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Mayor Provides Update Relating to the 2022 Proposed Budget

Bloomington, Ind. - Mayor John Hamilton provided an update relating to the 2022 City budget ahead of the City Council vote scheduled for Wednesday, October 27. The update reflects ongoing dialogue and discussion with Council members and the public, which began in earnest in April and have continued through this month.

“The 2022 City budget before the City Council is a critically important part of our recovery from the pandemic and our continued investment in the future,” said Mayor Hamilton. “It reflects our community values, and is essential to advancing our goals of climate justice, inclusion, and the high quality of life we all deserve and expect in Bloomington.”

The budget and several related ordinances appropriate \$170 million for operations and staffing of all city operations for the next calendar year. Under Indiana law, the Mayor must propose a balanced budget, and the Council may vote to adopt it as is or with reductions in specific fund categories. Or, if the Council fails to adopt a new budget, by law the current year budget continues unchanged for another year.

“The proposed budget reflects extensive involvement from Council and the public, with months of input on specific programs and positions as well as overall investment levels,” said Mayor Hamilton. “It is critically important that the Council adopt a new budget, because failing to do so would cause severe harm. I look forward to continued collaboration among all interested parties, and provide the following updates relevant to the proposed budget, which like many other plans depend upon positive votes to adopt the 2022 budget.”

In connection with public safety investments, the Mayor indicated that, as police negotiations begin this week on the labor contract for 2023 and beyond, the administration is committed to reaching a deal that will incorporate into a new 2023 base salary the \$5,000 one-time retention bonus being provided through 2022 for sworn police officers. Maintaining this level of support and finalizing a negotiated labor agreement will depend on Council approving sufficient funding to continue recruiting and retaining talented law enforcement personnel. The administration and the police department will also continue to innovate, expanding non-sworn as well as sworn officer capacities, and engaging a search firm to assist in recruitment of new officers.

In light of the challenges posed by the global climate emergency and the need to advance climate-related infrastructure goals locally, the Mayor will propose the issuance of two \$5 million general obligation bonds to fund additional sustainability initiatives, to be considered in the first half of 2022. Pending approval by City Council, a pair of five-year bonds, which could be replicated every five years, would generate revenue for the Parks and Recreation Department and the City’s General Fund to support investments related to several of the City’s formal plans, including the Comprehensive Plan, the Sustainability Action Plan, the Transportation Plan, and the Climate Action Plan.

In addition, the Mayor indicated plans to invest in new personnel to help advance community responses to the climate emergency. The Mayor proposed a new position in the Economic and Sustainable Development department to accelerate the work of the Assistant Director for Sustainability, funded with general funds currently in the Sanitation Department. The Mayor also announced support for shared, community-based personnel that could facilitate increased collaboration: up to \$200,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) resources to staff a “Green Ribbon Panel” -- outside city government -- to build and attract wider community momentum

toward climate goals. The Mayor in January 2020 first proposed such a panel, to be composed of government, nonprofit, educational, and private sector community and regional representatives to develop mutual goals and approaches to address the climate crisis.

“The 2022 budget offers real progress for our residents, our employees, and our whole community,” said Mayor Hamilton. “I urge the Council to support it, advancing our shared goals and brightening our future.”