



Office of the Mayor

David J. Cieslewicz

Room 403
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
Madison, Wisconsin 53703-3345
(Phone) 608 266 4611
(TTY) 608 266 4443
(FAX) 608 267 8671

2006 Executive Capital Budget: The Imagine Madison Projects

In April, I proposed **Imagine Madison**, an ambitious agenda for building projects in Madison over the next decade. I promised to report on progress toward that agenda annually in my capital budget plan.

Since then, the Legislature has dealt Madison and other Wisconsin cities a double blow by continuing its long retreat from support for basic public services, while imposing a one-size-fits-all “levy limit” on local communities. In this environment, it is fair to ask if we should move ahead with these plans.

My answer is an emphatic “yes”.

The Legislature’s budget is for only two years, while most of these projects will be built well beyond that time frame. Moreover, Governor Doyle specifically excluded capital projects from the levy limit because he recognized that cities must grow. But more importantly, our city needs to keep moving forward because when we build public projects, private investment follows. Indeed, many of the **Imagine Madison** projects assume a substantial non-City funding component. It is building the tax base through this kind of investment that will sustain us into the future.

The original **Imagine Madison** agenda included twelve projects, but I want this to be a flexible list that allows new projects to be suggested by the public and, frankly, that allows some projects to fall away if they prove infeasible. Here is an update on the original 12 projects.

Central Library. I have included the expanded Central Library in my Capital Budget with planning scheduled for 2008 and construction for 2009. At the same time I am challenging the private philanthropic community to fund half of the project’s costs.

Warner Park Pool. My first goal is to get the Goodman Pool, Madison’s first municipal swimming pool, up and running on time next year. Then, we can plan for the next pool at Warner Park, the site chosen by the Ad Hoc Pool Committee. This pool cannot happen until a lead private donor steps forward, but I have included it in my ten year plan beyond 2011. If a lead donor or donors step forward prior to that, the project could be started earlier. Pools are projected to run without a general fund operating subsidy.

Closing the Parks Gap. When I came to office, two dozen new neighborhoods on Madison’s periphery had no neighborhood park. I pledged to clear the backlog in five years and in my first two years in office, we have built ten new neighborhood parks. My 2006 capital budget maintains that steady commitment, with six new neighborhood parks to be built next year.

Streetcars. We have entered a yearlong study phase for the Madison Streetcar and I was pleased that Congress listed this as an eligible project in the recently passed six year Federal transportation act. Soaring fuel prices make this form of electric-powered transportation an even smarter investment. Still, it is too early to include any funding in the detailed five year capital plan.

Brayton Lot. A developer has stepped forward with a detailed plan and the promise of a grocery store on site. We are working to evaluate his proposal and others that might come forward.

Fairchild Building. While this appears to be an underutilized low-rise building in the heart of downtown, an initial feasibility study indicates that redevelopment of the site may be premature. My capital budget calls for reinvestment in the existing building with reevaluation of its potential again in the future.

Central Infrastructure. My capital budget continues the three decade project of rebuilding all of the old isthmus streets, sewer and other infrastructure. The East Washington Avenue project and the State Street project will enter their third years and remain on schedule.

Regional Malls Re-imagined. Madison's first comprehensive plan calls for the eventual redevelopment of Eastowne and Westowne malls as mixed use developments with structured parking, housing and more green space. This year Hilldale Mall is being redeveloped in exactly that way and can serve as a template for the other malls. No public investments are anticipated as part of these projects.

1000 Rain Gardens. My capital budget contains a line item for the continuation of this water quality project. We have requested funding assistance from the USEPA. The first flagship projects have already been installed thanks to a generous donation from Agrecol and philanthropist Bill Graham at Warner, Brittingham and Olin-Turville parks.

East Isthmus. A plan for an area wide redevelopment district has been introduced to the Madison City Council with adoption expected this fall. It includes funds for rebuilding infrastructure, promoting balanced and mixed-use growth and moving a railroad track necessary for the development of the proposed Central Park. Funds for that purpose have also been secured through a Federal grant made possible by Rep. Tammy Baldwin. Finally, site cleanup can go forward thanks to state funds obtained for the area by State Rep. Mark Pocan.

Mid State Ramp. I have included funding in my 2006 capital budget for this project. Discussions are currently taking place with the potential developer and we are exploring options to make this project feasible within reasonable fiscal constraints.

Villager Mall. A community-based redevelopment planning process is just being completed. I have included funds for a new South Library branch to be built in 2007 that would serve as the anchor for the redevelopment of the mall.

In addition to these original 12 projects, I also want to add redevelopment of the **Garver Feed Mill** to the Imagine Madison agenda. This historic building at Olbrich Park is owned by the city, but it is deteriorating from lack of use. While exciting planning for its eventual rebirth goes on through 2006, we aim to develop funding alternatives for possible inclusion in the 2007 budget.