

Interim Library Director Report March 2024

Budget Update

2025 Budget Outlook

On March 5, the Common Council had their second discussion about the 2025 budget. The Wisconsin Policy Forum provided helpful context for how Madison's funding compares to other Wisconsin municipalities. City Finance then presented additional information about measures that have been used in the past to balance the budget and facilitated a discussion about the Council's values. One of the biggest areas of agreement was that the Common Council values the staff and our current services, and they do not want to see layoffs or major service reductions. There was also acknowledgement that in order to fund these current services, the City will likely need to go to referendum. The Madison Metropolitan School District may also be going to a referendum this year, which would set up taxpayers for a rare situation where multiple referendums would appear on the same ballot. (Middleton had a similar situation in 2022, in which both passed). An additional value the Council held up was that of an informed public. Alders are preparing for five community listening sessions across the City to engage residents on the budget issues and hear directly from their constituents about their own values and how they want the Common Council to proceed. These are expected to begin May 1 and I will share dates/times/locations with you when I have them. If the Common Council does vote to go to a referendum, this will mean staff need to prepare two budgets. One will outline spending if a referendum passes; the second will include our plans should a referendum fail.

Capital Budget Instructions

The Capital Budget process kicked off on Tuesday, March 19. While reducing borrowing in the Capital Budget does not solve the operating budget problems, it does ease the tax burden on our residents, so the instructions this year are to be as judicious as possible in your planning. Any new project requests will need to complete a comprehensive approval form, while existing programs will be allowed 5% increases in 2030 only (the last year of the plan). Our requests will be due on April 19, with the Library's Mayoral briefing scheduled to be held on May 8.

Cost to Continue Budget Process (Operating Budget)

Beginning March 25 and continuing through the month of April, City Finance and department level budget staff will be working to develop a Cost to Continue budget for each agency. The Cost to Continue budget is a baseline estimate of what it will cost the City to run each department at the same level of service as the previous year. During this phase of the budget process, we highlight any changes specific to our department that are either planned or unavoidable that will impact the amount of funding we need. For example, increases in rent schedules, utility cost increases, etc. are outlined in our Cost to Continue budget. Once each department completes the Cost to Continue exercise, City Finance is able to adjust their projections for 2025. A major change that will be taking place this year alongside the creation of the cost to continue budget will be a change to the chart of accounts to match the Results Madison categories. For the Library, this

means moving from five services to seven, with adjustments to the names of several of the services, as well. We hope to present more information about these changes at either the May or June Library Board meetings.

The operating budget process officially kicks off on Monday, June 17, with a due date of Friday, July 19. Mayoral briefings for the operating budget will take place between August 12 and 14.

Imagination Center

On Wednesday, March 13, the Imagination Center received approval for its design from the Urban Design Commission. A big thank you to the design team and City Engineering staff for getting us to this point!

Operational Assessment

Our work with Advancing with Purpose and consultant, Kim Zablud, has begun, with Kim conducting interviews of about 75% of the Library Management Team (LMT). As she is in this data gathering phase, she will continue weekly check-ins with our LMT steering group, and we will begin planning an in-person visit for her team to do some observations of our operations.

Director Hiring

A big thank you to the staff who filled out the survey, read candidate essays, participated in one of the rounds of interviews, gave candidate tours, and attended the community meet and greet event in our search for a new Library Director! I truly appreciate the staff's participation and engagement in this process, and I am absolutely thrilled to welcome Tana to the position!

New Library Board Member

At the April 16 Common Council meeting, our new Library Board member, Plumer Lovelace, will be confirmed. Plumer is currently a research program manager at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He previously served as the executive director of the Wisconsin Library Association from 2013-2021. We are very excited to welcome him and his experience to our Board!

MPL ...in Washington D.C. and in a neighborhood near you!

The American Library Association brought library advocates from across the country to Washington DC to meet with members of Congress on March 6-7 and to emphasize the importance of funding libraries in the federal budget. Pictured left to right are Marc Gartler, manager of the Alicia Ashman & Sequoya Libraries, Milwaukee Public Library Director Joan Johnson, Senator Tammy Baldwin, and Dr.



Darrell Williams, DPI's Assistant State Superintendent for Libraries & Technology. In advance of their appointments on Capitol Hill, advocates received training on how to be most effective during meetings with legislators. Federal funding for libraries in Wisconsin supports critical services such as the delivery and technology services provided by the South Central Library System and other systems across the state. Madison Public Library has also been the recipient of direct grants from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services.



And closer to home, Dream Bus Library Assistant Ricardo Marroquín was recently featured on Madison College's Instagram with a short video about his Madison College educational journey. Ricardo (pictured left, with artist Emily Balsley, right) is one of several Dream Bus library workers who connects the library with residents who experience transportation barriers to using our library buildings. Ricardo is a wonderful library advocate and he's been an

important part of our Spanish language outreach in several sites around Madison. You can see the whole video at <https://www.instagram.com/p/C4LOO2aLimZ/>