



Office of the Mayor

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2006 Executive Capital Budget Message Mayor Dave Cieslewicz

Summary

My 2006 Executive Capital Budget is fiscally responsible and maintains my commitments to public safety, neighborhood services, basic infrastructure and the environment. My budget also makes investments in innovations that will save taxpayer dollars in the long run. Finally, to spread costs through a broader and more equitable base, my budget calls for greater partnerships with the private sector and with the state and county governments.

Fiscal Responsibility

My capital budget cuts \$19 million of borrowing from agency requests and comes in \$5 million below even the City Council-adopted 2006 target, excluding previously-approved projects authorized in 2005. Prudent limitation of City borrowing helps ensure that we continue to maintain our AAA bond rating and the lower borrowing costs that come with it.

Commitment to Public Safety

My budget maintains my commitment to build another new fire station in 2008 to serve the far west side, and commits to yet another fire station later to serve the far east side. This is in addition to station 11, which I opened just this August. As a result, after going 25 years without an additional fire station, Madison will add two in just four years during my administration.

I did not add an eighth ambulance for three reasons. First, I added Madison's first new ambulance in 15 years just last year. Second, a new ambulance costs \$800,000 a year to operate and because of state levy limits and aid cuts we cannot afford it. Third, the new Advanced Life Support agreement that I negotiated with our municipal neighbors that have paramedic services has already resulted in improved response times. Nonetheless, I will ask my new Fiscal Efficiency Auditor to study the effect of the ALS agreement together with call data and projected city growth patterns with a goal of giving me a recommendation on how to most efficiently use our resources in time for the 2007 budget. My commitment is to protect and enhance public safety not by just throwing money at the problem, but by working smarter.

After taking a prudent, go-slow posture for several years toward the Madison Police Department's requests for tasers, I have decided this year to accept their proposal to phase in tasers for all officers over five years. I have made this decision because the department has carefully examined its policies with regard to their use, held public listening sessions and issued new, more precise protocols for use of tasers. I am convinced that tasers can provide greater safety for our officers while giving them a more humane alternative to deadly force or other tactics.

Commitment to Neighborhoods

Libraries and parks are important neighborhood facilities and my capital budget maintains a commitment to expand two of our most heavily used libraries while continuing a five-year effort to clear a backlog of unbuilt neighborhood parks in new neighborhoods on the periphery.

We have reached agreement with the property owners to expand Madison's most heavily used branch library, the Sequoia branch in 2006. We are counting on \$900,000 in private fundraising to make this a real public-private partnership and we will own the building, which will save taxpayers money in the long run.

In 2007 we will expand the South branch library as part of the exciting Villager Mall redevelopment. The new South branch will set the tone for the renaissance of this part of South Madison. By spacing the Sequoia and South branch expansions a year apart we give Library staff time to manage each project and we give our operating budget time to absorb the new operating costs.

I have also included a commitment to build an expanded Central Library in 2009. My goal is to provide the private sector with an incentive to fund at least half the costs of this project.

Commitment to Basic Infrastructure

Maintaining and rebuilding existing streets and building new streets to accommodate a growing city as well as stormwater projects amount to by far the largest commitments in the capital budget. In fact, major streets, stormwater projects and State Street and Capitol Concourse projects account for over 40% of my capital budget.

Commitment to the Environment

To help clean the lakes, my budget invests in new street sweeping equipment, stormwater management and the 1000 rain gardens program and it provides a preliminary commitment to purchase the innovative "solar bees", pending analysis of their impact on water quality. To encourage alternative commuting, my budget builds more bike paths and continues investing in new buses. This includes investment in the next generation of fuel-efficient buses with hybrid technology. To improve energy efficiency, my budget continues investments in more energy efficient buildings and lighting retrofits, consistent with my "Building a Green Capital City" plan.

Innovations to Save Money in the Long Run

My budget contains investments that will save money in the long run. Two new automated street repair trucks will be purchased in 2006. This will reduce the number of workers needed to perform repair tasks like fixing potholes from four per crew to one. Second, my budget completes the move to automated recycling and trash pickup by investing in an automated trash system in 2007 that will complement the automated recycling system that is being implemented now. These systems will save hundreds of thousands of dollars in staff time, workers compensation costs and long-term truck purchases. Third, we will invest in a GIS tracking system for streets vehicles. Other cities have found that these tracking systems allow better planning and deployment of vehicles saving staff time and fuel. A new high tech phone system will save around \$200,000 a year in phone bills when it is fully implemented. Finally, we will continue our investment in energy efficiency and green building projects, saving on long-term energy costs.

The Need for Partnerships

My capital budget calls for private sector participation to help us build libraries, pools and other projects. It also makes some projects contingent on action at other levels of government. For example, our commitment to build the next fire station and Central Library is contingent upon action at the state level to increase state support for local basic services and to eliminate the so-called "levy freeze." Without these changes at the state level, it may not be possible to fund the operating costs of these major new facilities.