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2009 Executive Capital Budget: The Imagine Madison Projects

In 2005, I proposed Imagine Madison, an ambitious agenda for building projects in Madison over the next decade. This agenda highlights some of the long-term capital projects that will shape Madison's future. I promised to report on progress on that agenda annually in my capital budget plan. Each year some projects are completed, some come off the list and some are added. Here is my list of projects for 2009 and beyond.

Central Library. We made great progress in 2008 toward constructing a badly needed new Central Library. There is an active proposal for a mixed-use project that would include a library, ground floor retail and office space above. It would be a much better use of the site and give our library the opportunity to grow into the office space above it over time. The Library Board has approved a request for proposals and responses are due back later in 2008. My budget includes \$30 million in 2009 and 2010 for this project, split between the public and private sectors.

The Villager. We also made very significant progress in the redevelopment of the Villager Mall, a key property on Madison's South Side, now owned by the City's Community Development Authority. We expect to break ground on a new 12,000 square foot library later in 2008 and we will start rebuilding the existing building's facade and interior soon. My budget includes \$3.5 million in 2009 to complete the library and \$2.6 million in additional funding for other improvements.

Garver Feed Mill. Here again great progress was made in 2008 on saving and restoring this historic Madison gem. Two impressive proposals were carefully vetted by the Garver Building Reuse Committee with a mixed-use arts incubator project from Commonwealth Development selected to go forward.

Central Park. The Central Park Design and Implementation Task Force continues to develop more and more realistic plans for the park. In 2008 Madison Gas & Electric stepped in to help fund a planning process that would assume that the expensive moving of the railroad tracks would not happen immediately. This was an important breakthrough that will allow us to move forward with a "Great Lawn" concept and a skateboard park much sooner. My budget includes the use of \$3.5 million in Federal funds already secured for the project and \$750,000 in tax incremental financing over the next three years.

Public Market. A feasibility study for the Public Market was completed in 2008. This is an exciting project that would help strengthen the rapidly growing local food movement. But I believe 2009 should be a year to further refine the project, especially the projected cost and sources of funding as well as the location. The feasibility study indicated a funding gap of about \$8 million. This entire gap cannot be filled through City funding alone. I am inviting promoters of the project to work with the City, Dane County and the private sector to arrive at a realistic project that can work. Because this project needs more development and because other projects are well ahead of it, I have not included funding for the Public Market in my 2009 budget. When a more solid plan is in place, a modest City contribution might be appropriate.

Smooth Streets. Currently about 26% of Madison's arterial street miles are not up to the standards we set as a City (a pavement assessment rating (PASER) of above 5 on a 10 point scale). I have set a goal of reducing that to 10% in five years. I have also set a goal of reconstructing or resurfacing major arterials badly in need of repair, like Northport Drive and University Avenue. My budget includes \$10.6 million in general obligation funding to meet these goals.