of our community engagement efforts.

The proposed budget also funds continued investments in the city's Information Technology (IT) Department and Police Department to take proactive measures for data security. While violent crime continues to decline, identity theft, online hacking and other forms of cyber-terrorism require ever-increasing vigilance and proactive measures.

"Public safety continues to be my top priority, and these days that means being prepared for cyber-attacks to our digital infrastructure," Bernero said. "My budget plan supports continued police and IT training and equipment that is up to the task of protecting Lansing residents and businesses from cyber-crime."

Mayor Bernero formally submits his FY 2018 budget recommendation to the Lansing City Council at their regular meeting tonight. Under the City Charter, the Council has until May 15, 2017 to adopt a final city spending plan for the next budget year.