

I believe the best budgets are practical, not flashy. They make the most of the resources available: prioritizing the essentials, considering the future, and leaving room for the unexpected. The latest county budget does just that. It assures the protection and well-being of our citizens without increasing the tax rate on residents or requiring the county to take on new debt. Here are three areas in which I believe the fiscal year 2020 budget will make Maricopa County stronger and position us for future growth while sustaining and improving the lifestyle that we desire.

Public safety

Protecting our residents is a core function of government and that's why we spend more than 50% of our money on it. This budget not only funds deputies and detention officers, prosecutors and investigators, judges and support staff, it also funds the *systems and technology* that allow our criminal justice partners to operate more efficiently and fairly. Major public safety investments in fiscal year 2020 include:

- A new jail and intake facility that will speed up the booking process so officers from your communities are back on your streets faster
- Continued work on the Southeast Regional Justice Center in Mesa, which will consolidate East Valley justice courts in one location for improved service and efficiency
- The renovation of an old jail into modern office space for the County Attorney's Office, which is adding new positions this year to better handle the growing number of cases involving body camera evidence

Elections

The integrity of our elections is paramount to a healthy democracy. The Board of Supervisors is taking significant steps in the coming year to ensure people can vote when and how they want to. The FY 2020 budget reserves funding for new tabulation machines that will enhance security and also lead to a faster vote count. The budget also sets aside money for additional Elections Department staff, if needed. This is part of a larger review of our election processes. You can read in-depth reports, find press releases and other related material, and provide your feedback by visiting the [2019 Elections Review Project website](#).

District 1

This county budget makes targeted investments in communities, including those in the East Valley. By funding transportation projects, parks, and other services, the county supports a regional approach to growth. Highlights in District 1 include:

- Funding for a new East Valley animal shelter, as well as funding to support and continue to improve the current model of animal shelter operations that has resulted in a 95% save rate over the past year
- Upgrades to regional parks and trails including San Tan Mountain, Usery Mountain, and the Maricopa Trail

If you'd like to discover what else we are budgeting for in 2020, you can access all of our [budget documents](#) by visiting maricopa.gov/budget.

I am proud to be part of the team that continues to pass budgets that protect our taxpayers while serving the needs of our ever-growing county population. As the nation's fastest-growing county, the impact of what we do has never been greater. I'm optimistic that the next 12 months will be a time of continued growth and opportunity in our region.

Jack Sellers is a Chandler resident and a member of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors