

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I am pleased to report that the Madison Common Council passed the 2009 City Budget after only two nights' debate as compared to last year's three-night marathon. In this challenging economic time, it was indeed a difficult budget to balance. Tough decisions had to be made in order to maintain basic city services without burdening residents already stressed by hard times. We were able to avoid cutting Police and Fire services, keep current library hours, and continue weekly pick-up of large items without a fee increase. However, skyrocketing fuel costs made it impossible not to raise Metro cash fare 50 cents. Property taxpayers shouldn't have to shoulder such an unfair subsidy of Metro costs. I strongly believe now is the time to invest in Metro Transit so it can enhance services and add routes to reach peripheral districts to broaden its ridership.

Now that the Madison Metropolitan School District's (MMSD) referendum has passed, I encourage you to continue your support for public education by keeping close watch and demanding accountability at all levels to make sure tax monies are well spent. I myself am quite frustrated with the way MMSD and the Board of Education keep dragging their feet, refusing to allow Madison School & Community Recreation (MSCR) to bring programs to the proposed Pilot Neighborhood Center at Meadowood Mall, although City funding has been readily available for months. It's hard to understand MMSD's reluctance to cooperate and share responsibility for the ongoing problems of unsupervised Toki Middle School students harassing patrons at both Meadowridge Branch Library and the Mall. This delay jeopardizes program funding and kills the enthusiasm, goodwill and good faith of many area volunteers. One can't help but wonder about MMSD's leadership.

I ask you to be patient with traffic work to install stoplights at the S. Whitney Way and Raymond Road intersection. Once the work is completed, traffic is expected to move smoothly with enhanced safety for all users. Please remember that alternate side parking went into effect November 15. Let's work together to help snowplows navigate more efficiently this winter.

With the holiday season around the corner, I would like to thank all community volunteers who have generously donated time and energy to make life better for all area residents. I wish all of you a safe and very happy time with family and friends.

Alder Thuy
district20@cityofmadison.com