



December 14, 2021

Olmsted County Board of Commissioners and residents of Olmsted County, Minnesota,

On behalf of Olmsted County, I present to you the approved 2022 budget. Our budget is used to help Olmsted County achieve four goals:

- **Assure safe and healthy communities:** We keep the community safe and provide pathways to health, housing, and well-being.
- **Be good stewards of our built and natural environments:** We provide excellent transportation, land use, and recreation; protect air, water, and soil quality, and manage waste effectively.
- **Maintain foundations of democracy:** We provide fair property valuation and administer fair elections, provide access to documents of record, and provide access to remedy through the judicial system.
- **Provide operational excellence:** We develop our employees; use public resources wisely; and plan, adapt, and respond effectively.

Olmsted County is committed to the success of our community. Our 2022 budget funds will be used to make investments in many areas including existing commitments to meet the goals outlined above. These funds will also be used to continually improve our programs and services. I am pleased to share more information about our budget and provide examples of our 2022 strategic priorities.

Developing the operating budget

Olmsted County instituted strong financial practices and policies long ago which have served us well for many years. Despite economic uncertainties and other challenges due to the pandemic, in 2021, Olmsted County once again received a Aaa credit rating (with a stable outlook) – the highest possible rating – from Moody’s Investors Service. As we construct our annual county budget, we always carefully consider the best and most prudent use of our public funds.

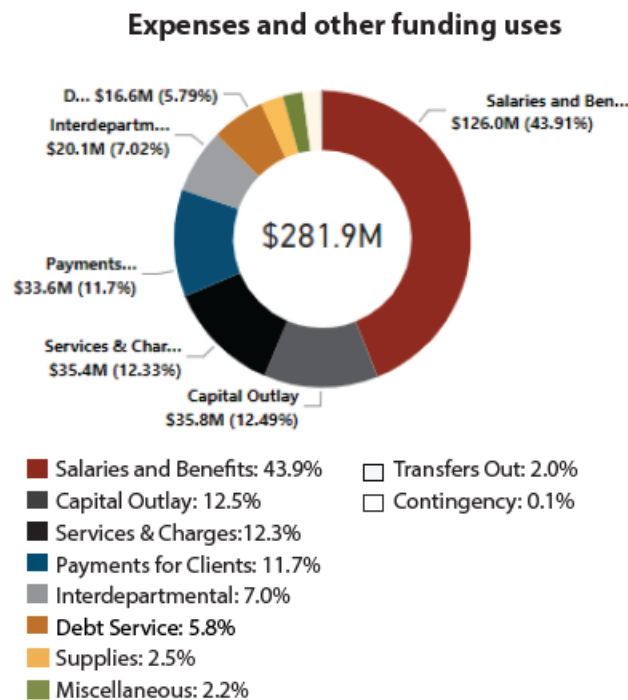
To reach Olmsted County’s budget, we add together our base budget and our approved budget decision requests (which include capital improvement program projects.) Various sources fund this budget such as property taxes, charges for services, and grants. For 2022, the approved budget for the county and the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) combined totals \$281,915,654. Of this total, \$116,757,218 is funded with county and HRA property taxes of \$112,822,877 and

\$3,934,341 respectively. The remaining \$165,158,436 of our budget comes from intergovernmental revenues, charges for services, transportation taxes, bond proceeds, reserves, interest income, and other miscellaneous sources. The county's \$112,822,877 property tax is a 4.9% increase over 2021. The chart below illustrates the tax-supported portions of the budget.

County only	Base budget	Approved budget decision requests	Approved budget
Property tax levy increase	3.10%	1.80%	4.90%

The HRA \$3,934,341 property tax has been increased by \$156,686 (the maximum allowed by MN Statute) over 2021. These additional funds will be used for homelessness prevention and housing stability, development, and rehabilitation at a critical time of need in our communities.

As noted above, the total 2022 approved budget is \$281,915,654 compared to 2021 expenditures of \$263,995,510.



Capital improvement program highlights

In addition to our operating budget, the county also approves an annual capital improvement program (CIP).

One highlight for the 2022 CIP is advancing recommended improvements to the Olmsted County Government Center building. After several years of analysis, a revised

plan to meet the needs of the justice system was presented to the Olmsted County Board of Commissioners in 2020. The commissioners reviewed schematic design plans in 2021, and construction is expected to start in 2022. Plans for 2022 include the construction of an additional courtroom to accommodate felony trials, support spaces on the fifth floor of the government center, and renovations on the fourth floor to accommodate the relocation of court administration. Additional phases of work related to justice space and plans for future years will be developed in 2022 as well.

Investments in community resources

Quality of life for Olmsted County residents is critical. That is why Olmsted County's annual budget also supports other community resources that make this area a wonderful place to live, work, learn, play, and grow. The 2022 budget includes \$1,355,248 million for local libraries, and an additional \$1,264,844 for other community resources such as the History Center of Olmsted County, Legal Assistance of Olmsted County, and the Olmsted Soil and Water Conservation District.

Strategic highlights

Our operating budget helps Olmsted County achieve several strategic priorities, a few of which are highlighted below.

COVID-19

Olmsted County has seen firsthand how COVID-19 has impacted residents' quality of life. To help individuals and families struggling during these difficult times, the Olmsted County Board of Commissioners approved the hiring of nine additional staff members on our Family Support and Assistance team for 2022. These employees will be focused on providing benefits assistance and getting financial and food support to those in need.

The pandemic has also exacerbated the need for additional mental health care supports in our community. To help residents' get the mental health care they need as well as assist with housing and homelessness challenges in our community, the county board also approved the hiring of five additional social workers for 2022.

We understand we still have a tremendous amount of work before us in this pandemic, and we remain dedicated to this county's COVID response. We will continue leading and serving the community through this pandemic every step of the way. Look to our county [COVID-19 webpage](#) and social media accounts for the latest local data and information.

Race and Racism as a Public Health Issue

A disparity that cannot be overlooked is the higher rate of illness and death among racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States compared to their white counterparts. In August 2020, the Olmsted County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution directing two of the county's advisory groups – the [Public Health Services Advisory Board](#) (PHSAB) and the [Human Rights Commission \(HRC\)](#) – to jointly study and investigate racism as a public health issue.

Projects completed in 2021:

- Reviews of the current processes, programs, and services offered by Olmsted County and in partnership with community organizations for successes and opportunities for improvement.
- Reviews of current county data and information to make the best-informed decisions.
- Work sessions to identify draft recommendations.

Projects to be completed in 2022:

- Engaging with the community and gathering feedback to understand what is most important to those who live and work in Olmsted County.
- Presenting recommendations for action to the Olmsted County Board of Commissioners in mid-2022.

Redistricting

Redistricting will also be taking place in 2022. Redistricting is the redrawing of electoral district boundaries every 10 years to account for population shifts and growth over the previous decade. This impacts all levels of government, including county boards. The names you see on your August 9 primary ballot in 2022 could also be impacted, because of the changes to district boundaries. Opportunities to participate in the local redistricting process have already begun and will continue over the next several months. The deadline for new county maps to be drawn is April 26, 2022.

To learn more and to find out how you can provide input, visit

www.olmstedcounty.gov/restricting.

Elections

Following redistricting, Olmsted County will have two elections events in 2022: a primary on August 9 and the General Election on November 8. Olmsted County is anticipating additional costs in 2022 to ensure election integrity and will be onboarding more temporary staff to assist with the elections process due to the increased popularity in absentee voting. We are expecting absentee voting by mail to be in high demand again this year, as voters have come to appreciate the convenience and protection that it offers, especially as we continue managing through the pandemic.

One Olmsted

Olmsted County is an inclusive, welcoming environment where diversity is celebrated. To help us further One Olmsted, our diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative, we have allocated funds in 2022 for the hiring of a recruiter on our Human Resources team. This individual will assist all parts of the county in recruiting and retaining an excellent workforce. It is our goal to have our county workforce more racially and culturally reflective of our community.

2022 residential survey

Every three years, with the help of state funding, Olmsted County conducts a residential survey to measure residents' perceptions about their quality of life and specific factors

of community well-being. The survey also asks residents to provide input on county government programs and services. As we look to continually improve or design new programs and services, this survey provides Olmsted County with useful direction and information. We will be doing the survey again in early 2022 with a random sampling of residents across each of our commissioner districts. Final survey results will be shared with all county residents in the summer of 2022.

Summary

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not raise property taxes in 2021 and our county put many projects on hold. The 2022 budget does include some necessary increases to ensure continuity of programs and services and important advancements in our work. We remain committed to using these resources wisely to achieve our county's mission to provide the foundation of a vibrant community.

I'd like to express my gratitude to Olmsted County's 1,300 employees for their unwavering dedication. Every day, these incredible individuals play an important role in serving Olmsted County's residents and visitors. On behalf of the entire Olmsted County team, we look forward to the work ahead in 2022.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heidi Welsch', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Heidi Welsch
Olmsted County Administrator

[View the 2022 Budget in Brief document](#)