



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
www.cityofmadison.com

Agenda - Approved COMMON COUNCIL

*Consider: Who benefits? Who is burdened?
Who does not have a voice at the table?
How can policymakers mitigate unintended consequences?*

This meeting may be viewed LIVE on Charter Spectrum Channel 994, AT&T U-Verse Channel 99 or at www.madisoncitychannel.tv.

Tuesday, August 20, 2024

6:30 PM

Via Virtual Meeting

Special Meeting

As public testimony has been taken on this item previously, there will be no public testimony at this meeting.

VIRTUAL MEETING

The City of Madison is holding this Common Council meeting in a virtual format. Members of the public may choose to view virtual Common Council meetings.

- Livestream on the Madison City Channel website:
<https://www.cityofmadison.com/watchCouncil>
- Livestream on the City of Madison YouTube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/CityofMadison>
- Television: Watch live on Spectrum channel 994 and AT&T U-Verse channel 99
- Listen to audio via phone:
(877) 853-5257 (Toll Free)
Webinar ID: 894 4931 3584

ROLL CALL

NOTIFIED ABSENCES: Latimer Burris

OPENING REMARKS

DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

Members of the body should make any required disclosures or recusals under the City's Ethics Code.

ITEMS REFERRED TO THIS MEETING

RESOLUTIONS

1. [84443](#) Authorizing the Scheduling of a Referendum Relating to Exceeding the

Municipal Property Tax Limits in the City of Madison

Sponsors: Satya V. Rhodes-Conway**Attachments:** [Presentation - A Sustainable Long-Term Plan for Madison Budget.pdf](#)[Memo - A Sustainable Long Term Plan for Madison Budget.pdf](#)[072224_WrittenPublicComment.pdf](#)[072024_AldRummelEmailtoFC.pdf](#)[080624_CC_public_comments.pdf](#)[080724_CC_public_comments.pdf](#)[080724_CC_public_comments2.pdf](#)[080824_CC_public_comments.pdf](#)[080924-081224_CC_public_comments.pdf](#)**Legislative History**

7/16/24	COMMON COUNCIL	Refer to the FINANCE COMMITTEE
7/16/24	Finance Department	Referred for Introduction
	Finance Committee (7/22/24), Common Council - Public Comment (8/6/24), Common Council (8/20/24)	
7/22/24	FINANCE COMMITTEE	RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER
	Refer to Common Council - Public Comment (8/6/24), re-refer to Common Council special meeting (8/20/24)	
8/6/24	COMMON COUNCIL	Refer to a future Meeting to Adopt to the COMMON COUNCIL

ADJOURNMENT



City of Madison

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File Number: 84443

File ID: 84443

File Type: Resolution

Status: Unfinished
Business

Version: 1

Reference:

Controlling Body: COMMON
COUNCIL

File Created Date : 07/15/2024

File Name:

Final Action:

Title: Authorizing the Scheduling of a Referendum Relating to Exceeding the Municipal Property Tax Limits in the City of Madison

Notes:

CC Agenda Date: 08/06/2024

Agenda Number: 1.

Sponsors: Satya V. Rhodes-Conway

Effective Date:

Attachments: Presentation - A Sustainable Long-Term Plan for Madison Budget.pdf, Memo - A Sustainable Long Term Plan for Madison Budget.pdf, 072224_WrittenPublicComment.pdf, 072024_AldRummelEmailtoFC.pdf, 080624_CC_public_comments.pdf, 080724_CC_public_comments.pdf, 080724_CC_public_comments2.pdf, 080824_CC_public_comments.pdf, 080924-081224_CC_public_comments.pdf

Enactment Number:

Author:

Hearing Date:

Entered by: mmclain@cityofmadison.com

Published Date:

Approval History

Version	Seq #	Action Date	Approver	Action	Due Date
1	1	7/16/2024	Elizabeth York	Delegated	
1	2	7/16/2024	David Schmiedicke	Approve	7/22/2024

History of Legislative File

Ver- sion:	Acting Body:	Date:	Action:	Sent To:	Due Date:	Return Date:	Result:
1	Finance Department	07/16/2024	Referred for Introduction				
	Action Text:	This Resolution was Referred for Introduction					
	Notes:	Finance Committee (7/22/24), Common Council - Public Comment (8/6/24), Common Council (8/20/24)					

1	COMMON COUNCIL	07/16/2024	Refer	FINANCE COMMITTEE	07/22/2024	Pass
	Action Text:	A motion was made by Figueroa Cole, seconded by Duncan, to Refer to the FINANCE COMMITTEE. The motion passed by voice vote/other.				
1	FINANCE COMMITTEE	07/22/2024	RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER			Pass
	Action Text:	A motion was made by Figueroa Cole, seconded by Currie, to RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER. The motion passed by voice vote/other.				
	Notes:	Refer to Common Council - Public Comment (8/6/24), re-refer to Common Council special meeting (8/20/24)				
1	COMMON COUNCIL	08/06/2024	Refer to a future Meeting to Adopt	COMMON COUNCIL		Pass
	Action Text:	A motion was made by Figueroa Cole, seconded by Duncan, to Refer to a future Meeting to Adopt to the COMMON COUNCIL special meeting of 8/20/24. The motion passed by voice vote/other.				

Text of Legislative File 84443

Fiscal Note

This resolution authorizes the scheduling of a referendum relating to exceeding the municipal property tax limits in the City. Under section 66.0602(4), Wisconsin Statutes, all counties, cities, villages or towns with a population over 3,000 may exceed their levy limit after adopting a resolution to exceed the levy limit, which is then approved in a referendum.

State law establishes the process for a referendum and the language to be used in the referendum. This resolution would authorize a referendum at the fall election (November 5, 2024). Referenda held at the fall election must use data provided by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue on August 15th. A resolution authorizing a referendum must be adopted no later than 70 days before the date of the election (August 25, 2024). The referendum language must include the purpose of the increase, the percentage increase in the levy due to the referendum increase, the dollar amount of the increase and the term of the increase. The language for the referendum is established under section 66.0602(4)(c), Wisconsin Statutes. The clerk must publish type A, B, C, D and E notices of the referendum under section 10.01(2), Wisconsin Statutes.

The resolution authorizes a permanent increase to the levy limit of \$22 million, effective for the City's 2025 budget (January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025), and property taxes levied by the City in December 2024 and collected in 2025. The purpose of the increase would be to fund police, fire, garbage collection, parks and library operations and other City services and operations. The cost-to-continue current services is estimated to exceed allowable revenues under state law by \$22 million. The total allowable levy for 2025 under state law is \$296.2 million, which reflects the net new construction factor calculation and estimated debt service. The estimated net new construction factor used in calculating that total allowable levy is 2.5%. The total allowable levy for 2025 is an estimated 3.4 percent (\$9.7 million) increase over the actual 2024 property tax levy.

Based on preliminary figures, the \$22 million included in the resolution would add 7.4% to the allowable increase in the property tax levy, for a total increase of 11 percent (\$31.7 million). The \$22 million increase adds approximately \$240 annually to taxes on the average value home, or approximately \$20 per month, or 0.66 cents per day.

Final numbers will be added via a substitute amendment to the resolution after August 15th and prior to the Council meeting scheduled for August 20th.

Title

Authorizing the Scheduling of a Referendum Relating to Exceeding the Municipal Property Tax Limits in the City of Madison

Body

WHEREAS, since enactment of section 66.0602, Wisconsin Statutes, and its amendment in 2011, local governments are prohibited from increasing the municipal property tax levy by more than the equalized value increase due to new construction or 0%, which ever is greater with limited exceptions; and,

WHEREAS, despite the population of Madison increasing from 237,198 to 286,725 between 2011 and 2024, an increase of 21%, the City has not previously scheduled a referendum to increase its levy limits; and,

WHEREAS, Madison receives among the lowest amount of state aid per resident, according to the Wisconsin Policy Forum, received the lowest amount of increase in state aid from the State Legislature in the most recent State Budget, and state aid per resident has declined 5% between 2011 and 2024, while inflation has increased 66%; and,

WHEREAS, cities in other states with a similar size as Madison have alternative general revenue sources other than property taxes, including sales, income and motor fuel taxes; and WHEREAS, income, sales and motor fuel taxes are collected by the State Legislature, with less than 20 cents of every dollar sent by Madison residents to the State Legislature returned to the City to support local services; and

WHEREAS, Madison is facing a \$22 million budget deficit for fiscal year 2025 to simply maintain current service levels to residents, including law enforcement, fire prevention and response, emergency medical services, public health, refuse and recycling, snow plowing, traffic, bicycle and pedestrian safety, parks, libraries, community services, transportation and other basic needs; and,

WHEREAS, the Madison Common Council established values and priorities for addressing the budget deficit, including maintaining services to residents, preventing layoffs or furloughs of city staff, maintaining wage parity for general municipal employees, meeting the needs of a growing city, and choosing the most progressive revenue options that consider housing affordability;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Madison Common Council authorizes the following: beginning in 2025, the City of Madison may exceed its current levy limit by a total of **[7.4%]**, resulting in a levy of **[\$318,219,440]**, for the purpose of general operations, and on an ongoing basis, include the increase of \$22,000,000 to the City levy for each fiscal year going forward.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall not take effect until such time as the electors of the City of Madison approve a referendum containing the following question:

"Under state law, the increase in the levy of the City of Madison for the tax to be imposed for the next fiscal year, 2025, is limited to **[2.5%]**, which results in a levy of **[\$296,296,440]**. Shall the City of Madison be allowed to exceed this limit and increase the levy for the next fiscal year, 2025, for the purpose of funding police, fire, garbage collection, parks and library operations and other City services and operations, by a total of **[7.4%]**, which results in a levy of **[\$318,219,440]**, and on an ongoing basis, include the increase of \$ 22,000,000 for each fiscal year going forward?"

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Madison Common Council hereby directs the City Clerk to place the above referendum question on the November 5, 2024, ballot.



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File Number: 84443



A Sustainable Long-Term Plan for Madison's Budget

July 2024

Current Situation:

The City faces a serious structural deficit

What is a structural deficit?

- A structural deficit is when projected expenses are greater than projected revenues, despite economic conditions. The cost to provide the same level of services next year is more than we think we will bring in through revenues.

How much is the projected deficit for 2025?

- Currently, the deficit is estimated to be \$22 million.

Why are we in this situation?

1 Limited Revenues

- State of WI places strict limits on revenues, so revenues do not keep pace with inflation
- Madison receives less State Aid (\$29/resident compared to statewide average of \$195/resident)

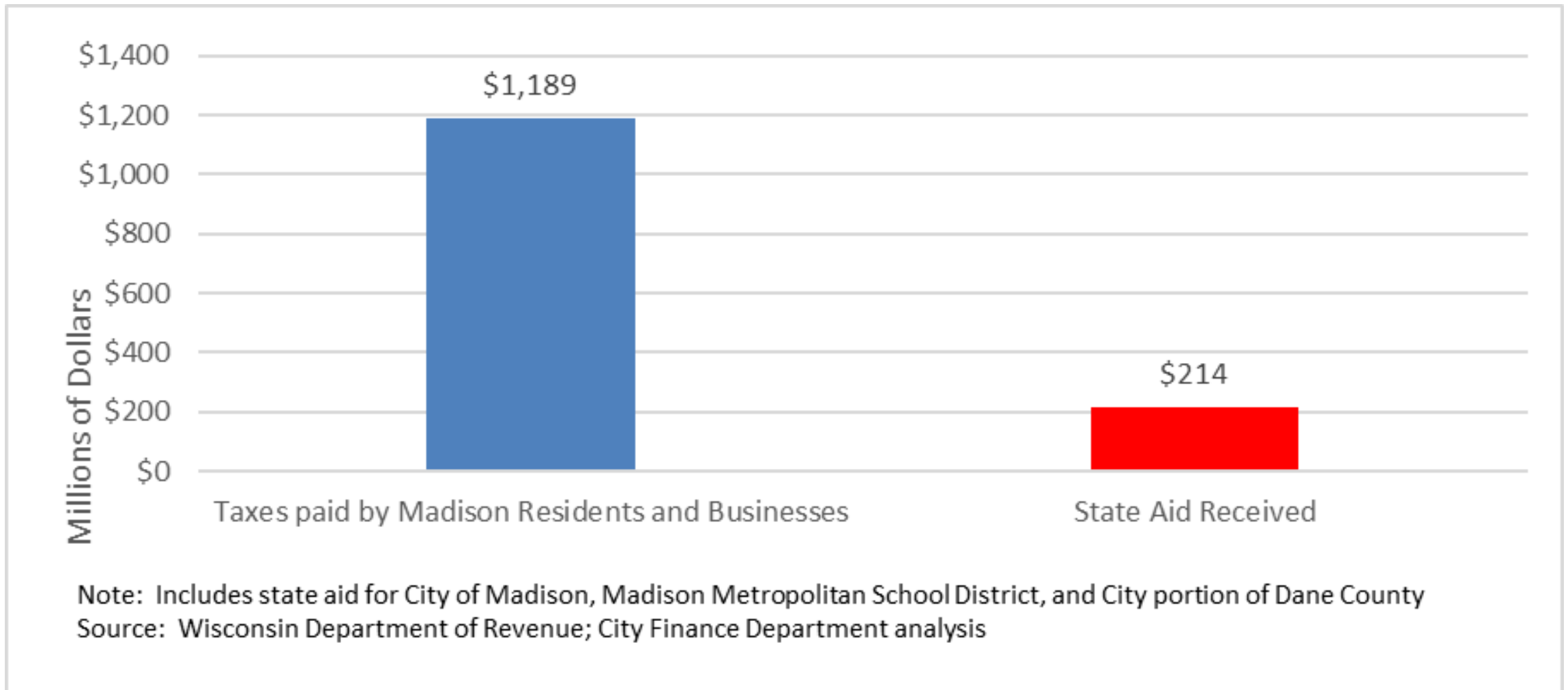
2 Growing City

- Expanding services to meet resident needs as the City grows (for example, maintaining emergency response times)
- Annual increases for cost of living adjustments, higher healthcare costs, and inflation

3 Impact of COVID Pandemic

- City revenues have not fully recovered from the pandemic – property taxes limited compared to county and state sales taxes
- Federal COVID relief funding helped with revenue losses in prior years, but this ends in 2024

State Legislature Shortchanges Madison: We Get Back Only 18 Cents For Every \$1 Of State Taxes Paid



What has the City done so far?

Madison has faced a budget deficit **every year** since the State imposed strict levy limits in 2011. The problem is bigger in 2025 than before because of the lasting impacts of the pandemic and end of federal recovery funds.

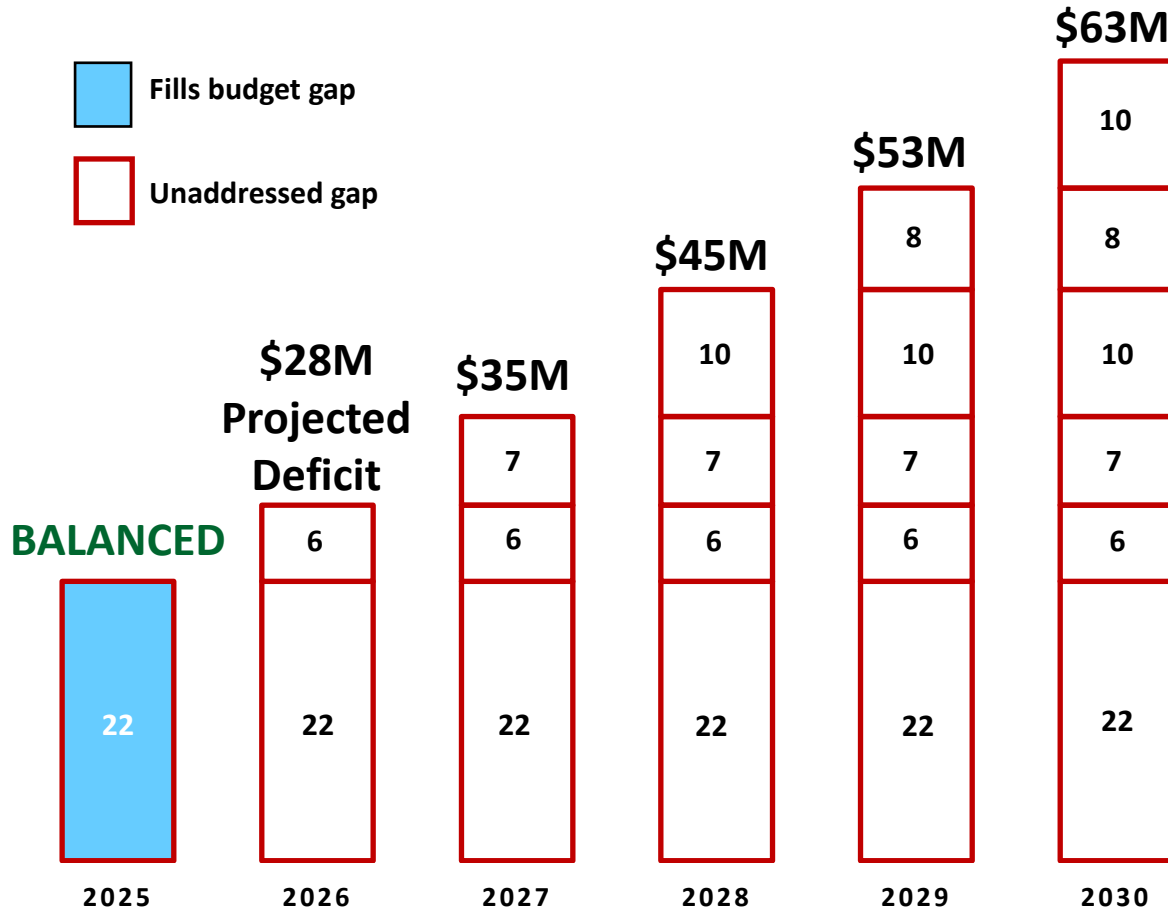
2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debt premium • Police and fire pension contributions • Premium stabilization surplus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Room tax growth • Ambulance fee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Room tax – shift from MT projects • Building Permit revenue • Urban forestry special charge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Room tax • Building permits • Urban forestry special charge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Room tax – shift Overture • Urban Forestry Special Charge • Health Insurance Plan Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Room tax • Ambulance fee • Transit fund surplus • Snow and ice removal budget • Urban forestry special charge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Room Tax rate • Cost Allocation • Increased investment revenue
2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TID 32 Closure • Increased interest revenue • Shift Library Collection to capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle Registration Fee • Shift Parking Enforcement to Parking Enterprise • Increased Forestry staff time to Urban Forestry Special Charge • Debt premium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$8 m in fund balance • \$6 million in cuts, Workshare/'furloughs', service efficiencies • \$6.1 million American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) • \$2 m in fee increases, Town of Madison fire & EMS contract 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$13.1 million ARPA • \$1.5 million Resource Recovery Special Charge (RRSC) • \$1.4m in cuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$6.9 million TID proceeds • \$3 million Resource Recovery Special Charge (RRSC) • \$7.7 million one-time reduction to Metro subsidy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$9.2 million in fund balance • \$5.6 million ARPA • \$3.1 million TID proceeds • \$3.0 million reduction to all agencies • \$2.4 million savings from vacancies/ salary savings 	
<p><i>Prior to 2012, levy limits had a 3% floor for annual increases rather than 0%; 3% minimum was applied to prior year maximum allowable levy rather than actual levy.</i></p>						



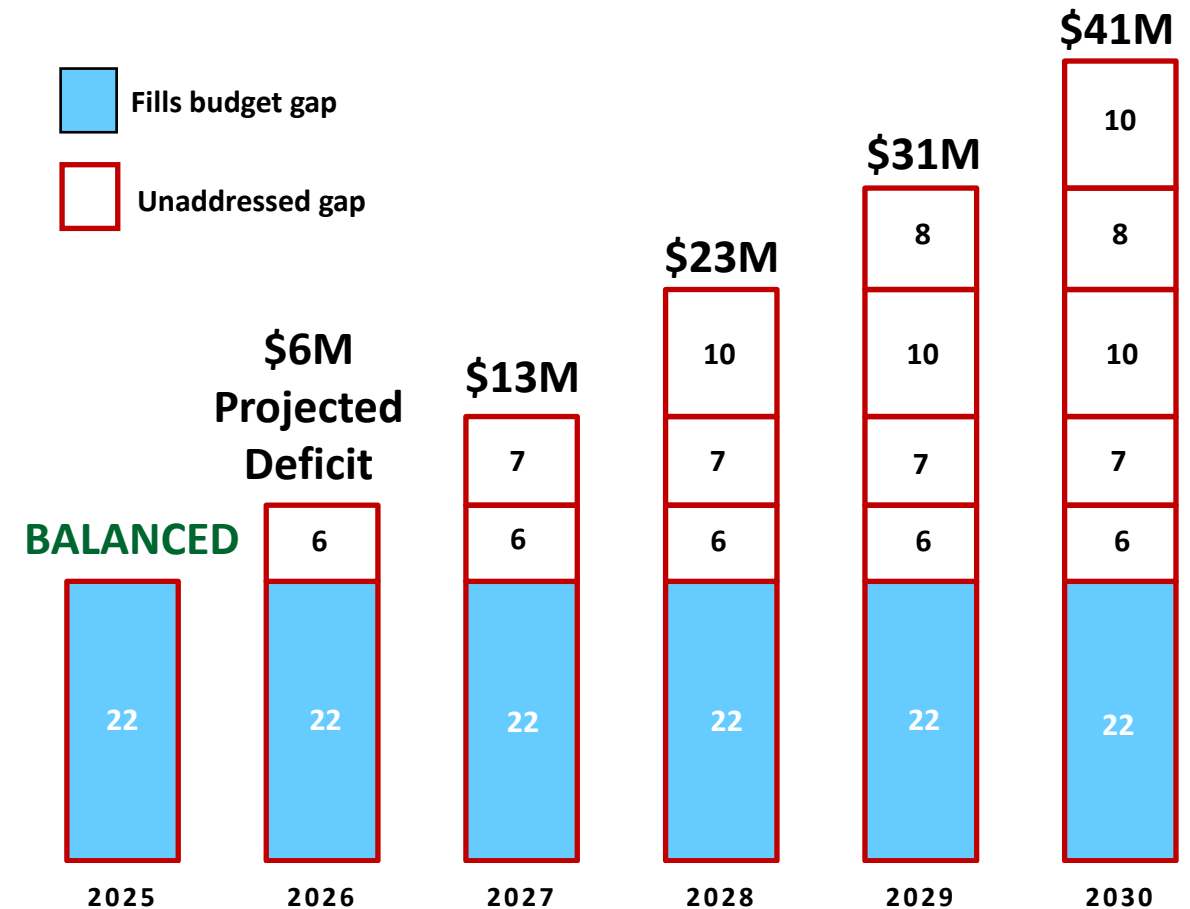
Spending the General Fund Balance Does Not Solve The City's Long-Term Deficit

The City's Finance staff recommends against filling the 2025 budget gap entirely with the City general fund balance (or "Rainy Day Fund"). The structural deficit will continue to increase annually so the balance should be spent prudently over several years. Further depleting the Rainy Day Fund would also damage Madison's AAA credit rating and cost the City more in the long run. With a referendum, the Rainy Day Fund can be used wisely as part of a long-term plan for Madison's budget.

ONE-TIME FUNDS



REFERENDUM



Council Guidance on 2025 Budget

Legistar 82456, adopted April 16, 2024

Values and Priorities

1. Maintaining services to residents
2. Preventing layoffs or furloughs of city staff.
3. Maintaining wage parity for general municipal employees
4. Meeting the needs of a growing city.
5. Choosing the most progressive revenue options that consider housing affordability.

Guidance on Developing 2025 Budget

1. Evaluate service levels, staffing and fiscal impact.
2. Seek ways to increase efficiencies in operations.
3. Explore a reduction in expenditures from cost-to-continue levels that does not compromise services to residents.
4. Develop referendum language to increase property tax to meet some or all of deficit, as well as options to replace existing non-property tax revenues.
5. Prepare options other than property tax, including special charges
6. Develop a multi-year plan, including options for new, or increasing existing, fees and charges.
7. Consider the level of overall general obligation borrowing in 2025 capital budget to reduce rate of growth in property taxes
8. Develop a community engagement plan to educate the public.



With A Referendum, Madison Can Avoid Significant Cuts or the Need for More Revenue for Another Five years

With a referendum, Madison will avoid significant cuts to services while minimizing new special charges in future years. There will also be more time for the State to approve additional revenue sources before the City faces an unaddressed budget gap.



↶ The earliest year that additional shared revenue from the State is possible



↶ The earliest year a local sales tax would likely impact the City budget



Additional revenue or cuts needed to balance budget



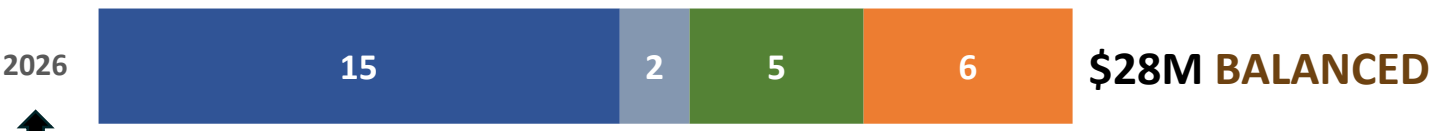
↶ Rainy Day Fund (\$25m) fully expended



Without a Referendum, the City Would Need Additional Cuts and Revenue by 2027



Without a referendum, Madison will need additional cuts by 2027 – even with annual increases in special charges and significant cuts to services in 2025.



The earliest year that additional shared revenue from the State is possible



The earliest year a local sales tax would likely impact the City budget

Additional revenue or cuts needed to balance budget



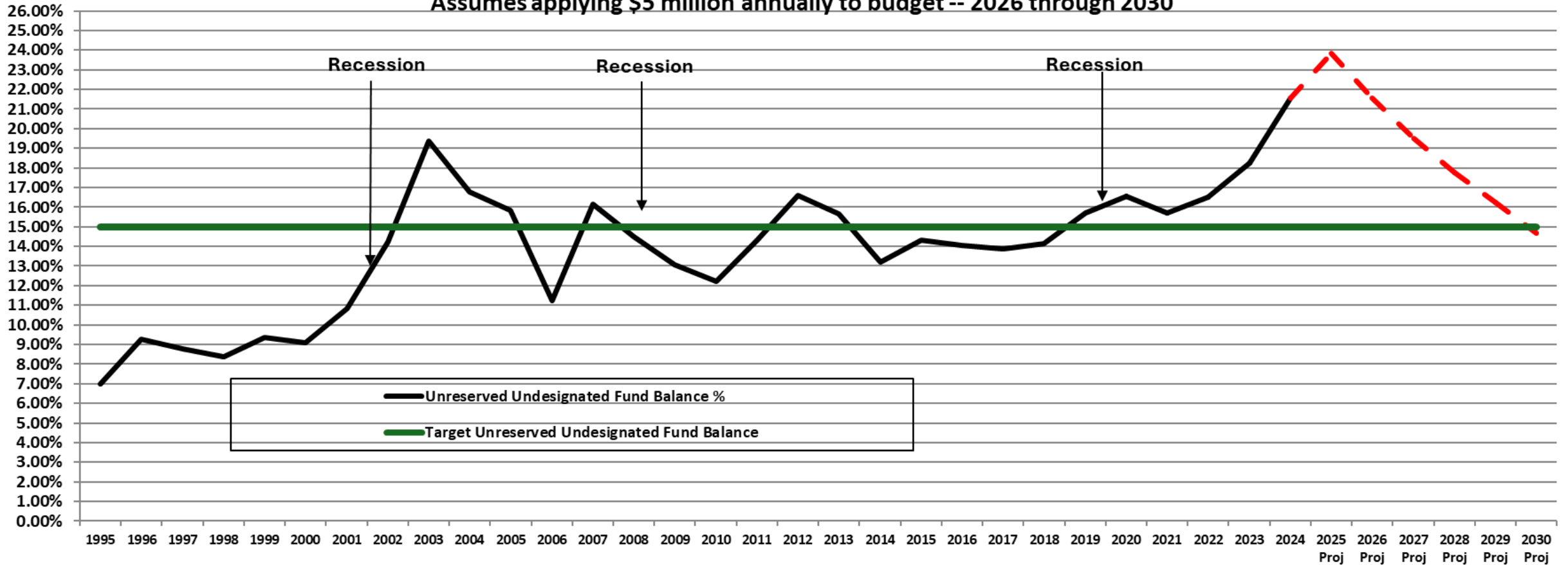
Rainy Day Fund (\$25m) fully expended



General Fund Unassigned Balance ("Rainy Day Fund")

General Fund Unassigned Balance
(as of January 1)
1995 to 2030 Projected

Assumes applying \$5 million annually to budget -- 2026 through 2030



Special Charges are on the Municipal Services Bill

	Annual	Month
Municipal Services Bill		
Water	\$406	\$33.83
Sewer	421	35.08
Storm	150	12.50
Urban Forestry	85	7.08
Landfill	6	0.50
Resource Recovery Special Charge	47	3.92
Total	\$1,115	\$92.92

Possible Infrastructure Special Charge: Focus on Traffic Engineering and Street Repair

- Initial Special Charge Revenue -- \$10 million
- Predictors in Street Use
 - Trip Generation (difficult to calculate, varies across uses)
 - Amount of Parking (surrogate)
 - Represents what each land use believes is needed for peak travel demand
 - Can be charged/calculated across all land uses. (Government owned properties, etc.)

Form of the Referendum Question

"Under state law, the increase in the levy of the City of Madison for the tax to be imposed for the next fiscal year, 2025, is limited to **[2.5%]**, which results in a levy of **[\$296,296,440]**. Shall the City of Madison be allowed to exceed this limit and increase the levy for the next fiscal year, 2025, for the purpose of funding police, fire, garbage collection, parks and library operations and other City services and operations, by a total of **[7.4%]**, which results in a levy of **[\$318,219,440]**, and on an ongoing basis, include the increase of \$22,000,000 for each fiscal year going forward?"

% = Net New Construction and adjustment for any closed TIDs; \$ = levy limit worksheet amount

Must state the purpose of the additional levy.

% increase over maximum allowable and new levy amount

Type of increase (one-time, on-going, short-term) and additional levy amount



Budget Timeline

Council meeting - 5 year plan presented	July 16
Agency Requests due	July 19
Finance Committee – 5 year plan and referendum discussed	July 22
Council meeting – public comment on referendum	August 6
Agency Briefings with Mayor’s Office	August 12-14
Common Council (Special Meeting) – vote on referendum	August 20
Executive Budget Introduced to Common Council (CC)	October 8
Finance Committee (FC) Briefing	October 14-15
FC Amendment Meeting	October 28
CC Amendment Week	October 30-November 8
CC Budget Adoption Meetings	November 12-14



Office of the Mayor

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July 16, 2024

To: Madison Common Council

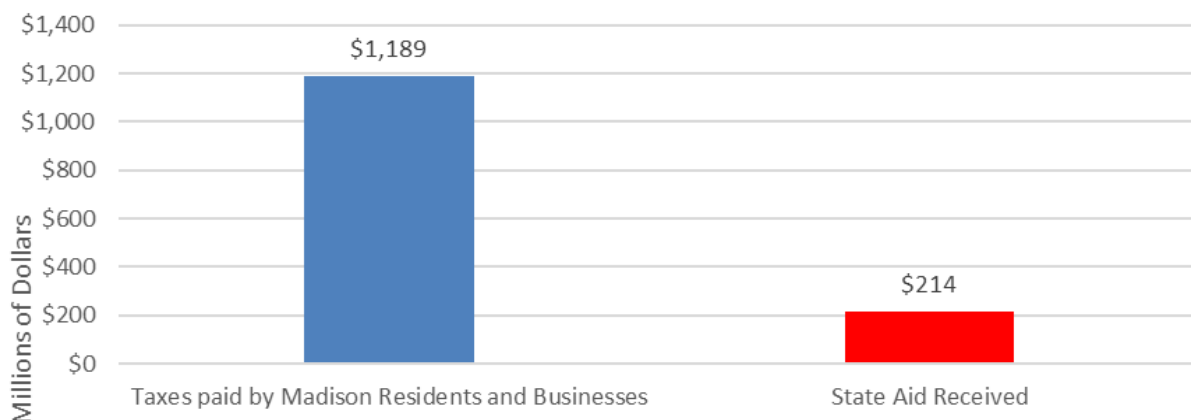
From: Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway

Re: Long term budget plan

Introduction

As we have previously discussed, the City's structural deficit is the result of two basic dynamics: a rapidly growing city and harsh restrictions on revenue enacted by the State Legislature and former Gov. Scott Walker. Since 2011, the State Legislature has strictly limited the amount of revenues available to pay for City services. [According to the independent Wisconsin Policy Forum](#), Wisconsin has the one of the tightest restrictions on increases in the entire country.

State Legislature Shortchanges Madison: We get back only 18 cents for every \$1 of State Taxes Paid

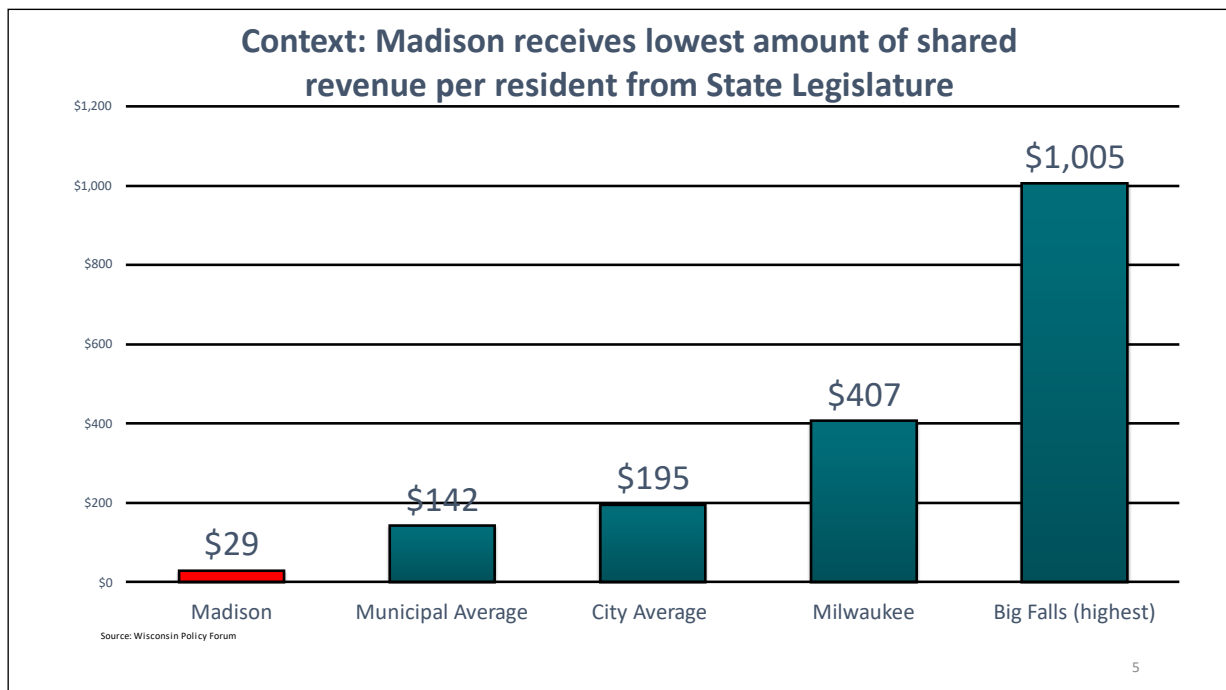


Note: Includes state aid for City of Madison, Madison Metropolitan School District, and City portion of Dane County
Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue; City Finance Department analysis

Despite being a primary driver of the state economy and contributing over \$1 billion dollars in state taxes, Madison residents get back less than 20 percent (18 cents) for every dollar they pay in state taxes. And that includes state aid provided to the City, School Districts, and Dane County. I'll say it again because it is so hard to believe – we receive eighteen cents for every dollar in state income and sales taxes paid. It's

not fair and it is why we don't have enough revenue to simply maintain current service levels to residents and businesses.

At \$29 per resident, Madison receives less than 15% of the statewide average. Wisconsin's largest city, Milwaukee, gets 14 times the amount of shared revenue per resident than the state's second largest city, Madison. It is because of these disparities that we are unable to increase service levels as our City's population grows at the fastest rate in the state. If shared revenue had increased at the rate of inflation since 2003, Madison would be receiving nearly \$20 million in 2024. If Madison received the per-resident average for Wisconsin cities, we would get \$54 million, enough to close the budget deficit more than two times over.



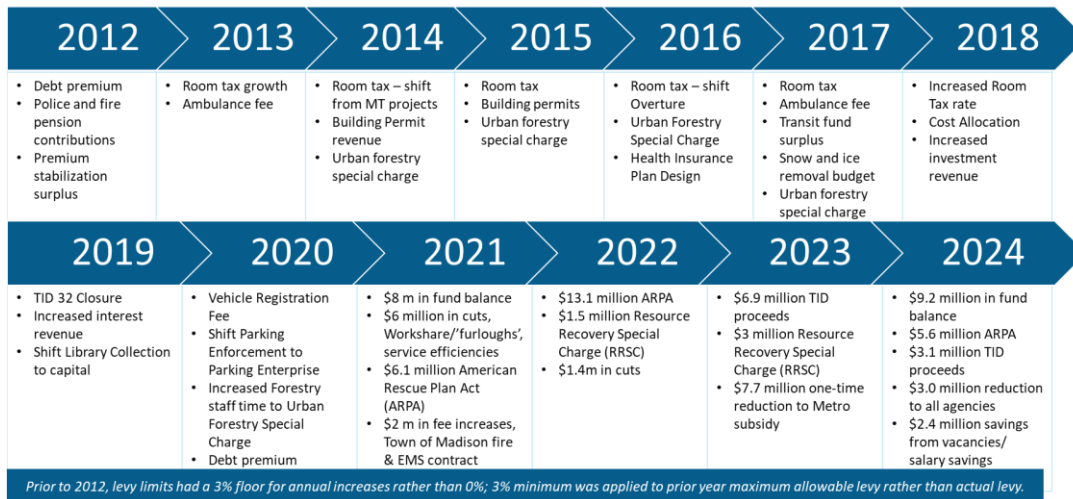
However, Madison is at the mercy of divisive politics at the state level, which has chosen to punish the state's largest cities for our politics by constraining our economy. Our ability to provide city services, supported by a vast majority of our residents, is fiscally impossible under the system created by former Gov. Scott Walker and the current leadership of the State Legislature. Wisconsin is sitting on a \$3 billion surplus and yet communities around the state are forced, every year, to balance budgets with higher costs and stagnant revenue. Residents in Monona, Fitchburg, Middleton, Oregon, Maple Bluff, and communities across the state are confronting the same frustrating dilemma and feel the same pain.

As a result, the City has had to close deficits in every City budget since 2011. The City has done many things to balance its budget over the past 13 years: increasing the amount that employees pay for their pensions and health insurance, increasing existing fees, cutting expenses, finding efficiencies, limiting hiring and creating new special charges. With belt tightening, workforce efficiencies, new fees, soon-to-be depleted federal pandemic aid, and other one-time measures we have avoided major disruptions in city services for the past decade. But Madison has exhausted all but two paths moving forward: an austerity budget we can't afford; or a voter-approved property tax referendum that could be easily avoided under a less draconian State Legislature.

Increased interest rates and higher staff vacancies have resulted in a modest increase in the City’s general fund balance, or “Rainy Day Fund.” While this increase can and will absolutely be part of the solution to the budget gap, it is one-time funding and spending it down will do nothing to address the structural deficits occurring every year or to solve the City’s long-term budget situation.

What has the City done so far?

Madison has faced a budget deficit **every year** since the State imposed strict levy limits in 2011. The problem is bigger in 2025 than before because of the lasting impacts of the pandemic and end of federal recovery funds.



The 2025 Budget

Knowing that we were almost out of options, we undertook a series of conversations that began immediately after the 2024 budget was adopted last November. First, the Finance Department developed a comprehensive information series on the budget. This was followed-up by in-depth briefings of the Council in February and March of this year. In April, the Council adopted values, priorities, and guiding principles for developing a budget that is balanced in the long-term using the very limited options allowed by the State Legislature.

The Council established the following values and priorities for the City budget ([Legistar #82456](#)):

1. Maintaining services for residents.
2. Preventing layoffs or furloughs of city staff who deliver those services.
3. Maintaining wage parity for general municipal employees.
4. Meeting the needs of a growing city.
5. Choosing the most progressive revenue options that consider housing affordability for residents.

With these values and priorities as a foundation, the Council provided the following guidance for developing the 2025 budget:

1. Evaluate service levels, staffing and fiscal impact when developing budget requests.

2. Seek ways to increase efficiencies in operations.
3. Develop language for a property tax referendum for some or all of the projected budget deficit, as well as options to replace existing non-property tax revenues, for consideration by voters at the November 5, 2024, general election.
4. Prepare contingency plans if voters do not approve the referendum.
5. Develop a multi-year plan to address the on-going structural deficit, including revenue options allowed under state law.
6. Consider the overall level of borrowing in the capital budget to help reduce the rate of growth in property taxes.
7. Develop a community engagement plan.

Each of these elements has, as much as possible, been incorporated into the City's budget development. To address the first two criteria, the City is implementing the Results Madison initiative, which is a strategic framework intended to align city services with the outcomes that matter most to Madison residents. As part of this process, City agencies are currently in the process of developing performance measures related to the services and activities they provide. City agencies are also audited on a 5-year cycle for review of internal controls and identification of ways to improve efficiency. Finally, all City agencies have been instructed to provide 1% reductions over their cost-to-continue budget to encourage continued savings and asked to identify potential service reductions of at least 5% of their budget.

While the financial fundamentals for the City's capital investments remain strong, as reflected in the highest possible rating on the City's general obligation debt from Moody's Investors Service (Aaa), which ensures the lowest possible interest cost, we have taken steps to address guideline 6 ("Consider the overall level of borrowing in the capital budget to help reduce the rate of growth in property taxes"). This year's capital budget strongly discourages agencies from requesting any additional general obligation borrowing (the kind that contributes to the cities debt burden). In order to be funded, any new requests must demonstrate how they improve the lives of residents who have been historically marginalized and address systemic disparities, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote climate resilience, and align with other long-range planning efforts.

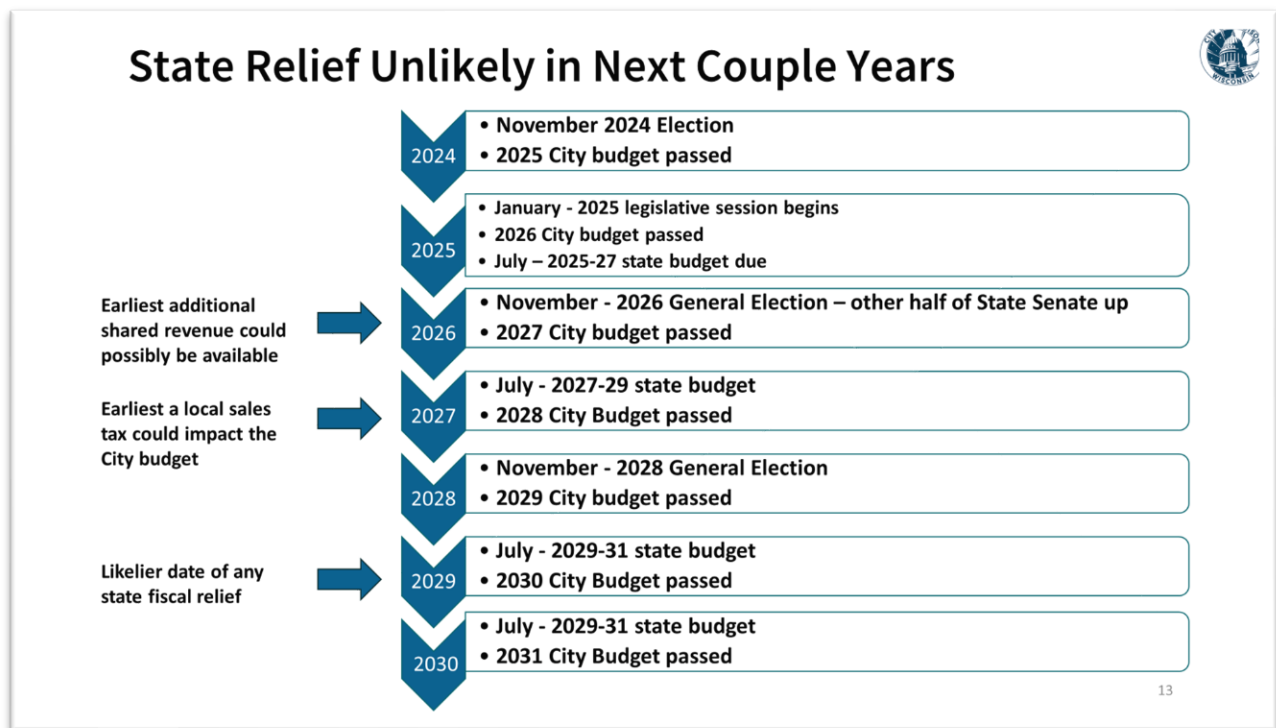
All of these efforts have been guided throughout by extensive community engagement (#7). This began as described above almost as soon as the 2024 budget was complete and include the Finance Department's comprehensive information series on the budget that was presented via a series of in-depth briefings of the Council in February and March of this year. The Council then spearheaded a series of in-person and virtual community budget conversations that were attended by hundreds of residents and generated scores of questions for City staff. We plan to continue this dialogue throughout the fall with continued public budget events and opportunities for community engagement.

Finally, this memo and the accompanying presentation to Council outline "a multi-year plan to address the on-going structural deficit, including revenue options" as well as "contingency plans if voters do not approve the referendum" (criteria 4 and 5). Language for a potential property tax referendum (#3) will be reviewed during the presentation and is being introduced tonight as part of the consent agenda.

A Responsible Long-Term Plan

As should by now be clear, the ultimate solution to the constant structural deficits faced by all Wisconsin cities has to originate at the state level in the form of returning more of cities’ own tax revenues to them in the form of shared revenue, allowing localities to tax themselves via a local option sales tax, or other relief (e.g., finally having state-owned properties like the UW and the Capitol to pay their fair share for the services they receive from the city or allowing municipalities to share transit costs via regional transit authorities). It is important to be realistic about the timeline on which such relief could occur, however.

Even in the most wildly optimistic scenario, wherein the state legislature convened for the 2025 legislative session in January and immediately took action to provide relief to Wisconsin cities – something that is exceedingly unlikely to happen given that they just addressed shared revenue in the previous session and that there will very likely still be a conservative majority in control– such relief would not impact the City budget until the start of 2026. If that relief came in the form of a local option sales tax, it is likely that would require a local referendum (that has been the case in most proposals for granting Wisconsin cities a local option sales tax). In that case, the additional revenue would not impact the City budget until 2027. State action will presumably be more likely after the 2026 mid-term elections when the other half of the state senate holds elections under the lines established in 2024. In that case, shared revenue could come in the 2027 state budget and be available to the city in 2028, while a sales tax would not impact the City until 2029.



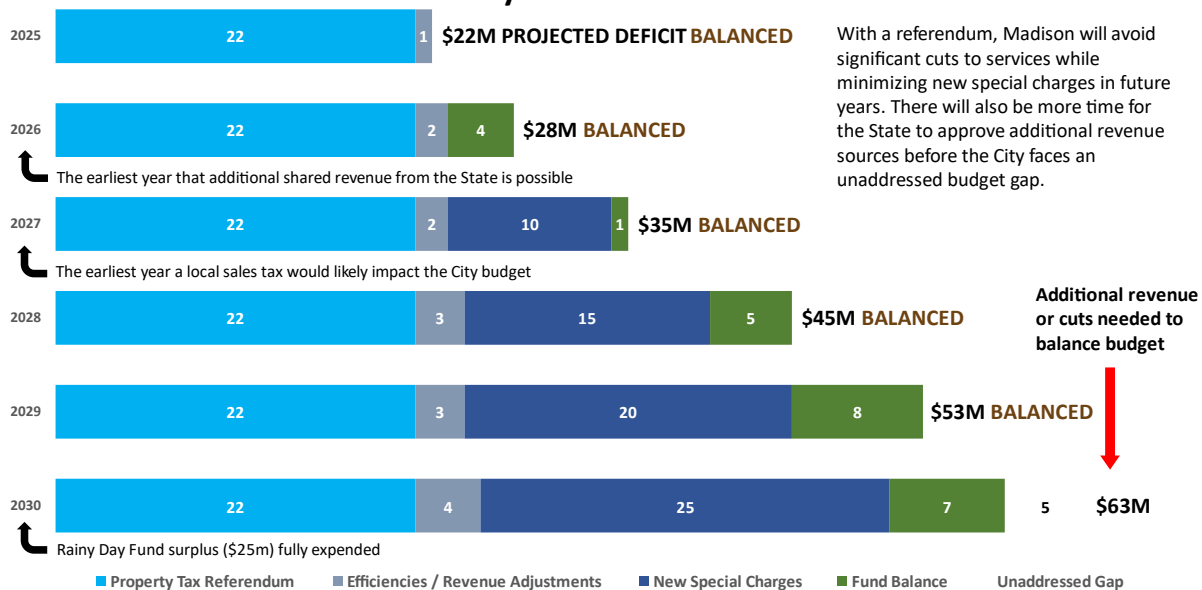
Even under relatively optimistic scenarios that account for changes in state legislative dynamics and assume a massive coalitional lobbying effort, the City must assume and plan for balancing budgets under the current draconian state restrictions for at least the next five years. Thus, guided by Council’s priorities

values, and guiding principles, we have worked to develop a responsible, long-term vision for the City budget avoids major cuts or having to increase taxes via referendum a second time, while we fight for a permanent solution to state-imposed structural deficits and continue to address the service needs and challenges of a growing city.

The major elements of our proposed plan

- A \$22 million property tax referendum on the November 2024 ballot. That would amount to roughly \$5 a month per \$100K of home value, or about \$20/month on the average home. The property tax is both the most progressive alternative available and the one that distributes the cost of running city government most broadly, to both residential and commercial properties across the city.
- Responsibly spending down the general fund balance (approximately \$25 million) over 5 years to the recommended 15% (beyond which it would begin to impact the City’s bond rating).
- Additional special charges starting in 2027 and gradually increasing to help close future budget gaps.
- Continued constraint on new city positions and further efficiency measures to continue to do more with less.
- No budget deficit or further cuts required until 2030.
- Escalated efforts to advocate for state relief.

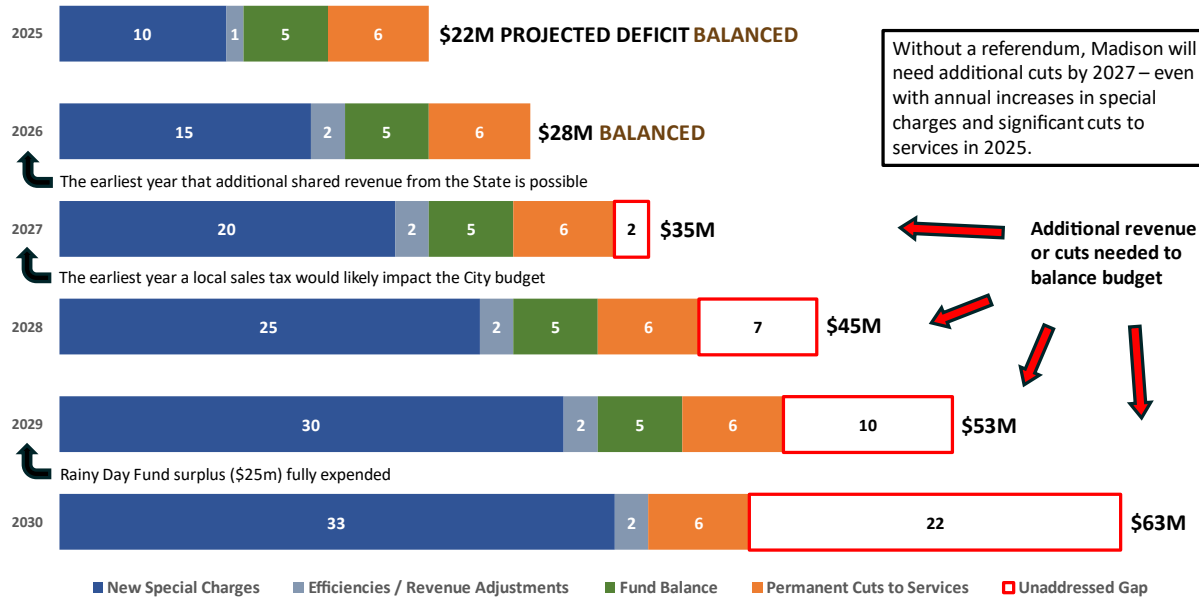
With A Referendum, Madison Can Avoid Significant Cuts or the Need for More Revenue for Another Five years



The alternative is bleak. To balance the budget without a referendum, the City would need significant cuts in 2025 – we estimate roughly \$6 million dollars, which equates to roughly 60 layoffs. The City would also need to begin to institute additional special charges this year, to the tune of an additional \$10 million. And even with those measures, we would start seeing budget deficits again as soon as 2027 with no obvious way to fill them.



Without a Referendum, the City Would Need Additional Cuts and Revenue by 2027



Conclusion

The State Legislature has systematically shortchanged our City and cities across the state. The only alternative they have left cities to pay for the services they provide is to ask residents to authorize an increase property tax – that is why so many cities across the state have been turning to that option. The budget outline above does so in the most responsible way possible, both avoiding massive cuts to City services such as police, fire, and libraries and also avoiding the need to return to voters to ask for yet another property tax increase. We want to thank all of you in advance as we move forward together to serve all of our City’s residents in light of this failure of the State Legislature to adequately and equitably support its second largest and fastest growing City. We appreciate your leadership in this challenging process and know that together we will do our best for Madison.

From: [Jim Siebers](#)
To: [City Budget](#)
Subject: budget deficit
Date: Friday, July 12, 2024 1:31:08 PM

You don't often get email from jpsiebers@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Finance Committee members,

I feel the best way to resolve the city's budget deficit is through additional budget cuts. I will vote against any referendum that would result in a tax increase of any kind. I am also opposed to increased fees.

In just the last two years my property taxes have increased 29%, which I find unacceptable.

Thank you,

James Siebers
1005 Burning Wood Way, Madison, WI

From: Rummel, Marsha <district6@cityofmadison.com>

Sent: Saturday, July 20, 2024 12:33:19 AM

To: Rhodes-Conway, Satya V. <SRhodes-Conway@cityofmadison.com>; Verveer, Michael <district4@cityofmadison.com>; Figueroa Cole, Yannette <district10@cityofmadison.com>; Currie, Jael <district16@cityofmadison.com>; Evers, Tag <district13@cityofmadison.com>; Madison, Sabrina <district17@cityofmadison.com>; Schmiedicke, David <DSchmiedicke@cityofmadison.com>

Cc: Munger, Sam R. <SMunger@cityofmadison.com>; Romines, Charles <CRomines@cityofmadison.com>; Kapusta-Pofahl, Karen <KKapusta-Pofahl@cityofmadison.com>; Matthias, Isaac L <IMatthias@cityofmadison.com>; Brogan, Dylan <DBrogan@cityofmadison.com>

Subject: Comments on 13. 84443 Authorizing the Scheduling of a Referendum Relating to Exceeding the Municipal Property Tax Limits in the City of Madison at Finance

Please do not reply all

Dear Finance Colleagues (non Finance alders are BCC'ed)-

I will miss Finance on Monday because I'll be on vacation but I wanted to share my thinking on the referendum. It is my version of Charlie Romines "R Plan" to buy back some of the special charges (up to \$10M) and add them to the referendum ask. Yes, it adds more to referendum and I realize that is fraught given the school district ask but basically taxpayers will be paying about the same if the \$22M referendum passes (and some even less) if we take most/all of the special charges on the monthly municipal bill and shift it to the annual property tax bill. Plus in my scenario I propose that we apply \$5M of the rainy day fund in 2025. I'm sorry its not more refined, I haven't checked in with Dave and his team, but in my scenario we would ask for \$27M.

I am sharing my blog where I outline, at the 30k foot level, this idea. I hope you all consider it as another option and ask staff to investigate it and provide more details.

Thanks for all you do-

Marsha

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/council/district6/blog/2024-07-20/d6-items-of-interest->

[week-of-july-22-2024](#)

D6 Items of Interest Week of July 22, 2024

At Finance Committee on Monday, there is a resolution to authorize a referendum for \$22M.

www.cityofmadison.com

Alder Marsha Rummel (she/her/hers)

District 6

Subscribe to my blog: <http://www.cityofmadison.com/council/district6/blog/>

Please note: all email, regular mail, text, & written communications are subject to open record requests.

From: [Susan Adib](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Property Tax Measure
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 9:23:31 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from sladib@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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The City of Madison and those who govern the City, have embarked on **extravagant** spending without having "the money in the bank" to fund the projects or positions. As most people learn along the way, **as** there are precious few classes addressing finances and economics until students reach college-level coursework, **one** should plan **ahead** for expenditures and ensure **one** can cover the costs before making purchases. The comment keeps being repeated: "everything costs more due to inflation", as a **justification** for the referendums asking the taxpayers to pay more. It should be **obvious** that "the taxpayers" are experiencing the same "everything costs more". **phenomenon**. Yet, they are expected to adjust their household budgets accordingly in order to not go into debt and still provide for their family's needs. As an **example of communities' adjustment efforts**, fast food restaurants have introduced their \$5 "meal deals" in an attempt to **bring** customers back who could no longer afford **higher** fast food prices. It is the opportune time for the City of Madison and the people who administer it, to adjust their expectations and finances accordingly by "downsizing" services and positions in an effort to conserve financial resources. Going forward the motto should be a "balanced budget" that does not rely on further taxation of the taxpayers, who have their own financial challenges. Regarding the proposed school referendum, it should first be determined what facilities could be consolidated. There is currently an overwhelming trend of families with school-age children moving to the surrounding suburbs of Madison, leaving MMSD with decreasing enrollment. For the same reason that taxpayers should not be relied on to fund deficits in the City budget, they should not be relied upon to fund a \$600 million project for MMSD. As the Dane County birth rate continues to decline, now is the time for statisticians to determine what the MMSD projected student population will be over the next 10 years. Only by doing this one can make reasonable plans for the required number of facilities and personnel.

Respectfully,
Susan Adib,

1

It is time that the City Council and City government realize that they need to "downsize their expectations", and, like households have had to do, cut spending.

It is quite possible that the United States is entering a recession, and now is the time to

From: [Nino Amato](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Nino Amato](#)
Cc: [Scott Milfred](#); [David Wahlberg](#); [Robert Chappell MSN 365](#)
Subject: Mayor Satya proposed city budget cuts which include all city funding to the Goodman Pool, reduction in snow removal & other city services if property tax hike doesn't pass by referendum in Nov.
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 10:18:20 AM
Attachments: [apple-touch-icon.png](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

TO: Fellow Property Taxpayers

From: Nino Amato, 64 Oak Creek Trail

In one of the most stunning acts of politically Cowardliness by Mayor Satya —who refuses to cut her mayoral budget or cutting the city council budget, or shutting down the crime ridden, Dairy Drive illegal drug sanctuary, or eliminating all out-of- state travel for the mayor, city council members and Dept. heads & staff, or by rolling back mayoral staff and city council salaries to 2024 salary levels, or by putting a freeze on all bike paths and bike path city staffing — the Mayor has instead, threaten to make deep cuts to city snow removal, cuts to Madison’s only community pool for economically disadvantaged children of color (Goodman Pool), cuts in road maintenance, cuts in water usage in Madison’s public fountains — if residents don't approve her \$22 million dollar property tax increase referendum this November.

Other Proposed City Cuts by Satya are:

- Eliminating Sunday and some evening hours at city libraries.
- Reducing water use in decorative fountains at Capitol Square, State Street and Peace Park.
- Eliminating the police department's Gang and Neighborhood

Crime Abatement Team.

FISCAL FACTS: Since 2019, the Mayor and the vast majority of this Common Council have refused to accept their responsibility in the financial mismanagement of the city's capital and operating budgets since 2019. • The City's \$27 million dollar structural budget deficit for 2025 was caused by poor policy decisions made by Mayor Satya and the vast majority of this city council, when they:

(1) spent the entire \$47.2 million it received in federal pandemic aid, on increase wages and none essential city services,

(2) by increasing the City's operating budget by 22.1% and the capital budget by 27.5% since 2019,

(3) by giving costly employee bonuses to all city employees and by increasing city employee wages and benefits in 2023-24 with a total increase by 25.2% and 37.7%, respectively, since 2019, and by

(4) passing Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway's \$250 million dollar costly signature BRT initiative — a Bus Rapid Transit system, that leaves the city on the hook for at least \$70 million.

NO SHAME: Instead of accepting their responsibilities for creating this crisis — the Mayor & City Council President are blaming their self-induced financial crisis on the state legislature — which is intellectually dishonest and utterly disingenuous.

Worse yet, the Mayor and the Common Council is abdicating their elected and fiscal responsibilities — by passing the fiscal crises they created, onto the voters, by asking them to bail them out.

We Tge Taxpayers can register to voice our opinions against a tax increase referendum in person or virtually, at tonights city council meeting. Please use the link below to register your opposition and let your Voice Be Heard. — Nino Amato



Sent from my iPhone

From: [Brenda Baker](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget!!!!
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 1:05:26 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from brendaleighbaker@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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I am writing to let you know how angry and upset I am about the budget cuts that are being suggested for this next year, especially the cuts to the Parks department and basic city services.

It is such a tiny investment to keep our beaches open, and staffed with lifeguards, and our hockey rinks and skate rentals, and ski rentals open for the winter!

When we start cutting things that make a community seem worth living in, I guarantee, other problems will quickly come.

This is the time for some creativity and ingenuity, not slashing the very things that keep our community feeling alive.

I suggest that our city focus on creative solutions to this shortfall, rather than these draconian measures that suggest that our city is dying, or rotting at its core.

Instead of thinking small, think BIG about the community we want to live in, and embrace the challenge to meet those needs. We need leadership here, not death spiral thinking.

Brenda Baker
Avid park user in all seasons

While the time to start thinking of new ways to generate revenue was years ago, it is not too late!

Take a look at Theodore Wirth Park in Minneapolis if you need inspiration on how to generate revenue AND serve the community through increasing park services!!!!

From: [Jennifer Bastian](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Agenda Item: 68 84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 2:20:04 PM
Attachments: [Bastian Library board letter.pdf](#)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jenniferhbastian@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Alders,

I am writing in support of Authorizing the Scheduling of a Referendum Relating to Exceeding the Municipal Property Tax Limits in the City of Madison. I am attaching a letter I wrote to the Library Board last month regarding the library budget specifically, and I would also like to add that the cuts to city services across the board look bleak, to say the least. All marginalized people, especially the very young and the very old, will be harmed if we don't put this referendum on the ballot and get it passed. Please do the right thing and move forward with the referendum.

Thank you,
Jennie

--

Jennifer Bastian
414.748.8127
<http://jenniferbastian.com>
Pronouns: she/her/hers

Hello, Community..

My name is Jennifer Bastian. I am an interdisciplinary artist, and cofounder of Communication, a Madison nonprofit arts and music organization founded in 2018.

As a young child, I was watched over by city librarians during the summers while my mother worked as an alder and later, mayor, in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. I have worked in public and university libraries and archives for a great portion of my adult life. You get it - I love libraries.

When I moved to Madison in 2016, my first jobs were working at the Fitchburg Public Library, and as a teaching artist for the Bubbler at Madison Public Library. Bubbler Team members introduced me to *every single artist* I met my first year here. Over the years, I have been an artist in residence at the Central branch, exhibited my work at multiple library branches, collaborated with librarians and Madison Senior Center staff, worked with library staff on the annual Print & Resist Zinefest, taught in the juvenile detention center and the men's jail. This Fall, I will begin a year as artist in residence at the Thurber Park Studio, an incredible opportunity to collaborate with the city of Madison, the libraries, and the Town of Blooming Grove. **Library staff have helped me to have a holistic and realistic view of the community I am a part of and that I seek to support and serve with my art practice.**

When Communication opened, Bubbler staff helped us to form community partnerships all around Madison with their already established relationships. They shared out our events, our flyers and calls for exhibition. **I cannot emphasize enough how much stronger Communication is as an org today because of the support the libraries and Bubbler have given.**

As you can see, I am a living example of the impact our libraries, and the Bubbler, can have. By supporting me as one individual artist, they've made it possible for me and the other Communication team members to support hundreds of artists in turn. That ripple of opportunity, creativity and equity must continue to grow. **Every staff member at the Bubbler is an essential part of the fragile web of arts infrastructure that our republican majority state legislature has attempted to repress over and over again.** As cofounder of Communication and a working artist, I do not take lightly how much the Bubbler has made possible for the arts in Madison.

I can think of one city agency that could easily take the library's budget gap out of its budget. This entity does not support the marginalized in our community, and in fact commits regular harm against them. The Bubbler's Making Justice program, in all its iterations, has worked toward reducing some of that harm by bringing art and care to children in the detention center and men in the jail. The Madison Police Department should voluntarily reduce its budget to accommodate the needs of the Library budget (I won't hold my breath).

Whatever the library board decides, I know that this issue will move on to other policy makers at the city. **Please know that I and many others are ready to demand that our libraries remain fully funded, that the Bubbler will remain in its current formation, and that NO STAFF of any kind at the library are eliminated.** We will not accept anything less than full library funding, and we are ready to work for it. Thank you.

From: [tom Beck](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Fwd: Over budget \$\$
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 12:15:21 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from cnse55@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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to solve the budget problem, stop scare tactics about cutting FD & PD cuts. Start common sense , reduce the unnecessary positions.

See below, why does the mayor need to travel overseas?

Tom

Protect our 1st. & 2nd. Amendment rights

FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

Begin forwarded message:

From: tom <cnse55@yahoo.com>
Date: June 19, 2024 at 10:05:37 AM CDT
To: City of Madison <district10@cityofmadison.com>, district1@cityofmadison.com, district11@cityofmadison.com, district12@cityofmadison.com, district2@cityofmadison.com, district3@cityofmadison.com, district5@cityofmadison.com, district6@cityofmadison.com, district7@cityofmadison.com, district8@cityofmadison.com, district9@cityofmadison.com, City of Madison <district4@cityofmadison.com>, district14@cityofmadison.com, district16@cityofmadison.com, Mayor <mayor@cityofmadison.com>, Our Rep <district15@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Over budget \$\$
Reply-To: tom <cnse55@yahoo.com>

Easy fix:

1. eliminate both asst.mayors
2. Mayor takes 10% pay cut, travel budget cut 20%
3. Alder's take 10 % pay cut
4. All DEI positions cut

Tom,
Protect the 1st amendment, stop the censorship Google, FB, Twitter, MSM!

From: [Clifford Blackwell](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: public comment on agenda item 84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 4:15:07 PM
Attachments: [STATEMENT OF CLIFFORD BLACKWELL.docx](#)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from ceblackwell3@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Attached, please find my comment with respect to the above referenced agenda item.

I welcome any questions, thoughts or comments.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Clifford E. Blackwell, III

From: [Dorothy](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: council meeting 8/6/24 - agenda item # 84443
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 9:23:29 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from dborchardt1@charter.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

DATE: 8/5/24
TO: Madison City Council
FROM: Dorothy Borchardt
RE: \$22 million referendum

I'm opposed to adding a larger property tax burden on the Madison taxpayers. Many life long Madison residents can no longer afford to live in Madison. You have forgotten about the middle income residents, many of them living on limited incomes. Many of my friends and all of my family have moved out of Madison.

The last five years budgets have been leading to this crisis. When you approved the budgets you were aware of the state's shared revenue system, but you went ahead and approved them anyway. You can't blame it on the state.

Did you ever meet with your state representatives and try to work out a better system? Don't blame it on the Republicans or the Democrats if you didn't try to make changes by working with them.

Stop putting wants in the budget, only needs. Stop building subsidized apartments to increase the density of Madison for the BRT. Madison needs more middle income homes.

Save our middle income residents from having to leave the city they love by NO to the referendum.

Dorothy Borchardt

From: [Dan Boyer](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum Resolution: Agenda Item 84443
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 1:17:09 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from boyer.dan@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Alders,

I am writing to voice my strong concern for the proposed cuts to Madison parks, including closure of all shelters, restrooms, and the elimination of winter rentals and rinks. Madison's parks are a major part of what makes this city so great and active, and to cut that piece out would be a real shame. My family – and countless others – use these beautiful spots and services weekly and very much hope that a different solution can be proposed that is not at the expense of recreation and health of Madisonians.

With thanks for your consideration and understanding.

Warmly,
Dan

From: [James Braun](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget cuts
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:43:39 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from losbrauns@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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One proposal I have is not to raise taxes, but to examine leadership and remove unnecessary or redundant positions. Start with those putting in the million dollar bus stops where 3 riders wait, and the leaders who pay transit operators overtime to stand around the Capitol trying to explain a transit system put in place with neither driver nor public input. Millions and millions aiding Parisi Construction and giving the Mayor a Bus Rapid Transit badge in a city where "20 is Plenty". Don't ask taxpayers for more money: spend their tax money helping all taxpayers.

James Braun

From: [Randy Bruegman](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Letter on the Proposed Referendum
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 1:30:17 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[No on Placing the Tax Referendum on the November Ballot.pdf](#)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from rbruegman@outlook.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Chief Randy Bruegman (Ret.)
PRESIDENT + FOUNDER



<https://www.theleadershipcruciblefoundation.org/>

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No on Placing the Tax Referendum on the November Ballot

Item number 84443.

With the 31.2 million dollar surplus in this year's budget, there is no need at this time to call for this referendum. From my calculation the city would only be in an approximate six million dollar deficit for the next fiscal year, not accounting for any other gains realized from the city investment funds for the remainder of this fiscal year. This could be made up by use of one time funds from the "rainy day fund," and leave the city well within the guidelines of the GFOA. This would provide over a year for the Mayor and Aders to develop other strategies that could balance the budget. The mayor has stated "a referendum is not my preferred solution. But it is the most progressive and realistic option for Madison given the current political makeup of the state government." The fact is, that property tax is the most regressive on people that own homes and rent who are in low to middle income.

There are other strategies that are far more progressive and realistic than driving people from their apartments and homes due to increased taxes. The city has over the past five years used federal ARPA funds not for one time expenditures, but those that create long-term operational cost. The use premium, the additional money that is paid to a lender to service funding when doing borrowing, has contributed to the deficit, and then rolling that into the ongoing operational budget is also an issue. Continuing to use the cost-to-continue budgeting approach enables and even encourages the mayor to overspend, and stifles innovation. The mayor is not compelled to exhaust the entire property tax and other tax windfalls each year. According to the city's admission, spending on transportation is 320 percent higher, and on human services is a staggering 700 percent higher compared to our peer cities. One of the troubling issues in this budget process is that the city appears to have rolled a significant amount of the one-time COVID relief money of 47 million dollars into its ongoing budget. If that is the case, that raises a host of questions regarding proper budget practices, ethics, and transparency. In addition, debt service should be in the area of 12% of the operating budget. Presently it's over 16% and is heading toward a 20% threshold. A high ratio threatens the AAA bond rating of the city which, if lost, will increase borrowing cost.

The city ordinance requires a fiscal note on major projects which seems to be no longer in use. The fiscal note should provide the total cost of the project, the annual operating cost, and the revenue source for the initial cost of the project and its long-term operating cost. As an example, has there been fiscal note provided for the operating costs of the new Bus Rapid Transit system?

It is recommended that you place this referendum on hold and take the following actions over the course of the next year to resolve this deficit.

1. You have an exceptionally talented core of department heads and senior staff, ask them how they would innovate services and reduce cost. The city has done business the same way for many years. If you promote the need and desire for innovation, which starts with you, the elected officials, you may be surprised with what they come back with.
2. The consolidation of services across the entities of this county would not only be cost effective, but would likely improve serviced delivery to all resident of the county. I know

this to be true, as I have consolidated several agencies in the past, and each time it improved services and saved money for the taxpayer. It is time to stop being so parochial and become an innovative organization.

3. Take a page out of Milwaukee playbook and revisit the State Allocation Policy. Milwaukee was successful because they brought the Mayor, Alders, Chamber of Commerce, Labor, and business together to collectively lobby the State Legislature for the changes that were passed last year. The city of Madison should do the same, but it will require leadership to bring those factions together toward a common goal of meeting and lobbying our State Representatives. Yes, that will require you to speak to Republicans and develop a professional relationship with them. The city should seek changes to the shared revenue formula, authorization for a sales tax for the city and/or a transit district covering the Madison metro service area, and an increase in the state payments for municipal services for state office buildings and the University of Wisconsin.
4. The city should also exercise more fiscal discipline by:
 - a. By not using one time revenues to create long term operational expenses.
 - b. Discontinue the use of premiums when borrowing money.
 - c. Reduce the amount the city is currently borrowing.
 - d. Properly providing fiscal notes on projects that are proposed within the city.
 - e. Examine all contracted expenditures, particularly in social services, for proven results.

I believe that these efforts are necessary before you ask your constituency for more money. The other point to keep top of mind is this. Property tax hurts those that can least afford it, the most. People in lower to middle income are disproportionately impacted by property tax whether an owner or renter. The city has said “well it is only going to 20 to 30 dollars a month on the average value of a home”. But for many people, that is often money the don’t have. Couple with that with the two other referendums that are on the ballot, if all three were to pass, that would likely put many people on the streets or into a subsidized housing situation. I think it is your responsibility to get your fiscal house in order first before you ask the taxpayers for more.

Randy R. Bruegman

Madison Resident

From: [Susan Bruegman](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: NO on agenda item #84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 3:27:57 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from susan.bruegman@att.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

To the Madison Alders,

I oppose the proposed Tax Levy Referendum.

Given this budget's \$31.2 million surplus, there's no immediate need to pursue a referendum. With an anticipated approximate \$6 million deficit for the next fiscal year, utilizing one-time funds from the "rainy day fund" could provide a window of over a year for the Mayor and Alders to explore alternative strategies for balancing the budget.

While the Mayor sees a referendum as the most viable option, realizing the property tax disproportionately impacts low to middle-income individuals, including homeowners and renters, is important. Using "scare tactics" to advocate for the referendum may not be in the city's best interest.

Exploring the consolidation of services across the county's entities could yield cost savings and potentially improve service delivery for all residents. You have a highly skilled core of department heads and senior staff, and seeking their input on innovative cost-saving measures would be valuable. Encouraging a culture of innovation and openness to change could lead to positive outcomes for the city's financial future. It's important to make decisions that address the budget deficit now, prevent future shortfalls, and put the city on a path to financial stability without excessively burdening taxpayers.

Sincerely,

Susan Bruegman

Susan Bruegman
313 Sauk Creek Drive
Madison, WI 53717
559-999-0287
susan.bruegman@att.net

From: [Tamara Bryant](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Support referendum resolution 84443
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 1:21:57 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from bryant.tamaraj@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Madison City Alders,

I am writing in support of the referendum resolution number 84443. I am an outdoor enthusiast and value the services provided by Madison City Parks. I like to hike at Elver, play tennis at Odana, Nordic ski at Elver and Odana, and bike on our bike trails within the city. Our city parks and trails are part of what makes our community such a great place to live in. We all can agree that our connection to the outdoors is crucial for our physical, mental, and social wellbeing, so I do not want to see cuts in services to the Madison Parks (or the other agencies of the city).

I have watched the Mayor presentation on the 2025 budget issues and I appreciate the information made available to our city residents. Thank you to our Mayor and staff for a thoughtful proposal to address this issue for 2025 and the years following. I hope our residents will support a referendum and I also hope the State of Wisconsin will make the needed changes in the allocation of funds for the future -- it is quite unfair that Madison city only gets 18 cents for every dollar collected in State taxes!

Thanks you for considering my comments. I appreciate your service to our city.

All the best,

Tamara

Tamara Bryant
2254 Keyes Ave
Madison, WI 53711

From: [Ann Conroy](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: referendum 84443
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 3:36:11 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from annjconroy@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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I am very upset to see the budget cuts that would affect winter sports in Madison. This is exactly the time of year when we need to get people outside and moving. Not filling ice rinks, having warming shelters open, and all the other cuts affecting winter parks is one of the saddest things I can think of. Madison needs to do better. Please find a way to add these back in so that the mental and physical health of our citizens can be met.

Ann Conroy

From: [Liz D.](#)
To: [Sally Young](#)
Cc: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Re: Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 2:00:48 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from liz.winter.dannenbaum@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Excellent! ♡♡

On Tue, Aug 6, 2024, 11:41 AM Sally Young <sallyryoung@gmail.com> wrote:

To: Madison City Council

In the past, Madison residents have been generous with voting to voluntarily increase their property taxes. However, I would like to go on record as being against the city's upcoming referendum. I am on a fixed income that is not keeping up with inflation. We have an ambitious mayor and I have not seen the city council doing much to restrain her ambitions. It is no surprise that the state has unfairly targeted us with a paltry amount of state funding. It is no surprise that the pandemic funds would end soon. So, why did this 'crisis' materialize in the past year? Why were we not working harder to balance the budget by forgoing wonderful, forward-looking but unnecessary projects two, three, four years ago?

Sally Young

4112 Major Ave.

"One of the most dangerous illusions of the climate crisis is that the technology of modern life makes us invincible...our bubble of invincibility is far more fragile than we know."

Jeff Goodall author of *The Heat Will Kill You First: Life and Death on a Scorched Planet*.

From: [Liz D.](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:54:21 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from liz.winter.dannenbaum@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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We have rarely, if ever, voted no on a city referendum, but we believe this administration has squandered money on unnecessary projects, like the public market, and especially on salaries for upper echelon city posts (how many deputy mayors do we really need?).

Don't even get us started on the failed BRT.

Time for Madison to focus on essential services and do **those** correctly!

Liz Dannenbaum
Donna Winter
4313 Major Avenue

From: [c d](#)
To: [Rummel, Marsha](#)
Cc: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget shortfall
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 11:15:33 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from kashkakat99@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Ald Rummel (cc all alders)

Could you discuss use/possible mis-use of TIF. Is there any part of the city today that can be called truly "blighted" or is lacking in investors/developers ready and willing to pounce upon any available square footage that comes up for sale? It's not unreasonable to expect that investors/developers many from out of state share in the cost of providing services/infrastructure to thousands of their future residents who arent even here yet. Why does that fall on our shoulders? Madison does not seem to realize that its an attractive city in the proverbial catbird seat - we can pick and choose to do business with whoever will bring the most benefit to our city.

Secondly, the Mayor needs to lead by example. What cuts are occurring in the mayors office?

Thank you for your consideration

Cathy Debevec /1885 E Main Street

Rummel, Marsha <district6@cityofmadison.com>: Aug 06 01:35AM

We will be discussing the potential referendum at Tuesday's Council meeting. Lots of details in the blog including today's posting of city agency's proposed 5% cuts to make up for the \$22M budget deficit if the referendum fails in November. We are seeking your input.

From: davedesign@tds.net
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: city referendum
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 7:52:35 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from davedesign@tds.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Totally against. WITH THE SCHOOL REFERENDUM. both will be hard on seniors with set income. Delay a year

From: [Joan D.](#)
To: [All Alders; tctvoice@captimes.com](#)
Subject: Re: financial options for Madison for Tuesday's meeting and letter to the editor of The Capital Times
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 12:43:40 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from joandowns911@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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I strongly believe that Madison should first use its \$31.2 million end-of-year surplus from 2023, to counteract the projected \$27 million shortfall for the 2025 budget. It is unacceptable not to use the money available to Madison and instead put yet another onerous burden on Madison's citizens. This is a matter of common sense and simple mathematics.

Joan Downs
765 West Washington Ave.
Madison, WI 53715-1486

Cell (for identification purposes only):
608-669-5510

From: [Jess Draws](#)
To: [Latimer Burris, Amani](#); [All Alders](#)
Subject: No Cuts to Libraries: Support Option C
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 11:38:25 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jessicalyndraws@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Hello to Alder Amani Latimer Burris and all Alders of the Common Council,

My name is Jess Draws and I have been a resident of Madison and a user of the Madison Public Library system since 2012. I currently live in City of Madison Common Council District 12, but have lived in various districts in the 12 years I've lived here. I am writing to you to express my strong support for the libraries in the face of potential budget cuts for the next fiscal year.

I am aware of Option A and B as proposed by the Madison Public Library Foundation. I do not find either of these acceptable. I want Option C. I support the proposal for a \$22 million referendum that would increase property taxes by about \$20 a month to balance the budget rather than taking \$6 million in cuts from city services. This is agenda item #84443 (Authorizing the Scheduling of a Referendum Relating to Exceeding the Municipal Property Tax Limits in the City of Madison) at the Common Council Meeting tomorrow (8/6/2024). I have already registered my support, although I will not be able to attend the meeting.

Libraries are essential to marginalized communities, providing free access to resources such as books, internet, educational programs, and safe spaces. They serve as a lifeline for low-income families, the elderly, immigrants, and people experiencing homelessness. Cutting library funding would disproportionately impact these vulnerable populations, deepening existing inequities in our city. Furthermore, maintaining robust library services is a smart financial choice; libraries contribute to the local economy by supporting workforce development, literacy, and lifelong learning, which in turn fosters a more informed and connected community.

Thank you for your time,
Jess Draws
1630 Fordem Ave, #110
Madison, WI 53704

--

Jess Draws
(920) 428 - 9137 || jessicalyndraws@gmail.com
[Pronouns](#): she/her/hers

From: [Deuce Dubs](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: NO on the 22 million dollar extra tax on homeowners real estate tax bill!
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 4:52:50 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jrwan53593@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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We do not support the additional real property tax burden as our taxes are the highest in WI already. We need fiscally responsible people administration our city budget, and people who understand that means you spend no more than revenues coming in. Did you ever consider having a surplus for once? We have "X" dollars coming in our household budget, we can only spend no more than X, actually less because of unprecedented inflation and ALL living costs like home maintenance, insurance and food--who needs those, right? Our household income has gone up a total of 5 percent over the past five years, but costs of living and taxes maybe 20 plus percent--hence we are in the red, and you want to burden us more for taking care of everyone else, at our expense so we cant take care of our own needs and responsibilities.

No doubt you know well of the proposed MMSD referendum which will ask an extra 1300 a year on property taxes on an average Madison home, a half billion dollar school rebuilding program. No doubt the county will ask and MATC...and costs of everything else will go up. But you do not care...remember, the city has NO MONEY, you extract it from taxpayers..it must be nice to have a bottomless checkbook that feeds off others. Shame on you! We believe in pay our fair share, but not funding all things that pop into our leaders minds and paying for all these needy people who move here and bring nothing with them and do not pay their share of living costs and just live on the system...in a perfect world, we would not care...but the world and the politics and fiscal mismanagement at all levels of government are a complete mess, and we can't bare the burden of this over taxing anymore.

So please, learn to define, spell and live within a budget, prioritize and spend no more than you can afford. Its tough that you can't fund every social program YOU FEEL needs to be addressed, but we say don't lay it on us. Show some real leadership, and stop running us out of this city. We used to patronize local businesses many times a week...not the past 5 years, we pay too much just to live and pay taxes...tell the businesses what they can do when none of us will come out to support them!

NO on you ask for additional special taxes from we two taxpayers. We know we will be ignored, because thats how our leaders are. We are retired and on a fixed income and now are looking to leave our home and life here because of you!

From: [Terry D](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Agenda Item 84443 comments
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 2:04:59 PM
Attachments: [Comments84443.pdf](#)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from tprong91@charter.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Please find attached file for my comments on the agenda item.

Thanks!

Terry Durham
402 Acewood Blvd
Madison, WI 53714

First, I would like to express my appreciation to the council for the time and work it puts in for the city. I realize it's not an easy job, and it takes a lot of time and effort. Thank you for your service.

I don't claim to be an expert on city budgets, I probably know very little. My father was a county board supervisor for many years, however, and I have at least a little concept of it (at least I think I do!). I'm merely giving you a perspective on the current budget situation from a common property owner's point of view. I have attended the budget event and followed as much as possible the information given to us via the city website, alders' blogs, etc.

While I've been a strong supporter of city services, public services, school referenda, etc. in the past. I cannot come to be supportive of a referendum regarding the current budget dilemma. I will try to explain my point of view.

I'm a firm believer of the saying "we make our own beds". I simply find it hard to believe, given there are well qualified financial advisors, planners, budgeters, etc. in the city that this could not have been foreseen and avoided years ago. How could the deficit been allowed to balloon to such a large amount, only to now be dumped on property owners at a quite inopportune time?

I'm well aware of the "causes". One of which we hear is/was the COVID-19 pandemic. Please keep in mind the pandemic was just that, a pandemic. It did not exclusively affect the City of Madison. It was worldwide. Personally, I was furloughed multiple days per pay period. This significantly affected my revenue. So, I had to make both lifestyle and budget changes to compensate, which wasn't by any means easy. I did not have the luxury of dumping my financial burdens on my neighbors. Millions of other people had to do the same.

Then, there's those mean Republicans. I get it. Rarely, if at all, do I ever agree with anything that our state Republican majority does or says. In 2010, Act 10 significantly impacted my budget and take-home pay. However, all the ranting, raving or protesting I did was futile. Again, I had to make difficult lifestyle and

budget changes. Again, I didn't have the luxury of dumping my financial burden on someone else.

Madison is becoming ever increasingly ridiculously expensive to own a home or even rent an apartment. The city's budget woes and proposed tax increases won't make it any easier. Given the city's history, I certainly don't see this as being the last time property owners will be forced to shoulder its budget woes.

"It's only a dollar a day, though". Sure, doesn't sound like much, but neither do those late-night TV commercials that state the same thing. Let's look at it. Let's take someone making an average salary of \$50k/year. If (and that is a big IF) they are lucky and receive an annual 3% cost of living increase, that's nearly 25% of that increase automatically taken by the city. And that's before taxes. Even more if the school district gets its money. That's a big deal, given the a cost of living increase is typically fully needed for all the other "Only X amount a day's", such as increases in medical insurance, medical bills, auto insurance, auto repair, groceries, water, heat, electric, home maintenance, child care, vet care, clothing, home insurance, pharmaceuticals, phone bill, internet... just to name a few. I find it hard to imagine someone trying to live here on a fixed income.

Personally, I can realize that if large property tax increases continue each year, it's not a question of if, but when I will be taxed out of my house. And I understand it's happened before, in other cities, this city, to probably many other people. And someone wealthier will be able to buy my house and afford it. But then what exactly has happened? Yeah, gentrification. Can the city then continue to boast about equality and opportunity for all? Or will you have to add the stipulation "Only if you've got the money."?

I also have concerns for what it may do for the future. Will future city councils look back and say "hey, we can really spend as much as we want. If we get in a hole, we'll just pass another referendum!".

Thank you for taking the time to read. Again, please realize these are just some of my viewpoints, and not meant to be insulting or attacking. I generally am supportive of city services and have been in Madison for nearly 20 years because

of its attributes. However, I need to be aware of my own wellbeing. I've spent a lot of time and hard work making my house my own. It should be realized that property owners are not a bottomless well of funding. Unfortunately, I also have no easy solutions, other than responsibly reducing services and/or staff of the city.

Again, I do thank you for your service to the city and appreciate the time you all take to serve on the council.

Terry Durham
402 Acewood Blvd
Madison, WI 53714

From: [Liz Ellis](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Please support the Madison budget referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:07:06 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from imaginarybrassica@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Good morning,

I am writing in support of the proposed \$22 million city budget referendum. The proposed budget cuts would harm almost every city resident, but especially those with the fewest resources. This is not what our city stands for.

Liz Ellis
3149 Stratton Way #309
Madison WI, 53719

From: [Bob Entwistle](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Proposed Property Tax Referendum
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 9:49:28 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from baentwistle77@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Madison Alders,

My feedback on the referendum is that I'm not voting yes at this time. There are too many things going on that show that even a modicum of fiscal restraint is present. And while the city talks a good game in housing affordability, approval of this referendum essentially jacks the rent for every resident of the city, in addition to adding to homeowners' tax load. You're not being "inclusive" by affecting housing affordability in a negative way!

1. Imagination Center at Reindahl - the city has continued to push this forward despite knowing full well there is no money to support ongoing operations. While it's a good idea, maybe it needs to wait until after other city priorities (BRT, new homeless shelter, etc) are completed.
2. City Market - we are probably too far along with this at this point but there were other ways to support small producers (work with existing grocery outlets to increase share of local products?) that didn't require a huge investment in a new facility that has issues (not enough parking, competition from existing grocery outlets)
3. Could we have put the brakes on the second BRT line? Yes, I know that 75% of the initial cost may be funded federally. But there is a huge operational cost coming.
4. While land banking for the south side parcel that the city is purchasing for future development of a park and housing is a good idea in the best of times, some of these things may need to be turned down in times of fiscal issues.
5. We need to review what funding the city provides to NGOs for things like food pantries, community health, services of homeless and other endangered populations. How many organizations are we funding that are doing the exact same thing but all with their own overhead? All the needs are there but it seems like our approach is to fund any organization doing good work rather than trying to leverage the best of the current providers.
6. There is no money for a total redesign of the Lake Monona waterfront unless you can establish that there is significant private money committed. It's a nice plan but needs to wait.

Thanks for your work on the budget!

Bob Entwistle
2709 Center Ave, Madison (District 15)

From: [Natalie Evans](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Please adopt the resolution allowing a referendum in November
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 10:41:03 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from evansnatalie15@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Thank you.

I am from Alder District 5, ward 67.

--

Natalie Evans

From: [John Fons](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: Truth and Consequence
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:57:00 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jefons@aol.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

All Common Council Members,

Your referendum to increase property taxes in Madison guarantees higher rents in Madison. Landlords will not donate their income to your budget or subsidize your deficits with money that must stand in line for mortgages, insurance, utilities, maintenance or improvements to their property.

Rents will increase because you increase taxes.

No one believes you represent the needs of low, moderate or fixed income residents when your actions provoke higher rent and drive up the cost of living in Madison.

We watch you build a complicated bus system with a down payment of Federal dollars. We watch you spend hundreds of millions of dollars yet fail to balance the city's operational budget.

We endure disrupted traffic, impeded emergency vehicles, extravagant bus stops located dangerously in the middle of busy boulevards made all the more hazardous by constricted traffic lanes, not because we required it, but because someone wanted the city put on a perverse Road Diet.

Increased property taxes will be your next mistake.

John Fons
4634 Tokay Blvd.
Madison, WI 53711
608-236-0844 Hm
661-917-0850 cell

From: [Joanna Fresch](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Madison Common Council Meeting - Agenda Item #68 Public Comment
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 2:41:59 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jefra1313@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Council Members:

I am writing in support of approving the referendum option on the November, 5th 2024 ballot. I encourage to the Council to approve the resolution to put forth the \$22M property tax levy increase for the voters to decide.

It is an unfortunate circumstance that we are in, since city tax levies in Wisconsin are tied to the rate of new construction. For quite a while in the late 2010's, that rate didn't even keep up with inflation. Many cities and municipalities have similar issues since most states limit the capacity of their revenue-raising abilities. See: <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2021/07/local-tax-limitations-can-hamper-fiscal-stability-of-cities-and-counties>. Although Madison has attempted to remedy the situation by making cuts and increasing fees for over a decade, it's come to the point where we've cut and increased as much as we feasibly can - which is why I support bringing the referendum.

I had the opportunity to attend previous council meetings and the East Side budget workshop - it's clear to me that fellow citizens of our city do not want to see their services cut, nor do they want to lay off a mass number of their friends and neighbors (my union siblings) working for the city who provide these services. When asked for ideas, most people couldn't fathom cutting the number of services it would take to make up the shortfall. Madisonians, including myself, enjoy a lot of the city's amenities like: clean streets, nice parks, great libraries, public transport, the CARES program, and fantastically convenient garbage and recycling services! The citizens of Madison, although disheartened at the thought of further property tax hikes, understand that to maintain the level of services as they are, will choose to fund them.

Going forward, I would suggest the Council and the Mayor's office work to lobby against the State's restrictions on the fundraising abilities of cities and municipalities. Hopefully, with the November election, it will provide a greater opportunity to present legislative changes so that the city has more control over their financing abilities to work toward alternate means of revenue-raising. I think people see that there is something amuck with the budget shortfall our city is facing (due in part to the distribution system of shared revenue), and the massive three-billion-dollar State budget surplus - and I hope that will inspire them to act accordingly by voting in favor of this referendum while choosing their state legislators at the same time. The referenda is a temporary solution to a problem that we – the Council, the Mayor's office, and all citizens – must be willing to fight to find a permanent solution for.

Thank you,

Joanna Fresch

Resident of D17
Proud AFSCME Member
3348 Ambassador Dr #3

Madison, WI 53718

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Will Friedrich](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Resolution 84443
Date: Saturday, August 3, 2024 6:53:40 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from will-friedrich@outlook.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Madison Common Council,

You have my full support to adopt resolution 84443, and place the referendum question on November's ballot. I am actively engaged in Canvassing and political outreach activities in Madison, and if this resolution is placed on the November 5th ballot, I will work hard to increase voter turnout and inform Madisonians of their crucial need to get to the polls and pass this referendum.

I am extremely frustrated that the State legislature and the long-lasting impact of Scott Walker's governorship has let the irresponsible and irregular nature of shared revenue in Wisconsin hamper our thriving and noble city. Madison does not deserve to have only 18 cents on the dollar of state taxes returned to it. I first recently became aware of the issues of shared revenue while viewing reporting from Dan Shafer from the Recombobulation Area as he reported on Milwaukee's recent sales tax increase which was a means to stave off a similar budget crisis. This referendum must pass, and further Wisconsin legislators must rigorously and honestly take up the issue of shared revenue once again to invest in our state meaningfully and consistently. It is simply unacceptable policy at the state level. I applaud all the work the Common Council has done in the past thirteen years to level the budget and navigate the ever-increasingly difficult financial waters imposed by this shared revenue policy.

Sincerely,

Will Friedrich – resident of Mansion Hill neighborhood, Madison.

From: [Aedan Gardill](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Harrington-McKinney, Barbara](#)
Subject: Common Council meeting 8/6 -- in support of #84443
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 12:23:34 PM

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Hello alders,

I want to email and express my support of agenda item #84443 for this upcoming Common Council meeting on Aug 6.

I agree that we should put the decision of who to bear the Madison deficit (either the residents or the public services) to the residents themselves.

Personally, I am happy to provide the ~\$20/month extra in property taxes to reduce the amount of budget cuts to public services, like the library. In the end, I think \$20/month per resident will have a MUCH smaller impact than cutting \$6 million to public services (and not to mention that the cuts to the public services will disproportionately affect low income residents).

I urge you all to vote yes to push this referendum forward.

Aedan Gardill
1110 Chapel Hill Rd

From: [david gebauer](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 2:10:00 PM

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

I am writing to you to let you know my opinion on the proposed referendum. I oppose a referendum. So far all we have heard from the mayor's office and the city council is threats of what cuts that would have to be made to services and programs. What we have not seen from the city is how the city can decrease budget costs now. Starting in the mayor's office, the mayor could sort out the necessary from the nice to have. For example, unnecessary staff positions, staff benefits, and unnecessary services. Myself, I can certainly live with a fair number of the proposed cuts in services and programs. Many are nice things to have as a city but not necessary. I will not bother going through the list of what those are, for I am sure that all of you can pick your own out.

Thank you.

--

David Gebauer

From: [Mary Jo Feeney Gebhardt](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendums that will raise property taxes
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 12:05:50 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from mjfgebhardt@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Please do not vote for the passing of such referendums. It is not fair to continuously raise our property taxes when this Mayor and this Council have put the city in this position by making poor decisions on how City money is spend and thinking that it grows on trees.

The City is in such dire straits now with what has been going on, especially with the rapid bus transit that has completely disrupted traffic in this city and will only be worse when buses twice the size of the regular city buses are trying to operate on the streets where lanes have been cut out and corners of streets will be too narrow for the buses to be able to make the turns.

Further more, having people getting on and off buses is an unbelievable dangerous idea and leaves everyone, bus riders, vehicle drivers and pedestrians in a very vulnerable state.

No More Referendums!

From: [noreply](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: [All Alders] 2025 Budget Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 12:01:25 PM

Recipient: All Alders:

Tuesday, August 6, 2024 – 12:00pm

Sharon Genthe

92 OAK CREEK TRAIL

Madison, Wisconsin. 53717 Yes, by email. stgenthe@gmail.com All Alders 2025 Budget Referendum Mayor Rhodes-Conway and Alders

Excessive spending by election officials should not affect tax paying citizens. threats of cutting snow removal, road repairs and essential services is unprofessional and inappropriate. You should be able to find \$22 million worth of fat to cut in the large over \$500million budget. Spending federal government money is still spending our money. More prudent spending methods should have been implemented because you knew of this eminent calamity years ago. Statistics show and it will be proven in a short time that the BRT is a boondoggle. Yet, with a flick of the hand you expect taxpayers to pay for it. Taking away children's recreation, such as the Goodman pool, which was a donation from the generous Goodman brothers should not be held hostage by your inappropriate spending. Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway and the City Council should do everyone a favor and recognize the wrath of the voters should this ridiculous referendum go through to November. There will be hard fought opposition. This ask of taxpayers reflects very poorly on your stubborn inability to manage money and arrogance that Madison tax paying citizens will just have to pick up the tab. I wholeheartedly vote NO.

Thank you, Sharon Genthe

From: [John A Gerold](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum Resolution Scheduled for August 6th.
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 11:54:34 AM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from jagerold39@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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To all the Alders:

I am strongly opposed to the \$22 million Proposed Referendum. Alongside the proposed School District's referendum, this will impose a very high additional annual property tax burden on a large majority of the city's population. I can stand the hit but a large majority of the population can not. Of the \$315 million plus that is being spent on BRT, the city will pay \$70 million. Since that is not complete and parts like the North/South route are still in the planning stage, those types of items should be postponed or stopped, until the City can get its financial house in order and probably saving a large part of the \$70 million, that then can be applied to supporting the highest needed city services and likewise reducing the need for the referendum at a full #22 million. I also believe the rainy day fund should be tapped to the fullest extent possible as another first step. I realize that can affect the City's bond rating, but in the meantime the city can continue to get its financial house in order. If that type of move puts a strain on the city down the road, then at that time, cures for that problem can be determined.. One area where the city could raise more revenue is a MUCH stricter enforcement program related to our traffic laws. Speeding, lack of proper license plates, unlicensed and uninsured drivers are a major problem. Maybe in the total scheme of things, stricter enforcement won't bring in that many more millions in dollars but it may be enough to not cut back on certain emergency services to a fuller extent.

John A Gerold
214 Saratoga Circle
Madison, WI 53705
[H] 608-833-5121
[C] 608-234-2253

“The greatest menace to freedom is an inert people.” Justice Louis Brandeis.

From: [noreply](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: [All Alders] Library funding
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 11:51:49 AM

Recipient: All Alders:

Monday, August 5, 2024 – 11:47am

Ari Gochberg

They/he

5416 eastland way

Madison, Wisconsin. 53716 No, do not contact me. All Alders Library funding sample language:

My name is Ari Gochberg and I have been a resident of Madison and a user of the Madison Public Library system since 2016. I am writing to you to express my strong support for the libraries in the face of potential budget cuts for the next fiscal year.

I am aware of Option A and B as proposed by the Madison Public Library Foundation. I do not find either of these acceptable. I want Option C. I support the proposal for a \$22 million referendum that would increase property taxes by about \$20 a month to balance the budget rather than taking \$6 million in cuts from city services. This is agenda item #84443 (Authorizing the Scheduling of a Referendum Relating to Exceeding the Municipal Property Tax Limits in the City of Madison) at the Common Council Meeting tomorrow (8/6/2024). I have already registered my support, although I will not be able to attend the meeting.

Libraries are essential to marginalized communities, providing free access to resources such as books, internet, educational programs, and safe spaces. They serve as a lifeline for low-income families, the elderly, immigrants, and people experiencing homelessness. Cutting library funding would disproportionately impact these vulnerable populations, deepening existing inequities in our city. Furthermore, maintaining robust library services is a smart financial choice; libraries contribute to the local economy by supporting workforce development, literacy, and lifelong learning, which in turn fosters a more informed and connected community.

From: [Eileen Goode](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum opposition
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:21:03 AM

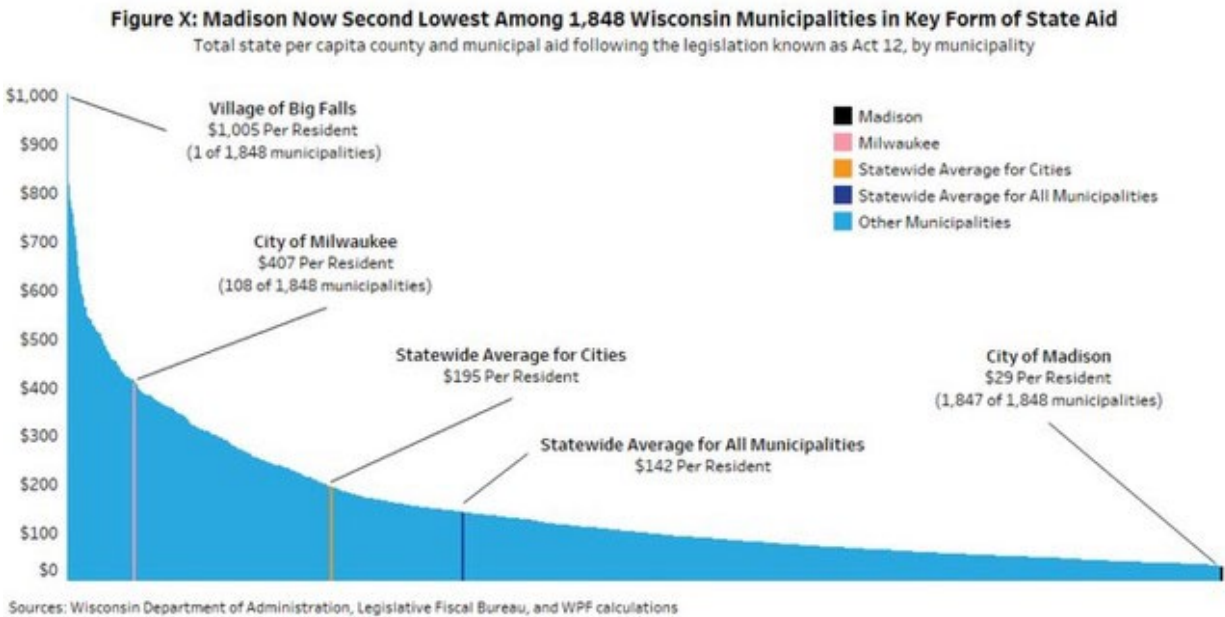
You don't often get email from eileen@ecg812.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Alders,

Can you explain the HUGE deficit that City of Madison receives with regard to state aid? Why is Madison so different from Milwaukee another large city? Why not review this discrepancy before going to homeowners once again for another big hit on taxes.

I would love to see some answers on this topic. I cannot attend Tuesday 8.5 City Council meeting.



Eileen Goode
21 Southwick Circle
Madison WI. 53717

From: [nancy53703](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget referendum resolution feedback
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 2:37:03 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from nancy53703@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello,

To help lower costs to taxpayers (especially those of us who are trying to hold onto our homes), please save \$16 million by stopping design and construction bidding on the Imagination Center until a better budget situation develops. The Madison Market is a boondoggle, too, but already in development, so...

If you haven't read former Alder Erik Paulson's 4-part series about ideas to fix Madison's budget deficit, please do so!

Option 1: More short term risk, more long term benefit

My preferred option, we should maximize the amount of revenue authority the city has and increase the levy by \$28M in the November of 2024 referendum, which would close the budget gap for both 2025 and 2026, and leave a \$8 million gap for 2027.

To ease in the levy increase and to close the gap through 2027, the Common Council would commit to using \$11M in one-time funds in 2025 and \$5M in 2026 to reduce the levy impact. This means that for taxpayers, rather than a \$28M extra increase landing all in 2025, there would be an extra \$11M levy increase in 2025, an additional \$12M increase in 2026, and an additional \$5M increase in 2027. The remaining \$8M in one-time funds can close the 2027 budget gap.

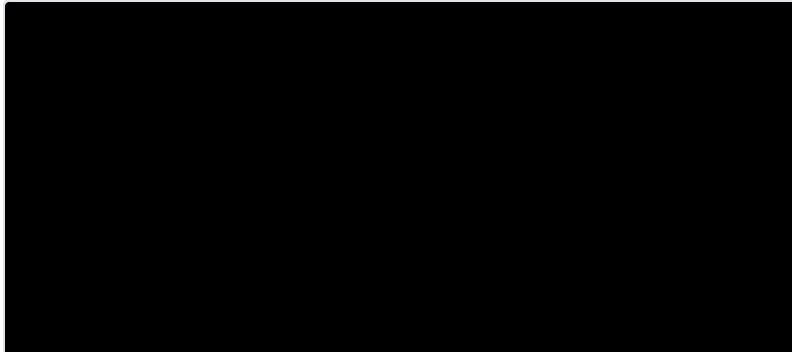
(We can do this without impacting our future levy. I explain how and show the math of the overall increase at the bottom of this post in the “nerdy details” appendix)

This option has the obvious downsides of:

Having a big number (\$28M) actually on the ballot, making it less likely to pass

Being very difficult to explain

[Madison's Budget Challenge, Part 4: We should do a City of Madison budget referendum. Here's how.](#)



Madison's Budget Challenge, Part 4: We should do a City of Madison budge...

Erik Paulson

The final post of the series, let's look ahead to a potential operating referendum.

Kind regards,

Nancy Gores
District 13

From: [kindley graf](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget referendum
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 4:26:50 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from kindley.graf@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Oppose a referendum to increase property taxes to meet the alleged budget deficit. Correct the deficit by reducing spending. Madison already sticks it to taxpayers by separately charging for municipal services then also hanging an additional charge on vehicle registration renewals.

Vote no. Do not proceed with a referendum.

From: [Julia Greenberg](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Please support resolution 84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 2:30:41 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from juliargreenberg@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hi,

I am writing to urge you to support resolution 84443 in order to place a tax levy referendum on our ballot. I am particularly concerned about how the proposed budget cuts would affect Madison Public Libraries and I have read their statement on what services would likely be impacted. Like many parents of young kids, I take my children to the Hawthorne, Pinney, or Lakeview library at least once a week, sometimes more. Their programming is terrific and they allow for interaction among diverse members in our community in a way few other services do. Lakeview's Sunday hours during the school year provide a particularly important spot for us and many kids on the Northeast side during the cold winter months. Please support this resolution so that voters can weigh in on whether we feel a small tax increase is worth ensuring funding for our libraries and for other community services.

Thank you for your consideration,
Julia Greenberg

From: [Austin Griesbach](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Support for Agenda Item 84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 7:59:10 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from austin.griesbach@icloud.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello,

I am writing as a City of Madison resident and homeowner in support of agenda item 84443, Authorizing the Scheduling of a Referendum.

I have no interest in austerity measures and reduction in services. If I disliked the services, or thought that the services weren't worth the taxes, I would have settled down in a town that didn't have them in the first place. If we are forced to go through with even half the service cuts that are currently on the table, we will be much worse off as a community.

Austin Griesbach
District 4

From: [noreply](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: [All Alders] Budget/Referendum
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 8:36:46 PM

Recipient: All Alders:

Sunday, August 4, 2024 – 8:32pm

Lori Groskreutz

Prefix

605 whitehall dr

madison, Wisconsin. 53714 Yes, by email. magpack1@charter.net All Alders

Budget/Referendum I recently saw on the news that 1- City of Madison looking into a referendum for MONEY 2- The Library has over a 20 million dollar short fall. subject 2- Library how can that be since we just completed the month of July. Where is the comptroller to over see the budget? Did the Head of the Library see the monthly statements that budget short fall? subject one- Where is the money going? did you all think covid money was never-ending? I checked past meetings and not ONE OF YOU that I can tell has stated - let's work on a budget (like the taxpayers) cut was in not a necessity, Freeze any pay raises, have employees pay more into insurance cost, also maybe the Convention Center, has that every turned a profit? maybe sell that to stop the money snowball. You are asking the taxpayers to pay more as they are receiving less in their income, paying more for living expenses, more for insurance cost, cut back to try to stay even. But you as alders have not proposed that for the city. 20 million here, 2 million short fall for shelter, WHEN does this stop? Referendum, after Referendum ? Please lead by example, for the TAXPAYERS. I am almost certain that no response from any one, but by goodness you will want me vote for alder and vote for a SPENDING referendum, I am betting no response from any alders .

From: [Samantha Cora Christian Haas](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Finance](#); financecommittee@cityofmadison.com
Subject: Comment in Support of Referendum: We need thriving libraries and parks
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 8:09:55 AM

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Hello,

I have called Madison home for the last 10 years, and ever since starting a family during the pandemic I've become more aware of the importance of city services. At the top of the list are the beautiful libraries and parks, which would suffer tremendously by the proposed budget cuts. I support the \$22 million referendum, because I recognize how vital services like libraries and parks are to connecting our community with local resources and each other. We need "Third Places" like libraries and parks that are multicultural and multigenerational for our city to thrive. Please do not cut funding to the programs and people who make these spaces wonderfully welcoming, accessible, and inclusive.

Thank you,
Samantha Haas
5717 Hempstead Rd, Madison
920-248-2676

From: [David Handowski](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Mayor](#); [Finance](#)
Subject: 2025 Budget Comments - Voting NO on referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 3:19:42 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from davidhandowski@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Alders, Mayor, and Mr Schiemdicke,

I am absolutely AGAINST, and will vote NO to any referendum that seeks to increase the levy or burden residents with additional property taxes.

First, I would like to thank, and acknowledge, Mr. Schiemdicke for all the public forums he conducted regarding the City of Madison finances. As always, he was knowledgeable and informative and gracious with a difficult task and forum.

However, he was not the person who should have been presenting to the public. That responsibility should have fallen to the owners of the budget which are Mayor and Council. Given Councils' lack of true participation in budget details for years, the Mayor should have been present to understand and address resident concerns.

The primary reason for a NO vote on the referendum is that you have lost all credibility in being fiscally responsible in managing our money. I personally feel you don't feel true ownership over every dollar the City is spending, questioning with passion what, why, where, how, if spending meeting a specific, quantifiable and measurable objective. When you plan to have work done in your own home, I assume you pay attention to details, you want bids to be competitive, you want the work to be guaranteed, you will follow up with the work to make sure it met contractual objectives and are personally satisfied with the work done. The single biggest question and priority is do you have the money budgeted to perform the work.

Many of us feel its simply a rubber stamp process with no true sense of

ownership. Plus, in our own homes, if we are over our budget, we are not continuing to spend and putting it on a credit card! This is what Mayor and Common Council have been doing for years.

There are very specific, and significant issues, that Mayor, Council and Finance have not addressed:

1. Use and application of ARPA (American Rescue Plan ACT) and other “one time” use funds – Rainy Day Fund, Bond Premium

a. Likely a significant amount of the budget shortfall is in how ‘one time’ funds have been incorporated into the normal annual operating budget. ARPA (and other funds) were never intended to be a liability transferred to a municipality’s constituents.

b. The transfer of this liability into annual operating budgets is “highly irregular” and is usually bound by specific rules. When and why was this initiated?

c. Lack of transparency in where these funds were applied, when, how much, why,

2. While at a critical juncture in City finances, there is \$10M (at one time \$12M) in ‘uncollected revenue’. When the City is starved for funding leaving monies uncollected is unfathomable.

3. Lack of clarity around BRT funding. Portraying grant monies from any governmental agency does not make it ‘free’ money. Capital assets require maintenance and repair (operating expenses) whether it’s a building, elevator, fire alarm/suppression system, bridge, road, bus, bus stop, bike path, etc. Any ‘net new’ asset drives maintenance as well as requiring funding (reserves) for future replacement. A \$200M grant will eventually require funding sufficient capital reserves, which will be a net new obligation for City and taxpayers. When ridership is falling this is a huge risk, and obligation, to citizens. What is the ridership model for the next 5 years, what happens if ridership declines, what

are mitigation plans if BRT is under water?

4. Threatening “layoffs” of City staff and a reduction in core services, when that is unnecessary. The City does not have an FTE problem but a services spending problem. I thank the City for releasing the latest “5% budget cut” model that makes the point.

a. Are members of Common Council requesting to see an FTE model from 2019 to current day for city staff. How much has staff grown as compared to City growth? A \$20M shortfall in 2025 is 200 FTEs at \$100K salary for round numbers. At \$75K that’s 266 FTEs. Where is staff growing? Shrinking? Does it align with core city services?

b. The core spend areas are in “purchased services” (from the budget release last night) which are vague, undefined, and lacking detail. These spends are significant, yet vagueness surrounds the details. Does Common Council understand where we are spending, with who, are they meeting measurable objectives with our funding? How often are those being audited for results, efficiency? Useful and actual information around where ‘one time funds’ (point #1) have contributed to net new operating expenses over time is critical. Who is asking those questions? Where are answers for the general public who are paying the bill? If you are not asking these questions WHY NOT?

c. From a professional standpoint asking for a flat 5% cut across all agencies was unnecessary. And you spun up staff when it was not required. If you have a department of 10 and all are ‘outstanding’ or high achievers, you are going to willingly cut good talent? You take 5% of all the bottom performers based on performance reviews. Private sector does this periodically and it typically increases morale, because your better employees have been picking up slack for poorer performing employees, and the general attitude is ‘it was about time’. And this is done at each layer. Where is the information about people, and department overtime? Does

anyone remember the bus drivers make more that \$225K a couple years ago? If Common Council is passing budgets you should be asking for information that is useful when evaluating budgets!

<!--[if !supportLists]-->d. When Chief Barnes has to remind you that a 5% cut will violate the principles of Act 12 and would cause the City to repay hiring grants tells me little thought was actually given to selectively and with purpose reviewing how budget reductions were requesting through City staff.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->e. Laying off City staff is the choice of Mayor and Council only. Staff reductions are likely not necessary. However, this appears to be the path of least resistance which is disappointing. It also highlights that City has no real interest in managing in a responsible manner. If staff reductions are preferable to cutting other spend and commitments, that is your choice. Not the choice many citizens would make. Your choice.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->5. <!--[endif]-->You continue to blame the state for lack of funding!

<!--[if !supportLists]-->a. This has been known for years.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->b. If Council has been applying one time funds for ongoing operating expenses then you knew years ago, what you know today. You are not the US Govt and you can't print money. And at some point this was all going to catch up with reality.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->c. Negotiations with the State should have been initiated years ago in preparation for this day. Madison is a key economic engine for the entire state. As dysfunctional as our state government is, they know this. Plus, you have Evers! Why have you waited?

<!--[if !supportLists]-->6. Last but not least – the Civilian Police Oversight Committee. For the millions spent to date there is still NO actual process in place to run the program. HOWEVER, do I see in file # 83848 that this body is proposing that the City will actually pay up to \$15,000 towards complainants attorney's fees to.....litigate against

the City of Madison? So, we are going to pay for both sets of attorneys in the same case? And there is no mention of a limit to the number of instances, whether the person wins/loses the case with prejudice? I mean, wow. How can this not be a conflict of interest? How does this make any rational sense to a taxpayer that we will pay for both the defense and prosecuting attorneys in the same case? The City is actually incentivizing court actions against itself? Mind boggling. If this is representative of what happens in other areas of our City government we have bigger problems than just the budget. If this is your money, how about each member of Council pay the first 20 \$15,000 bills personally. Would this make you look at situations like this differently in the future? I would hope!

I will not support a referendum. I would support having a member of Common Council sit in every exit interview for an employee who is cut, and to be present for every agency or supplier or person who has benefited from a service that can no longer be afforded. Perhaps then, it will make decisions more personal when funding issues come before Common Council.

I will be a NO vote until I see reason, personal responsibility and common sense in financial decisions.

David Handowski
District 1 resident

From: [Amelia Hansen](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Public Comment on Agenda Item #84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 3:32:43 PM
Attachments: [240806 Madison Common Council Public Comment AH.pdf](#)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from amhansen97@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hi,

Please see the attached PDF for my written public comment for today's Madison Common Council meeting.

Thank you,

--

Amelia Hansen
(she/her)

There is a genocide of Palestinians happening right now.
From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.

August 6th, 2024

To: Madison Common Council

From: Amelia Hansen

18 South Bedford Street

Madison, WI 53703

Dear Madison Common Council members,

I will support the referendum to increase the percentage cap on raising property taxes (agenda item #84443 on today's Madison Common Council agenda) to fund Madison public services, if the purpose of the increase is to fund all Madison public services except the Madison police. To clarify, I will support a referendum that clearly states that the increased percentage cap on raising property taxes will not allow any revenue collected from increased property taxes beyond the current percentage cap to be given to the Madison police department budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amelia Hansen

From: [Drew H](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 8:59:43 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from drewhansiii@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Developers could have helped avoid the city's budget issue if allowed to build more housing. But the city puts up too many barriers to new housing like the restrictive West Area Plan. So this government employee will be voting no on the city referendum.

Sincerely,
Andrew Hanson
Rolla Ln
53711

From: [Stacy Harbaugh](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Love my city, but voting no on the referendum
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 3:18:01 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from stacyrharbaugh@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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I appreciated the recent article in the Cap Times on the referendum on this fall's ballots. I vote in every election and typically am an enthusiastic cheerleader for referendums that approve funds for our public schools and city services.

The question on this fall's ballots is too soon after our last school referendum and comes at a time when taxpayers cannot afford an additional hike. Inflation is still impacting our pocketbooks at the grocery store. I'm in the process of trying to buy a home with a mortgage that may be around 6.5% interest. An additional tax hike while we're already dealing with corporate price gouging and an unreasonable housing market is too much.

I've no doubt our state legislators have carefully crafted laws to make this impossible, but perhaps if property tax increases could be applied only to single-family homes that are worth \$500,000 or more, voters would rush to vote yes to place more tax burden on the wealthiest members of our community. Those of us making five-figure salaries simply cannot afford another hike at this moment.

Stacy Harbaugh
336 Norris Ct. #3

From: [Lisa Hempstead](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Madison Public Library Board's Letter in Support of Referendum
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 3:01:37 PM
Attachments: [MPLB letter to CC 8-5-24.pdf](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Please read the attached letter from the Madison Public Library Board to City Council Members explaining our support of a referendum (item #68) on the August 6th meeting agenda.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lisa Hempstead
MPL Board President and MMSD School Representative



Dear Members of the Common Council,

The Madison Public Library Board is writing to advocate for a referendum that would support our beloved library system.

At the July 11, 2024, Madison Public Library Board Meeting, the Library Board passed a preliminary 2025 Operating Budget that would continue the current service levels at Madison Public Library and provide a pathway forward for the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park if certain conditions are met. However, the Board also approved a 5% budget reduction scenario that offers required reductions in priority order:

201 W. Mifflin St.
Madison, WI 53703

608.266.6300 ph
608.266.4338 fax

- \$120,692.63 - elimination of Sunday hours
- \$323,793.35 - elimination of 3-3.5 full-time equivalent programming staff and some program services & supplies, *with directions to prioritize the reductions of services/supplies over staff*
- \$644,205.12 - elimination of the equivalent of our evening hours, *while requesting that some evening hours be preserved over morning hours so we have a mix of daytime/evening hours for the community*

Now that the preliminary 2025 Operating Budget has been approved by the Library Board, it will go to the Mayor's Office to be incorporated into the City of Madison's budget this fall. **As the City of Madison works to draft a 2025 Operating Budget in the face of a \$22 million structural deficit**, the Library Board wants to express strong support for a referendum option that:

- funds the operational cost to continue, enabling the Madison Public Library to maintain its current service hours, staffing levels and programming.
- includes the funding needed to open and operate the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park

The Madison Public Library Board believes in the power of strong libraries to transform communities. As a board, we make budget decisions through an equity and access lens, and we know that libraries serve as critical lifelines for neighborhoods. Because of this belief, we are committed to seeing the Imagination Center move forward, as the Reindahl Park area has long been considered a service desert—not just for libraries, but for many other City services that libraries can help bring to the neighborhood. The Imagination Center at Reindahl Park has been in process since 2014 and funds have already been committed from both the City of Madison and the Madison Public Library Foundation for the construction of the library. While the Board would like to see the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park open and operating, we don't want it to happen at the expense of existing services without a deeper discussion of impacts across the city.

"The harsh restrictions imposed by the state legislature in 2011 have severely limited the City of Madison's ability to increase revenue through traditional means. This situation leaves us with no viable option other than a referendum to secure the funding



201 W. Mifflin St.
Madison, WI 53703

608.266.6300 ph
608.266.4338 fax

needed to maintain library services,” said Lisa Hempstead, Madison Public Library Board President. “Without the funds provided by the referendum, we will inevitably be forced to make difficult decisions that will lead to reductions in programming, staffing, hours of operation, and essential services.”

The Board recognizes that the City of Madison has worked creatively for the last 13 years to help lessen the effects of an increasingly difficult structural problem caused by strict levy limits imposed by the Wisconsin State Legislature in 2011. As a result of these limits, Madison residents and businesses get back only 18 cents for every one dollar of State taxes paid. In addition to the growth of the city, high inflation rates, and lasting impacts to City revenues from the Covid pandemic, alternative options are limited. While a referendum *would* increase property tax rates across the City, under the current proposal for a \$22 million referendum, the average impact to homeowners would be a total increase of \$240/year or \$20/month.

Prior to approving a preliminary 2025 Operating Budget, the Library Board heard from more than 60 citizens who expressed what they value about the services provided by Madison Public Library. Among those services were free and engaging programs, library books and collections, meeting spaces, technology and WIFI, research resources, voting, the Dream Bus, the future development of the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park, and so much more.

“This referendum represents a pivotal opportunity to invest in the heart of our community—a place where knowledge, culture, and community spirit converge,” said Hempstead. “The Madison Public Library is a cornerstone of our community, where worlds connect and dreams are built. Libraries offer invaluable resources and programs that support lifelong learning, cultural enrichment, and social engagement.”

The Madison Public Library Board encourages the City of Madison to add a referendum option to the November 5, 2024, ballot.

Lisa Hempstead, President and MMSD Representative
Mathias Lemos Castillo, Vice President
Tom DeChant, Secretary Treasurer
Alder Sabrina Madison, City Council Representative
Jolynne Roorda
Salúd García
Plumer Lovelace
Genevieve Carter

From: jhirsch@chorus.net
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: [Finance Committee](#); budget@cityofmadison.com
Subject: #68 84443 Referendum Resolution
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 9:02:56 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jhirsch@chorus.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Alders:

I ask you to **OPPOSE** the proposed referendum to increase the property tax levy limit.

You can't continue to use the same scare tactics that were used when the \$40 wheel tax was implemented. Reductions to "...police, fire, garbage collection, parks and library operations..." have already been taken.

It's time to take a hard look at all other expenditures. There are plenty of "*nice to have*" items in the 2024 Budget, the proposed 2025 Budget and on each Common Council agenda. In a budget crunch, they are not "needs" and should be rejected or put aside until funds are available.

Let's roll up our sleeves. ***NOTHING should be off the table!***

Janet Hirsch
District 9

From: [Lori](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Madison Parks
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 12:50:39 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from lhouse2112@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Please prioritize the parks system. We use the cross country ski trails and Goodman Pool. It is the parks that make the quality of living in Madison high.

Thank you,
Lori House

Lori Wendricks House
(608) 843-3265

From: [irenierenie](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: 22 Million Dollar Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 8:54:14 AM

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First of all, we should not be in the position of cutting services that are expected by tax payers. Especially life saving services like Police and Fire. The City budget needs to be run like the budgets Madisonians have too. We first budget by expenses that are necessary such as mortgages or rent, utilities, food, credit card bills, etc. THEN we look at additional spending.

I am extremely disappointed in the spending decisions being made. Make sure you have the money necessary to cover expected City services BEFORE considering other expenditures. An example is the BRT. This is putting us in debt, and is not benefitting the majority of Madison taxpayers. Roads are a mess with Red paint, turns disallowed where needed, and traffic backups will occur causing road rage.

I am against a 22 million referendum and cutting expected life saving services, such as Police and Fire. I also expect my garbage to be picked up. Money was spent irresponsibly, now do what we have to do as Madisonians and don't take on projects and spend before expected services are paid for.

Thank you,
Irene

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

From: [Fred Jaeckle](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Comment on Referendum Resolution
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 1:10:15 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from fwjaeckle@msn.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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I am opposed to asking voters to approve a referendum to allow city to increase spending beyond state limits. This covers the entire city deficit with no real spending/program cuts.

It is time to take a look at spending reductions. Prioritize budget items. the city clearly has too many "nice to have" projects on their plate. Focus on spending on "must have projects". It is also time to look at how many positions are actually needed to operate the mayors office, and other departments in the city. For example, I see no benefit in even having the Police Oversight board or whatever it is. NOTHING has been accomplished since it has been started. Although the budget is not that large, no benefits have been received by the citizens of Madison except for the board members and chair getting paid.

Time to tighten your belt, or there will indeed be a taxpayer revolt, and it will manifest itself at the ballot box.

From: [Dustin Johnson](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Concerned Northsider
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 8:52:50 AM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from dustinjohnson1995@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Hello! I haven't ever submitted anything to an alder before (or any public government figure) but I figured this is the time to share.

I moved to Madison in 2013 to attend UW-Madison and moving from central Wisconsin to a city 4x the population of my hometown, I was thrilled by the potential opportunities. I don't have to tell you how much I absolutely love Madison - you all live here too!

Fast forward to the pandemic, we're all stuck inside and contemplating how both my girlfriend and I will work out of our studio apartment. It made for some comical times since I was constantly on the phone and there were no walls separating the 600 sq ft we worked/lived.

We moved from the Autumn Lake apartments off Lien Rd. To the Marling on East Wash. A great upgrade to get a 1 bedroom + den, and it was perfect until it wasn't. We needed more space. We knew we wanted to stay in Madison, contribute to the community, grow our roots, and thrive here in this city.

We bought our house on Longview St. in 2022, with the most amazing luck of closing before interest rates rose. I'm only saying this to emphasize that there are people in MUCH tougher financial position than I am due to the interest rates that their lenders charged them and are charging them, of which we have no control over.

I want to see Madison's communities thrive. I want to see Madison grow! I love this city, now spending almost half of my life here. We NEED more homeowners, we need more investment into the people that build this community.

I moved out of apartments to get more space, but I can't underscore enough how big of a deal it was to get out of the rising rent cycles. I NEED my housing payment to be consistent and I'm sure many of new, first-time homeowners would agree.

None of us have budgeted for property taxes in the first place, but none of us deserve this assault on our new(ish) homes. The money that the city is seeking in all of its efforts to raise property taxes in the next few years is just not the way to get it done.

There is already a squeeze on us first time homebuyers, and to see multiple entities call on property tax increases for means of increasing their budget is disheartening at the least, and bullshit if I'm being an honest community member.

We need to find other ways to get what we all want. We cannot continue to push the burden on the average community member (and NEW HOMEBUYERS!!! - PLEASE DON'T FORGET ABOUT US!!!)

I cannot build a high rise apartment to get the tax credits to cover my property taxes. I don't get any tax credits from the city for living here. I don't have kids, I don't use public transit, and many of the programs that I'm already funding with my property taxes I do not use. I cannot let my monthly housing payment increase. Countless others cannot have their housing payments increase.

Please keep in mind the incredible challenges that a city who prioritizes growth over current residents. We want to be a welcoming community, but not as a burden to the people that live here and want to spend their lives in Madison.

I'll be actively encouraging the northside neighborhood to vote against any future property tax increases on the ballots. I hope you keep the little guys in mind.

-Dustin

From: [brian johnson](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Why I don't support raising the tax levy
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 10:27:17 AM

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Madison Alders

Before you ask to increase the tax levy to cover the budget deficit, you need to show that you are good stewards of the taxes you already collect and spend

Case in point:

Four years ago, you created the Police Civilian Oversight Board and The Office of The Independent Police Monitor. Since then, you have budgeted almost \$2 Million for these programs – despite the fact that they have not delivered on their mandates.

- The PCOB still does not have a complaint process for citizens to use and as far as I know has not taken on any cases.
- The PCOB and IM have not delivered any of the annual public reports your ordinances mandate.
- There doesn't seem to be a public outcry for the services the IM and PCOB were created to address.
- Portions of their budgets appear to have gone unspent while other city services could have used more funding.

For the past four years, both the PCOB and IM appear in violation of the ordinances you created while failing to deliver any tangible public benefits - yet no one seems to hold them accountable while our tax dollars continued to be funneled to them.

I would be happy to have you correct me if I'm wrong here but I have made polite requests over the past couple years to the IM and PCOB for any information regarding their progress, accomplishments and focus and have never received any answers other than "we are working it".

The continued funding of a program that has consistently failed to deliver every year since its inception, casts a shadow of distrust over the city's ability to manage and hold tax funded programs accountable for success.

Before raising our taxes again, the you need to demonstrate that you have the fortitude to cut programs when they don't deliver and redirect the funds to programs that work.

At this time, I do not support raising the tax levy limits.

Sincerely,

Brian Johnson

From: [Tish Johnson](#)
To: [Brogan, Dylan](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#); [All Alders](#)
Subject: Still Concerned
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 8:45:47 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from tish.johnson920@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hi Dylan,

It looks like I received the answer to the question I posed a couple of weeks ago asking which services the mayor plans to cut. I see this information in the update finally released yesterday. To say I'm disappointed is beyond an understatement.

Please understand how threatening this looks when the mayor plans to go after such basic services as police and fire and transportation. And to threaten services that support the homeless population is beyond my comprehension.

The interesting parts are these:

- What about the Mayor's office? Are there no cuts that need to be made there? 4-5 deputy mayors is excessive.
- Where is the detailed plan for capturing the unrealized revenue from State utilized municipal services? The same for lobbying for improved shared revenue and an RTA tax? (Would our community tolerate any of this if they knew what revenue potential was involved in these areas?)
- When basic services like this "must" be cut unless we agree to pay even more property tax, it puts everything the mayor says into question. How can we trust the mayor to keep adding large projects (next will be the huge Monona Terrace renovation)?
- Where and when does this stop? If an additional \$22 mil doesn't completely address the deficit it is hard to see this is the end of the demands or threats for cuts.

With this update and it's timing, it is clear the council is prepared to vote to approve the referendum. And unfortunately, when people vote, they will only have part of the picture - by design.

Dylan, please know this only makes me more concerned about the Mayor and Council's ability to effectively and responsibly manage.

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/news/2024-08-05/update-on-2025-budget-process>

Sincerely,
Tish Johnson
5505 Tolman Terrace

From: [brian johnson](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Mayor](#)
Subject: Ideas regarding what to cut from the city budget
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 12:56:45 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from brian48johnson@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Before you consider cutting heads in important city services like Fire, Police etc - I hope that you are seriously looking at cutting heads first from the Mayor's administrative staff.

I see at least four Deputy Mayors listed - Two of whom have Housing in their remit and one, Rueben Sanon, who has no job description in his bio on the Mayor's webpage. Does a city our size really need Deputy Mayors over positions that more directly impact the day to day needs of our citizens? Consider cutting this number in half by consolidating the Housing & Sustainability and Housing & Human Services positions into one and drop the position held by Rueben Sanon. I'm guessing that would save approximately \$100,000.00+/yr

Additionally, as mentioned in my earlier email, eliminating the Office of Independent Monitor and the Police Citizens Oversight Board (which has delivered zero benefit over the past four years) would free up over \$500,000.00/yr.

By making these moves, you could save over \$600,000.00+/yr.

Sincerely,
Brian Johnson

From: [Amy Kell](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Conklin, Nikki](#)
Subject: August 20, 2024 Meeting, Agenda Item 84443
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 10:48:02 AM
Attachments: [Letter to the Common Council Regarding the 2025 Budget and Proposed Levy.docx](#)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from amykell0450@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Please see attached comments regarding the proposed 2025 budget and budget levy.

Thank you,

Amy Kell
Madison, WI

August 5, 2024

TO: AllAlders@cityofmadison.com

FROM: Amy Kell, Madison Wisconsin Resident

RE: Item Number 84443
Proposed 2025 Budget and Levy, Common Council Meeting on August 20, 2024

Alders, there are ways to reduce costs and avoid the proposed levy without austerity. Some combination of the following would be sufficient.

1. The City's solution to the \$22 million currently projected deficit is to raise revenues through an increase in taxes through a proposed levy. The City has proposed minor reductions in costs. For example, the City notes that over the past five years, agencies have underspent their authorized budgets by about 4% annually. But it proposes only a 1% across the board reduction, resulting in a \$3 million dollar savings. By reducing agency budgets by the full 4% that they already do not utilize, that alone results in a \$12 million savings toward the \$22 million deficit – or 54.55% of the projected deficit.
2. According to the Finance Department's "2025 Operating Budget Update", total projected expenses for General and Library Funds are 6.4% higher than the 2024 adopted budget, which includes ARPA funds. The City notes that major factors contributing to a higher budget include a \$14.5 million increase in salary and benefits including a 3% COLA for all employees.

Why aren't salary and benefit increases being foregone and/or limited in 2025 in order to reduce the deficit, especially considering the fact that there have been salary and benefits increases every year this decade? This \$14.5 million amount alone would cover nearly 66% of the currently projected \$22 million deficit.

3. According to the Finance Department's Outlook for the 2025 City Budget, "Madison's Spending in Context", the City of Madison's spending on Health and Human Services is 698% of the average rate of Health and Human Services programming of the 35 largest Wisconsin cities over 20,000 in population. In fact, the City of Madison spends the most of any city per capital on Health and Human Services.

Why can't these expenditures be more in line with other Wisconsin cities? (The math: (\$249 per capita x 270,000 people = \$67,230,000). A reduction of 1/8 (one-eighth) in Health and Human Services costs alone would cover 38.20% of the projected \$22 million deficit or \$8,403,750 (the math: $(\$67,230,000 \times 0.125 = \$8,403,750) / 22,000,000 = 38.20\%$). In addition, the City of Madison and Dane County should work together to find efficiencies in human services delivery that would benefit both municipalities.

4. The city estimates that the current \$22 million deficit is projected to grow exponentially between now and 2030, when the budget gap is estimated to be \$67 million. Note that this project is based on the Cost to Continue model, which means that the City would provide the same level of service each year. The data above suggests that the staffing level is not necessary nor warranted.

A reduction in long-term debt reduces operating expenses by reducing debt service payments as well as the interest on those debt payments. Lower debt also maintains our high credit rating. Debt service payments rose 35.23% from 2018 to 2024 – \$47,239,110 to \$63,879,000. Debt service payments represent the second highest budget function (category) after Public Safety and Health.

From: [Shannon Kennedy](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Agenda item 84443. Referendum to raise property tax levy limit
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 2:29:37 PM

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The Mayor and Common Council Alders want to have an increase of \$22 million to the state-imposed property tax levy limit.

I suggest you review the projects that were approved and cut some expenditures there! This would be the responsible option.

The Common Council Alder and Mayor are threatening to hold hostage from its citizens, - "funding for police, fire, garbage collection, parks, library operations, and other City services and operations." What were the OTHER city services and operations?

I consider this black mail.

I am not experienced in the processes of city government. I suspect I am not alone, just like some of our Common Council Alders and most citizens of Madison.

What were you and the Mayor thinking when you over budgeted on these projects? Did you think it was going to be easier to ask forgiveness and more funding than permission to overspend? What will the operating costs of all your new projects cost its citizens in the future?

Again, I suggest you review the projects that were approved and cut some expenditure there. This would be the responsible option. CITIZENS will continue to look for more cost cutting in their daily and monthly budgets as a matter of necessity. Now it's your turn to make some cuts.

- Retired people living on a fixed income will continue to struggle paying bills and need to make cuts.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->House sales will continue to dwindle.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->The supposed, Affordable housing locations will continue to have rents raised again. It was not really affordable to begin with and costs keep rising.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->Brick and Mortar companies continue to close and cut employees.

- <!--[endif]-->There a no new manufacturing jobs here in Madison that I am aware

of. If people need to find jobs and work outside of Madison, they will also be looking for more affordable living arrangements there.

- People are looking for housing as it's been told. Are you building for low to middle income wage earners or high income?

Thank you for your time.

Shannon Kennedy

From: [Joseph Keyes](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Oppose Property Tax Referendum
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 8:53:36 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jkeyes1a1@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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To Madison City Council Alders,

I oppose the property tax referendum. The proposed property tax increase referendum will place a great and undue hardship on Madison's taxpayers. 63% of Americans cannot cover a \$500 emergency bill from savings and 37% lack the funds to cover a \$400 emergency bill. This tax increase will force taxpayers to make gut wrenching cuts in their already stretched and thin budgets to cover this increased cost.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Keyes
District 11

From: [Kurt](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Agenda Item: 84443 - Authorizing the Scheduling of a Referendum Relating to Exceeding the Municipal Property Tax Limits in the City of Madison
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 3:18:32 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from ksensenb@protonmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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My partner and I own and live in a duplex in Madison. We rent out the other unit usually to young couples. My property tax in 2022 was \$5,770.69, in one year it jumped to \$8,667.23. Where do you expect us to make up that \$2,896.54 difference?

In a city that is experiencing a housing crisis and a housing affordability crisis, raising property taxes, especially for multi-family dwellings, will only exacerbate the crisis.

I am against raising property taxes on multi-family properties.

Thank you,
Kurt

From: neilnewsltr@charter.net
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: I support City Budget Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 8:13:33 AM

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In addition, can the common council and mayor's office help organize a Madison resident campaign to lobby the legislature to increase Madison's shared revenue?

Neil Lerner
1 Laredo Court
Madison 53719

From: [Eva Lewandowski](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: 84443 budget referendum comment
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 10:14:39 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from elewandowski@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello Alders,

Regarding the proposed budget referendum, item 84443, I wish there were an option for a slightly smaller referendum with slightly more budget cuts. There is a pretty big difference between the 1% efficiency cuts needed if the current referendum amount is passed and the 5% cuts needed if not.

I would support moderate increases in property taxes with cuts to things like water in city fountains, the library's Kanopy subscription for online movies, Arts Grants program, and Sunday hours at the streets drop-off site. There are many programs like this that are nice luxuries, but are not essential to the health and wellness of our residents or our community.

Thank you,

Eva Lewandowski

--

Eva Lewandowski

From: [ALLEN R LIEGEL](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: [ALLEN R LIEGEL](#)
Subject: resolution 84443
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 9:15:48 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from arliegel@wisc.edu. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear City of Madison Council Members,

My name is Allen Liegel and I live on Madisons west side. I think that it is important for the City of Madison to have the mayor, city attorney or someone in a city department look into why our city has not challenged a 2023 state law that says that Madison only gets about \$29 per resident in shared revenue from the state when the statewide average for municipalities with more than 20,000 people get \$ 114 per resident, according to the Wisconsin Policy Forum. Why are we being penalized? Is there no recourse for us to seek to overturn this decision? Does it have anything to do with the liberal bent of our community? I do support the increased levy of \$22M extra for 2025 but currently do not support this every year going forward until we find out why we are treated so unfairly when it comes to shared revenue and have exhausted the cities efforts to have this injustice corrected. Ideally it would be good to have this corrected before the 2025 budget is finalized but I realize that this may be an unrealistic request.

Sincerely,

Allen Liegel
6 Southwick Circle
Madison, WI 53717-1415

From: [Beverly Louis](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Property tax increase for deficit
Date: Friday, August 2, 2024 11:14:33 PM

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A number of things that have been outlined should take place (reduce services, remove positions in department budgets that are not currently filled, cuts in department budgets, put a hold on any projects that have not started, no new projects created, minimal property tax increase, etc.) Tax payers and renters should not have to absorb the total deficit. The current governing body should have been able see this coming and had a decent plan to present so this city would not be in this situation.

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)

From: [Kay Lum](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum resolution 84443
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 12:30:49 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from kayserbaser@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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The city of Madison is growing and we need to keep up with infrastructure. Our parks and park services are one of the things that bring people to Madison, keep them here, and keep them happy and healthy! I love the bike trails and the hiking and ski trails, the pools, skate parks, pump tracks... all of it keeps kids busy and active and healthy and out of trouble! It also keeps their parents happy and healthy... I dont have kids, and it keeps ME happy and healthy! why have splash pads if the water is not turned on? Why have ski trails and grooming and snow making if they cannot be used? why have bathrooms if they are locked? If we want Madison to be a place that tourists want to come to and people want to move to, then we need these services!

Please vote for this resolution. Thank you!

--

Have a Golden Day!
Kay Lum
608-225-3578

Check out my websites
For my graphic design work go here:
kaylumdesign.com

For wild lycra clothing go here:
absurdudeez.com

From: [James Mand](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: ITEM 68 ON AGENDA
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 10:08:17 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jimmand1948@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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In all good conscience, I cannot support a referendum by the City of Madison asking for an extra \$22 million dollars per year above the mandated levy limits. The city keeps making one expensive mistake after another.

First spending several hundred thousand dollars to remodel the Fleet service bldg. as a men's shelter during covid.

Close to downtown and the Beacon and other homeless support services.

Then deciding instead to build a brand new facility on the far northeast side away from most support services.

And the cost keeps going up. What is it now, \$21,000,000?

Instead, deciding to create a new City Market, using the Fleet Service bldg. When Soglin first proposed it, it was to cost \$1,500,000. And be self-supporting.

And paid for by private fund-raising. I donated some funds to it.

Mayor Satya was against it, until she got elected. Now she is for it.

Why do we need a pie-in-the sky vanity project?

There are farmer's markets all over the city. And on the Capitol Square.

And the Feed Kitchens on Sherman Avenue, which has spawned several successful food related businesses.

Such as Beef, Butter, BBQ.

In the meantime, the cost of the City Market keeps going up. What is it now, \$13,000,000?

And worst of all is the new BRT system.

After abandoning all the transfer stations around the city, including by the new apartment complexes behind Oscar Mayer.

And the large transfer station across from Woodman's on Milwaukee Street.

So, most of the start-up cost for the BRT system, electric buses, and entire new infrastructure of stations is being paid with Federal \$\$\$.

But Madison still has to cover a substantial amount of the cost. And the cost of operations after startup.

The City of Madison seems to have no limit to spending on grandiose projects, with constant construction cost overruns.

Sincerely,

James F. Mand
49C Golf Course Rd.
Madison WI 53704

Jimmand1948@gmail.com

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: [geri marsh](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [geri marsh](#)
Subject: 84443
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 5:24:01 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from gerimarsh57@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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I oppose this referendum of \$22 million ongoing tax levy.
Geri Marsh

From: [J.M.](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Please put the referendum on the general election ballot
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 9:21:53 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from joseph.c.matte.3@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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The people of Madison should be able to vote on whether they want a tax increase or not.

From: [Aaron McGee](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: [Gartler, Marc](#)
Subject: Reduce garbage collection, not library hours
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 11:33:50 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from aaronmcgee@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Alders,

Please don't allow the mayor to close libraries early or reduce library hours. Madisonians value our libraries. We should be expanding weekend hours at all libraries not reducing them. And closing libraries early on weekday evenings would eliminate patrons' ability to visit after work hours. Please do everything possible to expand library hours.

If revenue is needed, please consider increasing local sales taxes (not property taxes). Property taxes are making Madison too expensive to live in.

Also, while libraries are essential to a smart and healthy community, weekly garbage pick up is not. Garbage collection could easily be reduced to bi-weekly pick up to save money without reducing the quality of life.

Thank you for considering the importance of accessible library hours in a progressive community.

Aaron

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"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."
Mahatma Gandhi.



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From: [Sara Meredith](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [council](#); [Finance](#)
Subject: Support for Agenda Item #84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 8:38:10 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from smeretactics@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Good morning Alders, Common Council Members and City Finance Department,

Emailing to let you know of my support for having a \$22 million referendum to increase property taxes \$20 a month rather than cutting city services - including the library, parks, and elimination of arts grants (to name a few)

I'm also emailing in my capacity as an artist AND full time volunteer of arts non- profit Communication. We believe cuts to many of the city services like the library would have an unfair impact on the city's poorest and disabled residents.

We want our city to be accessible and if that means those who can afford homes and properties pay a bit extra to ensure vital and most accessible city services remain available - then that is what needs to happen.

Thank you for your time and dedication!

photo  **Sara Meredith**
Communication Shop Manager, Artist Smere Tactics
She Her Hers| smeretactics@gmail.com
www.smeretactics.com


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From: [noreply](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: [All Alders] VOTE NO ON REFERENDUM
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 10:31:29 AM

Recipient: All Alders:

Sunday, August 4, 2024 – 10:29am

Paul Nelson
1805 Spaight St

Madison , Wisconsin. 53704 No, do not contact me. All Alders VOTE NO ON REFERENDUM I plan to vote “NO” on any referendum to raise property tax revenue to address the budget shortfall.

From: [Ed Niles](#)
To: [Rummel, Marsha](#); [All Alders](#)
Cc: [City Budget](#)
Subject: Comment on proposed \$22m property tax referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 3:52:02 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from eniles@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Madison Common Council Members & staff,

I am unable to attend this evening's Council meeting to provide my thoughts in-person, but I wanted to provide a quick comment related to one item of business (proposed \$22m property tax referendum).

To set the appropriate context upfront, given the situation the City of Madison finds itself in regarding the budget I am personally in favor of a referendum to provide some amount of increase above the state-imposed property tax levy limit to help address Madison's budget shortfall. However, as I've expressed to Ald. Rummel and heard from others during community outreach sessions on this topic, I feel it is extremely important that the council and mayor's office take seriously any past spending increases which contributed to the current size of the structural deficit (regardless of whether that structural deficit is "fair" or not). Thus, I'd like to propose that the council take two specific actions:

1. Request that staff prepare a list of any new or adjusted programs or policy changes voted on over the past decade, which contributed a significant amount of annual increased spending in the operating budget above some threshold (maybe >\$150K/year). This list should be made available to the council members and the public, and reviewed for possible items to cut before deciding on a final budget referendum amount. I suspect that given our current budget concerns, regardless of how the council members or citizens may have felt at the time about a particular spending item, there are at least a few things with price tags which look rather foolish under the current circumstances.
2. As city finance staff have pointed out during this process, the City's second largest expense is debt service, which is how the City pays back borrowing for capital projects. Going forward, when the council is voting on a capital budget expenditure of a significant amount, an estimate should be made of how much debt service that specific item would add annually for the next 10 years. This could be a relatively rough estimate utilizing some simplified formula, but it would provide a comparative baseline with other projects under consideration as time goes on. Hopefully by surfacing this aspect of the cost, in addition to the overall capital cost for a given spending item, might help the council make wiser decisions in the future and reign in increases in our debt service.

I thank you for your time in consideration of these ideas. My hope is that by taking these actions (or others of a similar nature) that the council & mayor would show that they have some skin in the game and are reversing some past spending into this deficit. Sharing the burden in this manner should make it easier to ask citizens of Madison to add to their property taxes in a referendum.

-Ed Niles
2129 Linden Ave, Madison, WI 53704

From: [Benjamin Noffke](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Support Levy Limit Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 1:37:39 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from bnoffke3790@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Hello Alders,

I'm writing to voice my support for a levy limit increase referendum. Cutting city services will have an enormous impact on the quality of life in Madison, affecting our most vulnerable citizens. If we combine this referendum with continued reform to lower the barrier to new construction for incremental density, I would feel much better about Madison's financial future to keep up quality services.

Thanks for your time,
Ben Noffke

From: [Jo Ann Wagner Novak](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: budget referendum
Date: Saturday, August 3, 2024 5:26:35 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from joann.wagnernovak@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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I believe I understand and have read enough information on the referendum for weeks. I don't envy the decision you must make.

It really places quite a financial load on those who own a home and pay property tax regardless of age.

In future, I wish the Council could create a method for sending a clear message from the WI state voters to the Legislature. That message needs to be heard in many state municipalities and communities. For any of us who've been paying attention, this last state budget from the state legislature again continued the clear that just a very few cities in this state are being targeted, short-changed on Shared Revenue. .

How can we drive home this severe political division so that all voters see the danger?

The very few communities that are targeted are the same ones who are responsible for serving up safety and health protection

for all of the state citizens who visit to enjoy the highlights of our capitol city.

In the current communication age, we have lost local journalism, who conveyed these issues to citizens across the state.

Until we have the backing of enough voters throughout the state, we'll still be stuck at the bottom of the Shared Revenue barrel. I anticipate you will end up approving the referendum.

Thank you!

From: [PJ Nowak](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: New Taxes
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 9:38:54 AM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from nowak44@sbcglobal.net. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Dear Alders:

I am very concerned about the proposed referendum. Between the \$22M you seek, and the forthcoming MMSD referendum you are talking about raising our taxes close to \$1,000 per year. We are retired and living on a fixed income. We recognize that taxes increase each year, but this is a very significant amount.

I would suggest that you find places in the budget where cuts can be made without touching essential services such as police, fire, and library. Please do not raise taxes or threaten our essential services as that would be the easy way out of the current structural deficit. Work hard and find places in the very large city budget where reasonable cuts can be made. We are approaching a point where we will contribute to solving the city's housing crisis as you tax us out of our home,

Thank you,
Pete Nowak

From: [Mary Odell](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 3:43:24 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from odellme@att.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

It appears that the Mayor and the City Council have not investigated possible funding sources over the last couple of years. It is a cheap shot to blame the Legislature for the problem. In your personal budget I am sure you would have asked more pertinent questions to "live within the current rules" and or have sought solutions before things got so tight.

The worst scenario is that this referendum will only solve this year's shortage. I cannot believe that you as a Council continued your spending without any restraint. And more significantly, you adopted the most expensive BRT version and then did not account for an operating budget for it.

The Mayor has front loaded her Administration with 13 advisors; I would recommend that at least 5 of those positions be cut as they never provide any on the ground services such as you propose to cut.

Certainly this situation should cancel any dreams the Council has of becoming full time. And why go with projects like the Monona Lakefront re-do? Grants result in additional costs for the operating budget, in ad finitum!

Another expense that has become habitual is consulting fees. It is obvious that consultants only work from paper drawings and cost a lot of tax dollars. I have a personal anecdote that probably covers a multitude of consultants: Madison Metro person (consultant) stated that the re-design was predicated on the idea that Madison had never has a bus system. We lost a lot of neighborhood service as a result. Yes, the person said this to a group of residents. Seems counter to improving the system.

As a Council, it is important to take pro-active measures to resolve the budget mess. First please own it as a Council as you followed the Mayor in this spending dilemma. Secondly ask the tough questions. Thirdly scrutinize the developers' proposals and protect the neighborhoods from top down planning.

Sincerely yours,
Mary Odell

From: [Harry Richardson](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Approve \$22 Million dollar city referendum and work to get voters to approve it.
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 4:10:12 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from richardsonharry348@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Greetings,

I urge all the Madison city alders in the strongest possible terms to support Item 68 on tonight's agenda, to put a referendum on the November ballot to plug the \$22 million dollar gap in the city budget next year. It is vital that we maintain and improve city services, especially for the neediest among us. We need improved city services, not cuts to the library hours, cuts to the buses (there has already been a decline in bus service in the process of the brt set up with bus stops removed and longer walks to get a bus among other problems) Without this money the city services would likely be harmed by staff layoffs. This would hurt those in need of city services and the affected workers. I understand property taxes would likely go up, media accounts say \$240 for an average Madison home. As a renter I would expect my landlady to pass on this cost to me and I support this. I will willingly pay more to support vital city services. I say this in full recognition of the school district referendum which is likely to be passed onto me as well.

Once this referendum is passed I would urge all council members to use all available means to educate their constituencies on why this referendum is necessary and why they should vote for it. I will certainly do my part and share my concerns publicly, in groups I belong to and with my friends and neighbors. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for sitting through what is likely to be a long meeting tonight with more work in the several weeks to come.

Sincerely,
Harry Richardson
456 N Few St.

From: [Kim I. Richman](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Mayor](#)
Subject: Agenda Item #68 (08/06/2024)
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 7:46:13 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from krichman@pm.me. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Madam Mayor and alders;

Inflation has its grip on us taxpayers. The cost of medical care is up, housing prices are up, insurance coverage is up, gas is up, home energy costs are up, groceries are up, and on and on.

The proposed property tax increases you're considering will add to the already suffering folks we fight for every single day; middle- and lower-class residents, ESPECIALLY those on low and fixed incomes.

If the referendum passes, most taxpayers will be forced to make cuts to their budgets that the city did NOT want to do with their own budget.

Without a doubt this will force some Madison residents out of their homes and out of the city.

To ignore these facts is one of the most irresponsible things I have seen from ANY Madison common council. Remember, you work for us we don't work for you.

- A [SecureSave survey](#) found that 63% of Americans could not cover a \$500 emergency expense by tapping their savings.....
- According to the Fed's 2022 Economic Well-Being of U.S. Households [survey](#), some 37% of Americans lack enough money to cover a \$400 emergency expense, up from 32% in 2021..... Yet you're asking for a ridiculous property tax increase.

There are 21 people who got us into this dilemma, you should get us out of it with more responsible spending, accountability of those receiving funding, **and especially listening to constituents, apparently which nobody did after all of those budget meetings on the different sides of town.**

I am registered and advocating in opposition to Agenda Item #68 (84443) to Authorize the Scheduling of a Referendum Relating to Exceeding the Municipal Property Tax Limits in the City of Madison.

Do the right thing and figure out a way to take the burden off of the taxpayers for your irresponsible spending.

Regards,
Kim Richman
16th District
#

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) encrypted email.

From: [Elinor Riley](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum question
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 2:36:13 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from elinorandron@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Alders,

Please accept this email in response to the question regarding a potential referendum by the City of Madison Common Council. We do not support this notion of increasing taxes to help defray the increasing city budget. Please vote no to the this proposal.

Respectfully,

Elinor Riley
Ron Towle
Residents of 6 Springwood Circle, Madison 53717

Sent from my iPad

From: [Rob And Deb](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Agenda item 84626
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 5:18:10 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from redmanslake@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

This is radically wrong.
Please fight to keep our skyline from being destroyed forever.
There is a reason that this ordinance exists and has for a long time.
I hope there will be much public outcry over this.
Too many issues like this get pushed through by developers/investors.
Please do what is right.

From: [GERRY ROESING](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Scheduling a referendum for exceeding municipal property tax limits
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 3:57:42 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from garoesing@aol.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Hello Alders,

I am writing with regard to a potential referendum to exceed state municipal property tax limits. I cannot understand how city government and city schools can continually think they can go to the taxpayers whenever there is a budget crunch. As alders, your role is to manage city spending in line with city revenues. You simply must not exceed the amount of monies available in carrying out city services. While it might be painful to reduce services to make that happen it is, simply, your job. This is one of the reasons you became an alder, to manage city government in a responsible way. To go to the taxpayers for more money whenever there is a shortfall is simply mismanagement and failure to carry out your mandate.

Managing my home requires control to meet my needs within my budget. I cannot get a new roof if I do not have the money to pay for it. I cannot improve my landscaping if I cannot pay the landscaper. And on and on. It seems so simple. Why cannot you alders apply that thinking? Do you all have a rich uncle you can call whenever you want some improvement to your homes that you do not have money to pay for? When your kid wants something you cannot afford you tell them that they cannot have it. Do the right thing and manage city services in a like manner. You will feel better about it in the end that you did the right thing.

Sincerely,

Gerry Roesing
City of Madison resident

Sent from my iPad

From: [David Rohde](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Public Comment on Referendum Resolution Scheduled for August 6
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:20:50 AM

You don't often get email from dbrohde@charter.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

I prefer that the City of Madison live within their means and not increase taxes to fund basic services. We have already seen substantial increases in taxes due to inflated property values. Instead, reduce funding in non-essential areas unimportant to the majority of Madisonians, such as BRT and other "fluffy" projects.

From a concerned tax paying citizen in District 7.

From: [noreply](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: [All Alders] Budget Referendum 8/6
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 1:56:26 PM

Recipient: All Alders:

Tuesday, August 6, 2024 – 1:52pm

Rachel Rovinsky
746 W Main St
Apt 306

Madison, Wisconsin. 53715 Yes, by email. rachirovinsky828@gmail.com All Alders Budget Referendum 8/6 Hi, I am a graduate student at UW-Madison and Madison resident. I am urging the Common Council to approve the \$22 million referendum that would balance the budget and allow for continued support of public services, including our libraries. This money collected from property tax should go towards services that support our most marginalized communities. This means allocating more money towards libraries, fire department, garbage collection, and parks, NOT police, as police primarily harm BIPOC residents of Madison.

From: [Michelle Russell](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: [Madison Mayor](#)
Subject: Item 68, Referendum resolution 84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 11:58:22 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from mmartellrussell@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Hello esteemed Alders,

We all wear many hats and hold many roles in our community. I'm a mom, a public school advocate, a neurodivergent parent of a neurodivergent child, a fervent democrat, a covid-conscious reluctant homeschooling family, a teacher. Of the ones I juggle, the role of an advocate for immigrants/English learners is one I would like to speak for today.

Prior to moving to Madison, I worked as an English Language Development coach/teacher for a school district, supporting teachers in learning best practices for working with a growing number of English-learners. After the election in 2016, I volunteered to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) at Sandburg Elementary. It was a need in our community that wasn't being met. The first meeting was standing room only, full of moms, dads, and grandparents, all neighbors who had the need to learn English. All of the members of my ESL class were immigrants, with limited schooling in their home countries. All of them wanted the chance for a better life here in Madison, and they knew that learning English was key to that success.

The Imagination Center at Reindahl is integral to the development of our community to be a place that fully supports our growing number of youth and immigration population. The resources it would provide for people at all stages of life (parents, learners, preschoolers, babies) is a right that not all people in the Sandburg community get. A lot of families do not have the access to a vehicle or time to get to a library in the Madison library system.

The Imagination Center at Reindahl would be a place to gather and learn. (I had many, many challenges in finding availability in time and space to hold my classes at Sandburg.) There is an equity divide from the free programming my kids have access to because I have the means to bring them to another MPL, albeit not convenient. These families are missing out on early childhood development classes, skill-based offerings (such as ESL, taxes), and enrichment. All of this programming would enrich a child's life, English language development, and support their parents in becoming active members of our community. My kids went to school with children who **never** visited the library before. Here, on the Northeast side of Madison, Wisconsin. This is an access issue. This remains an unfulfilled promise for residents of the Greater Sandburg Area.

Please approve the referendum to not delay the building and funding of the Imagination Center again. The success of the children and families of the community here needs it.

Thank you,
Michelle Russell
Great Sandburg Resident

From: [Suzanne Rybeck](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Opposition
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 7:51:39 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from srybeck@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear City of Madison Alders,

I strongly oppose the property tax increase referendum.

Please see below:

"The proposed property tax increase referendum will place a great and undue hardship on Madison's taxpayers. 63% of Americans cannot cover a \$500.00 emergency bill from savings and 37% lack the funds to cover a \$400 emergency bill. This tax increase will force taxpayers to make gut wrenching cuts in their already stretched and thin budgets to cover this increased cost."

Sincerely,

Suzanne Keyes Rybeck
408 Marston Avenue
Madison, WI 53703

From: [Glori Sabin](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Opposition Of Agenda Item #68
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 7:52:42 AM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from kdietzman@sbcglobal.net. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Alders,

I implore all of you Alders to NOT authorize or approve any reference relating to exceeding the municipal property tax limits in the City of Madison. Home owners are already struggling with the exceedingly high inflation of daily living without further devastation. We CANNOT pay anymore than you have already authorized by approving expenditures out of the realm reason and necessities. You are jeopardizing our ability to continue living in our homes with out of control spending. Please listen to your constituents who are pleading with you to eliminate any thought of exceeding the municipal property tax limits. Thank you for making sound and responsible decisions.

Glori D Sabin
10 Jubilee Cir
Madison Wi 53718

From: [Glori Sabin](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget Cuts
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 12:01:29 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from kdietzman@sbcglobal.net. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Alders,

If there are any suggested budget cuts to City of Madison services, the almighty overspending Mayor's office positions and maybe even her salary should be THE FIRST on the chopping block! She should be incredibly embarrassed as she sees no fault in her greediness to ADD high paying positions to her office and budget. How and why were these warranted? Really, all of you need a critical thinking course along with sound and conscious decision making. Shame on you! I'm a disgusted resident of the City of Madison.

Glori D Sabin
10 Jubilee Cir
Madison Wi 53718
Sent from my iPad

From: [Chris Schatzi](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: FOR MEETING AGENDA
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 12:48:29 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from cschatz@riseup.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Why would we spend more money on this city, when the city is being treated like a playground for the military and not as the wonderful place to live it once was and definitely no longer is. *Address the elephant in the room: **The F-35s have to be relocated—the question is how, when, and why did you do this to us in the first place?*** Speak for your constituents, and make this right ASAP. Thank you!

Chris Schatz
2429 Hoard St.

p.s. Noise is a major neighborhood concern in my neighborhood, beyond even the F-35s. The use of public space by city services is contributing to this, so you do not have my support to spend money on those until some improvement (or I move, as seems inevitably the only solution).

From: [Keith Schlesinger](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Madison Tax Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 12:44:37 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from keith.schlesinger@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Alders,

I am reading an online story on WKOW and it said the Mayor is listening to residents on how to deal with the deficit.

First of all, listen to your taxpayers when they send a suggestion to the Mayor's office. She has a staff but NOBODY bothered to respond to my email.

I am addressing the park and ride lot at Dutch Mill Road, in southeast Madison. You are giving FREE PARKING to people in that parking lot while they hop a coach to O'Hare or Midway. Dane County charges \$10 per day to park at the MSN airport. The City of Madison is working AGAINST the County of Dane by giving away free parking at Dutch Mill.

Look at how many parking spaces you have there. Yes, go out there and count them. If it is a true park and ride facility, give them a 24 hour in and out policy with no charge. Otherwise , \$10 a day to park there.

You are missing revenue big time. You need to make this a user fee parking lot if parked for more than 24 hours. It is a simple ticket in ticket out system.

I just hope you guys listen to taxpayers. The Mayor's office does not.

By the way, I will vote NO on your referendum to raise taxes. I am retired.

Keith Schlesinger
District 16
Madison

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: [Fields, Debbie](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: FW: Vote NO on tax referendum
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 8:51:26 AM

Alders,

Following please find a message that was received in the Council Office inbox.

Best,
Debbie Fields
Program Assistant 2
Common Council Office
608-266-4297

-----Original Message-----

From: Schoff Brothers <5942southhill@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 4, 2024 6:23 PM
To: council <council@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Vote NO on tax referendum

[You don't often get email from 5942southhill@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Alders,

I cannot attend the upcoming council meeting to speak.

I am strongly opposed to the city plan for a request for an additional \$22,000,000 by referendum.

Property taxes for homeowners are already crushing because of steep increases in property values. And, with those increases, the city must be bringing in far more dollars than just 10 years ago.... And yet you "need" more?

The school district has blown through the \$300,000,000 from their recent referendum and is also planning to ask the taxpayers for more.

In the last 5 years, the city seems to readily spend money with reckless abandon on extravagant projects like the public market, BRT, and Monona lakeshore improvements. While each of these projects has merit, none of them is truly necessary or represents a core part of the city's responsibility.

Two former mayors have publicly expressed concern about the city's finances.

Despite considerable financial support from the federal government for the BRT project, the city's share of the cost of these projects far exceeds the \$22,000,000 you plan on asking for.

In light of the many large projects the city is pushing, the decision to cast the "need" for a referendum as the only way to avoid deep service and personnel cuts appears deeply disingenuous.

Please do not approve a referendum.

Please go back to the budget, determine what the core responsibilities of the city are, and construct a spending plan that stays within the available resources without further raising taxes.

Sincerely,
An increasingly unhappy lifelong Madisonian

From: [Christine Schwartz](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Support for budget referendum
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 1:34:49 PM

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

I am writing in support of the referendum for exceeding the municipal property tax limits. One of the reasons that Madison is such a wonderful place to live are our parks, services, good schools, and clean and safe environment. We should have local control to make our own determination about the level at which we wish to tax ourselves for the benefit of the community. I strongly support the proposed referendum.

Sincerely,
Christine Schwartz
117 Van Deusen St
Madison, WI 53715

From: [Erin Skarivoda](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: FUND OUR LIBRARIES
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 5:33:32 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from erin.skarivoda@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Common Council Members,

I am a staff member at UW-Madison and a constituent of District 6 here in Madison. **I am writing in support of agenda item #68 (84443)** for the August 6 Common Council meeting. Increasing property taxes is far preferable to cutting library services. **I urge you to take action to support our local libraries and city services.**

Libraries are an essential part of our community. The resources they provide go far beyond books and information. They have free meeting spaces for entrepreneurs, free children's programming for families, and free community events. At the library, anyone can get help filing their taxes, mending their clothes, and learning all different kinds of new skills. Libraries have internet access for people who may not have it at home. They have safe, warm shelter for people who may not have a safe, warm house or home. All of these things are important to the safety, sustainability, and happiness of Madisonians.

If you want safer communities, reduce funding to the Madison Police Department (for example, starting with Matt Kenny) and increase the funding to the Madison Public Libraries.

Thank you for your time. I urge you to vote in favor of this referendum and continue working to find ways to resource our community.

Sincerely,
Erin

Erin Skarivoda

she/her

email: erin.skarivoda@gmail.com

phone: 920-606-1849

From: [Jon standridge](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: August 6 referendum meeting
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:21:10 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jonstandridge66@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Since I am on a fixed retirement income, the proposed tax hikes will have an impact on my household. It seems to me that the city has been on a spending spree. I have two suggestions aimed at reducing spending and reducing the size of the referendum amount.

1. Put phase 2 of the BRT program on a permanent hold.
2. Reconsider and eliminate every new position created in the last 5 years, starting with the new communications position in the Mayor's office.

From: [john.steines](mailto:john.steines@gmail.com)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Re: District 15: Meeting and Event Highlights for the Week of August 5, 2024
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:21:11 AM

You don't often get email from jsteines@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Regarding # 83. 83601 SUBSTITUTE: Amending Section 27.05 of the Madison General Ordinances to refine lawn and property maintenance provisions.

I strongly support authentic institutionalized guidance toward pollinator-friendly habitat wherever it can be found.

Comments you've already received speak to 'lawn' grasses & care behaviors of people who thrive in maintaining them (not me), lack of a list of unacceptable invasives (potentially including the native invasive pokeweed - all of the parts of which are toxic, and is now spreading adjacent to Fair Oaks Ave/Starkweather Creek. I guess we're stuck with that! Especially if there's no educational program to address & encourage enlightened removal of dangerous species, in favor of care of native habitats (pollinator-friendly & minimization of outdated 'lawn-grass' ethic).

Respectfully, John Steines Chicago Ave, Madison WI.

On Mon, Aug 5, 2024 at 12:03 PM Alder Martinez-Rutherford, District 15

<noreply@cityofmadison.com> wrote:

[View this email in your browser](#)

[City of Madison](#)



[Front entrance of the City-County Building on a sunny day](#)



Meeting and Event Highlights for the Week of August 5, 2024

HOW DO I PARTICIPATE IN COMMON COUNCIL MEETINGS? The Common Council generally holds meetings twice a month on Tuesdays, starting at 6:30 pm in hybrid format. Members of the public can participate in the following ways:

- Watch Online
- Attend In Person or Virtually
- Register for Public Comment
- Provide Comments before a Meeting

To learn more about how to participate in Common Council meetings, visit: www.cityofmadison.com/council/meetings-agendas/participate-in-council-meetings.

Boards, Commissions, and Committee Meetings

Note: This is not a complete list of meetings for this upcoming week. All meetings and their details can be found at the [Meeting Schedule page](#).

- **Common Council:** The Common Council meeting will take place on Tuesday, August 6, in hybrid format at 6:30 p.m. Agenda items include taking public comment on a resolution authorizing the scheduling of a referendum relating to exceeding the municipal property tax limits, as well as a resolution limiting the granting of “Class A” liquor licenses for the purpose of limiting density and proximity of such licenses to sensitive sites.
 - [Meeting Details](#)
 - [Meeting Agenda](#)
 - [Register for Public Comment](#)
 - [Watch Online](#)
- **Sustainable Madison Committee:** The Sustainable Madison Committee meeting will take place on Monday, August 5, in virtual format at 4:30 p.m. Agenda items include refining lawn and property maintenance provisions of Madison General Ordinances.
 - [Meeting Details](#)
 - [Meeting Agenda](#)
 - [Register for Public Comment](#)
 - [Watch Online](#)
- **Landmarks Commission:** The Landmarks Commission meeting will take place on Monday, August 5, in virtual format at 5:00 p.m. Agenda items include adopting the Northeast Area Plan and adopting the West Area Plan.
 - [Meeting Details](#)
 - [Meeting Agenda](#)

- [Register for Public Comment](#)
- [Watch Online](#)

If you would like more information about becoming a member of a City board, commission, or committee, please visit [the page linked here](#).

Public Information Meetings

- [Neighborhood Meeting on the Völker Development Proposal & Deon's Live Bait License Renewal, Monday, August 5](#): A neighborhood meeting to hear more about the Völker Development proposal is scheduled for Monday, August 5, 2024, at 6pm in the Bloom Bake Shop space at Northstreet, 557 North Street. After the development team's presentation, you will have the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Madison Petroleum LLC, owner of Deon's Live Bait and Minnows located at 2301 Commercial Avenue, was unable to submit their Class A Beer License renewal paperwork by the deadline. As a result, they have now applied for a new Class A Beer License so they may continue selling beer at the convenience store. If you'd like to hear more about the license application, or if you have questions or feedback to share, there will be an opportunity to do so at the Monday, August 5, 2024, neighborhood meeting about Völker Development proposal.

News & Announcements

- [Public Comment on Referendum Resolution Scheduled for August 6](#): The Madison Common Council is encouraging residents to submit public testimony on an important resolution affecting the City budget at its next meeting. *[posted August 2, 2024]*
- [Road Closures - Stevens Street Reconstruction](#) *posted August 2, 2024*

Beginning Monday, August 5, Stevens Street will be closed to through traffic from North Franklin Avenue to Grand Avenue. This is part of the North Franklin Avenue and Stevens Street Resurfacing project that will replace aging and deteriorating... *[posted August 2, 2024]*

- [August Moving Days: How to Set Out Appliances, Furniture, & Other Large Items](#): When placing large items out for pickup, follow these guidelines... *[posted August 2, 2024]*
- [August Moving Days: Daily Collections of Carts in Student Move Area](#): Starting at 6:30 a.m. on Monday August 5, 2024 residents in the downtown moving days area can place trash and recycling collection carts out for daily pickup. The Streets Division will have crews patrolling the move-out area emptying collection... *[posted August 1, 2024]*
- [City of Madison Absentee Ballot Drop Boxes Updated Ahead of Primary](#): Madison's 14 absentee ballot drop boxes are getting an updated look ahead of the Aug. 13 primary election. *[posted July 31, 2024]*
- [August Moving Days: How to Recycle Televisions, Computers, and Other](#)

[Electronics](#): Electronics must be delivered to the Streets Division’s drop-off sites, or to a reputable private electronics recycler in the area. All electronics are accepted for free from City of Madison residents at the Streets Division drop-off... *[posted July 31, 2024]*

- [In-Person Absentee Voting Begins Today](#): In-person absentee voting for the August 13 Partisan Primary begins today. “Avoid lines at the polls on election day and visit one of our local libraries to cast your ballot early,” said Mayor Rhodes-Conway. “In-person absentee voting has begun. You... *[posted July 30, 2024]*
- [August Moving Days: How to Use the Large Item Work Order System during the Move Out](#): Starting the week of August 4, 2024 and ending on Friday, August 23 2024, the large item work order rules are different for residents who live in the student move-out area. *[posted July 30, 2024]*
- [Want to Vote by Mail? Request Absentee Today](#): With just two weeks remaining before the August 13 Partisan Primary, the City Clerk’s Office urges voters wishing to receive an absentee through the mail to submit their requests today. “Don’t lose the opportunity to make your vote count,” said Mayor... *[posted July 29, 2024]*
- [August Moving Days: Make a Plan and Donate Today](#): The annual August Moving Days for downtown Madison will soon get underway. Thousands of Madison residents will be changing homes within the downtown moving days area and you will need to decide just what to do with all their stuff. The... *[posted July 29, 2024]*

Please [visit the City news webpage](#) to find additional news and announcements and to subscribe to receive notification of news releases as they are posted.

Events

- [Hospitalized Voting Begins, Tuesday, August 6](#): Beginning today, voters who are hospitalized can [appoint an agent](#) to:...
- [Blood Pressure Screening, Tuesday, August 6](#): Free Blood Pressure Screening is available to older adults, on the first and third Tuesday, 11:15 - 12:00 pm. Please find additional upcoming Madison Senior Center events listed on the [Madison Senior Center event calendar](#).
- [Madison Night Market, Thursday, August 8](#): The Office of the Common Council is excited to host its resource table at the Madison Night Market on Thursday, August 8. We welcome you to stop by and say hi and share your feedback with Council staff and alders!
- [Dane Dances: Luisito Rosario / V05, Friday, August 9](#): Food and cocktails are available for purchase at 4:30 PM. [Lake Vista Café](#) will be open for your enjoyment along with [La Taguara](#), [Melly Mells Catering](#), and Kipps Kitchen. Visa and MasterCard accepted. Feel free to bring a blanket, chair, and picnic basket Sorry, carry-in alcohol is prohibited. Seating on the rooftop is limited.
- [Ride the Drive 2024, Sunday, August 11](#): It’s thousands of happy healthy people coming together to experience parks and open streets in a single,

one-day, free, community event. Since the inaugural Ride the Drive in 2009, this event continues to celebrate Madison's commitment to a healthy, active lifestyle focusing on the environmental and economic impacts and the importance of social integration.

Parks Alive Dates!

Parks Alive builds stronger neighborhoods and connects neighbors to their parks through fun, family-friendly activities, music and free food. Events are held in parks across the city and throughout the summer. Connect with your neighbors and engage with your community at a Parks Alive event near you! Events start at 5:00 p.m.

- [Parks Alive at Hammersley Park on Wednesday, August 7](#)

Please find additional upcoming City of Madison Parks events listed on the [City parks event calendar](#).

Additional upcoming events can also be found on the [City events calendar](#).

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From: [Donald Taylor](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Kat Taylor](#)
Subject: Referendum question
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 6:10:27 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from taylorat@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

It says on the website that you want to raise the spending at 20,000,000 otherwise 150 positions will have to be cut.that breaks down to 134000 per position. That seems very high. What positions would be cut and would it make more sense, I salaries are that high,to give a pay cut so as to afford keeping those positions?

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)

From: [Steve Verburg](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: in favor of budget referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 1:40:19 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from stverburg@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Alders,

I'm writing to express support for placing the budget referendum on the ballot as a way to protect crucial social services and other city services that mitigate the harm caused by Madison's racial disparities.

Best,

Steve Verburg
Wendy Ln
Madison, WI

From: [JW](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Input on additional property tax referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 7:25:58 AM

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

We do not support the increase to cover the 22 million so called budget crisis funding. It is only your view that it is a "crisis" but too us its a fiscal mismanagement and refusal to actually live within a budget.

We saw the mayor on the news last night and sensed her vail threat said with a smirk (that just appears as Bully tactics and not true concern). We want to know what to keep and what to cut"! A very smooth move to threaten people to vote yes out of fear!

Our administration has done many wonderful improvements to this city over the past years, and their motives are right for doing so...instead of kicking everything down the road like past administrations have. Thank you!

However, we feel that some things seen as progressive priorities maybe so, but do not all have to be done right away, like the massive metro changes, a rail corridor and station for Amtrak...maybe costs should be put on a time plan and done when the incoming reserves are there, not pushing overspending on taxpayers and threatening them by cutting services. If that needs to be done, then do so. You can't give everything to everyone all the time!

Sometimes sacrifice is necessary to fund priorities, and other things worked in as the city grows and tax revenues. One way to increase revenue is to bring in more small through large businesses...Madison is hard to work with from a business perspective and we have seen many businesses leave, turned away or turned off by the administrative polices and TAXES here...and the surrounding communities got Epic, major retailers, and many more businesses that should have been here.

And stop all the tax incremental financing tax breaks for all these residential developers...they are not paying their fair share and it costs a fortune to build out the infrastructure and maintain it. Its a real boon for T Wall and the many others who are getting rich while you overtax the working homeowners and renters through their rent increases.

We appreciate your social consciousness and wanting to care for your community, but don't pass that burden on us all the time assuming that we agree with all your social good programs...yes, in a perfect world and economy, we would readily say yes to all, but with all the inflation and job cutbacks, slowed wage growth and TAXES, we just can not do it all to fulfill the plans you have..consider that. Yo are driving us out of our homes.

It has gotten so expensive to live here we are planning to sell our home to get out of this city and county, our house value has dropped 60K the past three months according to market stats after you sent us our assessment...the basis for the real property taxes, so we will be paying more taxes than we should if market value is truly fair...!

You say you care about local business and people expect high levels of services and community services, yes, that is wonderful, but not if you no longer have the discretionary income to pay and enjoy them...please explain to the small businesses that people aren't spending and patronizing them anymore or as much because of out-of-control costs of living and your tax increases! And less patronage to business is less county and city taxes for you too...think of that mayor and alders!

We have strong feelings about the fiscal situation and lack of good management and could go on, but you get our point, and no if the vote is 51 to 49, yes it is a majority and politicians like you say the voters have spoken, but not true, you only hear those who support your agenda and ghost the rest of us. So, let the librarians feel anxious, let them cut their hours some...our employer just chopped 20 jobs in one month, and have not filled another ten who left or retired the past six months off loading work on the survivors in the office..now that really causes anxiety! Poor librarians...at least they have a job! And great benefits thanks to the mayors generous raises following covid.

Last, lets not forget inflation continues despite the CPI made up numbers people, lets not forget the school referendum for one half trillion dollars coming up, and lets assume the county, state and MATC will likely increase their taxes too! How much can you bleed out of working people until they collapse.

How much are you taking away from us actually being able to enjoy living in this once wonderful small-town city and all of the High level of services and amenities when we have no money to enjoy them? We guess we can drive by and look at those who enjoy all the subsidies and freebies given by the city on our wallets,

We can ride around and look at all the panhandlers you allow to roam the intersections...and support all those you feel we need to support when they move here with noting. Again, we'd love to take care of all budget and other peoples needs. But our funds our finite, unlike the City of Madison's tax extraction (and when you use vail threats and fear its extortion) systems.

We know you may read this. Doubtful, and will sneer and chuckle as you do and ghost us and cancel us as non-supporters and hit delete! That is how we feel when contacting you anyway. Madison Wisconsin is a wonderful place, but we can no longer afford to live here...so you will say.."if you don't like the politics and policies, move...sadly you are forcing us to do so"!

Thank you for at least encouraging us to voice our feelings, but we doubt it matters. Remember too, that a majority of those that vote these referenda are students and short time residents who do not have to pay for and live with the consequences of their votes...that is a hazard of university towns and others who vote for everything that pay little or no taxes to get more free services...our government has weakened Americans through masking social support as a hand up when in reality it makes them weak and entitled and unmotivated to EARN the American Dream—a fallacy today! We love to come home from work to see the news of those who don't work having rallies and marches protesting for more privileges after we work all day to pay for our lives and theirs! Now that is real social justice our council and leaders support.

Warm regards,

Just two meaningless 40-year residents who will hopefully soon be former ones

PS, please forgive any spelling, grammar or typographical errors, I have lost much of my sight, so this took considerable effort to draft!

From: [taylor warsek](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum Comment
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 9:11:13 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from taylor.warsek@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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We will not be voting yes on this referendum. The current mayor has been in office as mayor for almost the last 6 years and was an Alder for a few years before that. All during that time, Madison has been "brewing" this budget deficit. And all the while she has started a number of "pet projects" , for what appears to us, to be a way to pad her resume to seek a better job opportunity in DC. The spending on these projects has been what we consider Fiscal Mismanagement in light of the increasing deficit. It also appears the mayor has cunningly developed a core of alders who vote yes on all her project spending to assure her projects always go forward, no matter the cost. And now we ,as taxpayers , are expected to foot the bill. And now the threats have started of what will happen if the referendum is not passed. This seems like a type of "blackmail" to us. Before ANY layoffs or job cuts are instituted, It seems the real pain ought to start at the top of a very heavy and expensive Mayor's staff and all her "pet projects".

Rick Taylor and Linda Warsek

From: dpwaugh@gmail.com
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: bob.klebba@gmail.com
Subject: budget consideration - the referendum question
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 1:22:36 PM

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Dear city leaders,

My first thought is one of concern about what raising property taxes will do on housing costs. These increases will directly impact those already struggling to pay rent. I think the exercise of a reduced budget is very important and helpful and might be worth trying on. It strikes me that this is an equity issue because while the most affluent among us can afford the increase, we will be making life harder for quite a number of others.

One piece of the puzzle that is missing for me and would like more clarity on is the impact TIF districts have on revenue and services. I understand that those funds have strict use requirements, however, should we be evaluating closing or shrinking geographically some open TIF districts? Do we need to rethink the whole idea of public subsidy to fund development? Should we be having more coordination with county government to better manage competitive development across municipal boundaries?

Plus, please sell the bus barn on East Washington. That type of use is more appropriate elsewhere and is contrary to the nature of transit oriented development planning.

Best
David Waugh
704 E. Gorham St

From: [Jan Weatherhogg](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: City Budget- URGENT!!!!
Date: Sunday, August 4, 2024 4:39:39 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from downija@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

It's time for the City Council and Mayor to pay attention to the needs of the Madison taxpayers, not how to pass more expenses on to the taxpayers! Your job was supposed to work within a budget, not add additional expenses and misuse funds. Your solution to cover the budget deficit is to increase the property tax. That transfers your lack of fiscal management and responsibility to the taxpayers and that is unconscionable! You obviously do not care that 63% of Americans cannot cover a \$500 emergency bill from savings and 37% lack the funds to cover a \$400 emergency bill. This tax increase will force taxpayers to make cuts in their already stressed budgets! We have always budgeted for our property taxes, that is our responsibility! Now, it's time for you to do your job, you work for us. We're tired of doing your job!

From: [Larry and Ginny White](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Conklin, Nikki](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: REJECT Tax Levy Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 2:58:44 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from lgwhites@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Alders: After watching the budget briefing given by the mayor and budget director at your July 16th meeting, we remain unconvinced of the need for a tax levy referendum.

The mayor said a structural deficit has existed since 2012 when the Republican legislature and Governor Scott Walker imposed harsh revenue restrictions. We can't help but wonder, "Why has she spent freely during five years in office and only now is developing a five-year plan to address the deficit?"

We understand why she and many alders prefer to use a cost-to-continue budget model. It's easier than having to evaluate the need for and effectiveness of all budget items and make difficult choices.

The proposed language in the referendum is expected to say that it's "for the purpose of funding police, fire, garbage collection, parks and library operations *and other City services and operations*" (emphasis ours). This is a well-known tactic from the bureaucratic playbook: lead with essential services and continue to fund a catch-all category of nice-to-have positions, programs, and projects.

In discussing the impact of a rejected referendum, the mayor spoke in terms of the number of jobs that would be lost. Framing the issue as jobs lost is simplistic and intended to strike an emotional chord. Now she has introduced another tried-and-true scare tactic: deep cuts to popular city services like library hours, the Goodman pool, street repair, Madison Metro Transit service, a police program on gangs and neighborhood crime, and more.

She doesn't mention potential cuts in other areas, for example:

- Tax credits or benefits granted to third parties such as developers and community organizations
- Spending on health/human services programming at seven times the average rate of Wisconsin's 35 largest cities
- Foreign and domestic travel by the mayor, city staff, and alders
- Mayor's Office staffing
- Specific programs and new or planned initiatives and infrastructure.

We've seen no evidence of good-faith efforts on the part of the mayor and alders. You don't acknowledge that you helped grow the deficit, nor will you and the mayor try to make strategic cuts to nonessential positions, projects, and programs. Instead, the mayor recently filled a communications manager position

(approved by alders) at a salary of over \$90K/year. We think he might well have been hired to help convince taxpayers to support the referendum. But, personally, we remain dubious and are planning to vote NO.

Respectfully,

Ginny and Larry White
71 Oak Creek Trail
Madison, WI 53717

From: [noreply](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: [All Alders] Make cuts - quit spending more money
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 9:51:47 PM

Recipient: All Alders:

Monday, August 5, 2024 – 9:47pm

Christine Wolf
4617 Eldorado

Madison, Wisconsin. 53716 Yes, by email. 1wolfchris@gmail.com All Alders Make cuts - quit spending more money Why aren't more cuts being made to planning staff and community development? Instead, you & mayor are threatening cuts for the BASIC SERVICES, such as trash, collection, fire and police. And you're approving MORE spending on items like Reindal Park. Your planning department is the "central power." No cuts to upper management, just the lowest level of staff. Your own personal budgets must be a mess if you just keep spending. Very disrespectful to us city residents.

From: [Sally Young](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 11:41:34 AM

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

To: Madison City Council

In the past, Madison residents have been generous with voting to voluntarily increase their property taxes. However, I would like to go on record as being against the city's upcoming referendum. I am on a fixed income that is not keeping up with inflation. We have an ambitious mayor and I have not seen the city council doing much to restrain her ambitions. It is no surprise that the state has unfairly targeted us with a paltry amount of state funding. It is no surprise that the pandemic funds would end soon. So, why did this 'crisis' materialize in the past year? Why were we not working harder to balance the budget by forgoing wonderful, forward-looking but unnecessary projects two, three, four years ago?

Sally Young

4112 Major Ave.

"One of the most dangerous illusions of the climate crisis is that the technology of modern life makes us invincible...our bubble of invincibility is far more fragile than we know."

Jeff Goodall author of *The Heat Will Kill You First: Life and Death on a Scorched Planet*.

From: [Jacklyn DaWalt](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 4:18:22 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from jd.jerome41@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Voting NO on a City Referendum is somewhat foreign to us but we believe this administration has been spending money frivolously on projects and an excessive Number of Deputies to the Mayor - are they truly necessary? BRT is another ego booster for the Mayor and not a necessity. We are well aware of the different pots of City money but it is past time to spend on essential services and do those correctly.

Jacklyn and Judy Da Walt
4119 Jerome Street

Sent from my iPad

From: [James Ford II](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 4:23:44 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jhfordii@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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The mayor's approach to budgeting, in my opinion, is based on fear tactics. Vote for my referendum or face budget cuts and higher fees. Either approach places most of the burden on homeowners. What about the out-of-state corporate developers getting rich off Madison residents? Let's use four commercial properties to underscore the point - Whitney Point, Whitney Reserve, Hampton Place, and Sequoya Commons. The properties have 48, 49, 59 and 101 units and the property tax per unit are \$3,172.9, \$4,355.19, \$3,911.33, and \$4,469.85 respectively.

U.S. News and World Report puts the average annual cost to educate a student in Madison at \$16,137. For taxes at these properties to cover the MMSD infrastructure, no more than 9, 13, 14, and 28 students can live at each of the four properties respectively. If the student number is greater, these property owners are not paying their fair share to support the city infrastructure.

I raised this issue at a May budget meeting and shared my concerns with the alders and city finance staff. No response. So, I will ask again -how will city leaders ensure that out-of-state developers pay equitable property taxes to support the city infrastructure during construction and afterwards?

Plans to balance the budget need to consider all options including new ways to raise revenues for the out of town and in town developers who are profiting from the residents of Madison without covering the cost associated with the changing infrastructure that their new developments introduce to the city of Madison.

We should not be talking about cuts to fire or olive services or the Goodman Pool, the libraries, or to poll workers. It's time to stand up to the Mayor and say no to her fear based approach to budgeting and make sure that the profiteering out of town and in town developers are paying their fair share and not passing the burden to taxpayers or those who are paying ever increasing rents.

Sincerely

Jay Ford
5026 Marathon Drive
Madison Wisconsin 53705

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)

From: [Cam Yang](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: In Opposition of Resolution 84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 4:23:47 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from cyang@freedom-inc.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Hello,

My name is Cam Yang and I am writing in opposition of Resolution [84443](#). The Madison police department does not need any more increases to their budget, and in addition, this property tax increase will only increase the current cost of living for the most vulnerable communities, especially during economic times such as these. I'm asking that you all rework this resolution, remove the police department from this resolution, and come up with a better economic algorithm/equation that allows vulnerable homeowners (who are living paycheck to paycheck) a better fighting chance to keep their homes.

Best,

--



Cameron PajYeeb Yang, they/them/theirs/nws

Development Manager

cyang@freedom-inc.org

(608) 515-5518

2110 Luann Lane Madison, WI 53713

From: [Sarah Hamilton](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Agenda 84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 4:29:25 PM

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I am opposed to this referendum to increase property taxes to balance the budget.

The mayor needs to start managing the known existing funds and stop expecting the citizens to bail her out. Before accepting federal funds you should be sure you know if you have the funds to pay the city's share. OR have a referendum asking the citizens if they are willing to pay more taxes before accepting federal funds. Citizens can't continually cover for the mismanagement of funds. We are retired and do not have endless funds. We have a tight budget to cover our own household expenses and can't continually be expected to cover you mismanagement. Stop overspending! Stop expecting citizens to bail you out!

Sarah Hamilton
401 Blue Ridge Pkwy
Madison, Wi 53705

Sent from my iPad

From: [Nino Amato](#)
To: [Nino Amato](#)
Subject: Tonight's Comments Before the City of Madison Common Council
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:19:32 PM

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Madison Common Council Public Hearing (8-6-24)

By: A. J. Nino Amato, former City Alder

64 Oak Creek Trail, Madison 53717

As a life-long resident of Madison who have consistently supported increases in Madison's city budgets and MMSD budgets – Madison taxpayers and renters are feeling the financial crunch of increase rents and property taxes and have reached a “financial threshold” – and worse yet, feel our elected officials and some of our city agencies are taking city taxpayers generosity for granted.

Without question, everyone who has spoken this evening – including myself -- want to solve the City of Madison's historic \$27 million-dollar structural deficit -- but the proposed 5-year budget plan and city referendum is simply “re-organizing the deck chairs on the Titanic.”

Worse yet, Madison's Common Council progressives who got elected on the promise of making Madison housing affordable for all citizens, and for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion, by reducing Madison's racial disparities - have failed in delivering their promises.

And by increasing city property taxes, which will lead to increasing people's rents, will make things worse for the people who need our help the most.

Simply put: We cannot solve our fiscal crisis, with the same policy thinking we used when we created this fiscal crisis.

Therefore, it is time for the city to create an “Emergency Fiscal Crisis Task Force,” consisting of former city alders, county and city department heads and business & labor leaders – to produce a strategic financial strategy, which will:

- (1) address the current legislative fiscal restraints,
- (2) develop a 2025 restructuring budget that focuses on basic city service and measurable cost-accounting outcomes, and
- (3) to determine what city programs and services are working and those that are not.

The Task Force will report back to the City Council on or before November 1st with their re-structuring budget recommendations and services provided by our essential city workers.

Once the Task Force presents their recommendation, the city should then make their case before the state legislature and before the voters during the April 2025 general election.

From: [tom Beck](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Mayor](#); [Finance](#)
Subject: cost cutting ideas
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:29:16 PM
Attachments: [A Sustainable Long Term Plan for Madison Budget -- Memo.pdf](#)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from cnse55@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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1. outsource janitors
2. sell fancy new electric fire truck, buy a used model
3. Sell fancy new electric garbage truck, buy a used model
4. outsource all IT services
5. stop all green ideas and wasteful spending

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/finance/documents/budget/2025/A%20Sustainable%20Long%20Term%20Plan%20for%20Madison%20Budget%20-%20Memo.pdf>

Thanks,
Tom

Protect our 1st. & 2nd. Amendment rights
FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!



Office of the Mayor

Satya Rhodes-Conway, Mayor
City-County Building, Room 403
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Madison, WI 53703
Phone: (608) 266-4611 | Fax: (608) 267-8671
mayor@cityofmadison.com
cityofmadison.com

July 16, 2024

To: Madison Common Council

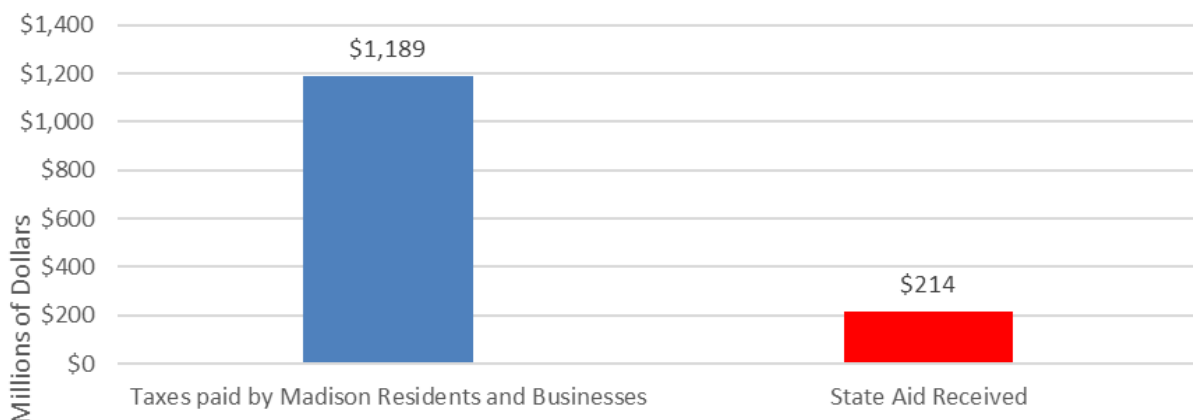
From: Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway

Re: Long term budget plan

Introduction

As we have previously discussed, the City's structural deficit is the result of two basic dynamics: a rapidly growing city and harsh restrictions on revenue enacted by the State Legislature and former Gov. Scott Walker. Since 2011, the State Legislature has strictly limited the amount of revenues available to pay for City services. [According to the independent Wisconsin Policy Forum](#), Wisconsin has the one of the tightest restrictions on increases in the entire country.

State Legislature Shortchanges Madison: We get back only 18 cents for every \$1 of State Taxes Paid

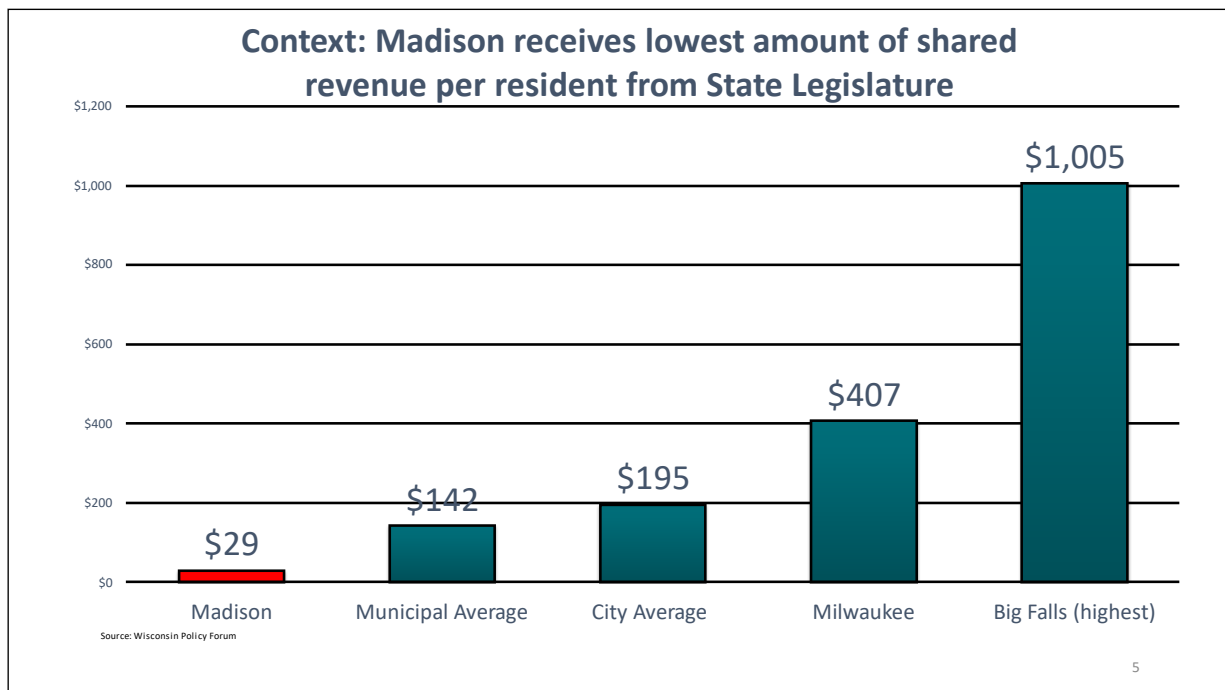


Note: Includes state aid for City of Madison, Madison Metropolitan School District, and City portion of Dane County
Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue; City Finance Department analysis

Despite being a primary driver of the state economy and contributing over \$1 billion dollars in state taxes, Madison residents get back less than 20 percent (18 cents) for every dollar they pay in state taxes. And that includes state aid provided to the City, School Districts, and Dane County. I'll say it again because it is so hard to believe – we receive eighteen cents for every dollar in state income and sales taxes paid. It's

not fair and it is why we don't have enough revenue to simply maintain current service levels to residents and businesses.

At \$29 per resident, Madison receives less than 15% of the statewide average. Wisconsin's largest city, Milwaukee, gets 14 times the amount of shared revenue per resident than the state's second largest city, Madison. It is because of these disparities that we are unable to increase service levels as our City's population grows at the fastest rate in the state. If shared revenue had increased at the rate of inflation since 2003, Madison would be receiving nearly \$20 million in 2024. If Madison received the per-resident average for Wisconsin cities, we would get \$54 million, enough to close the budget deficit more than two times over.



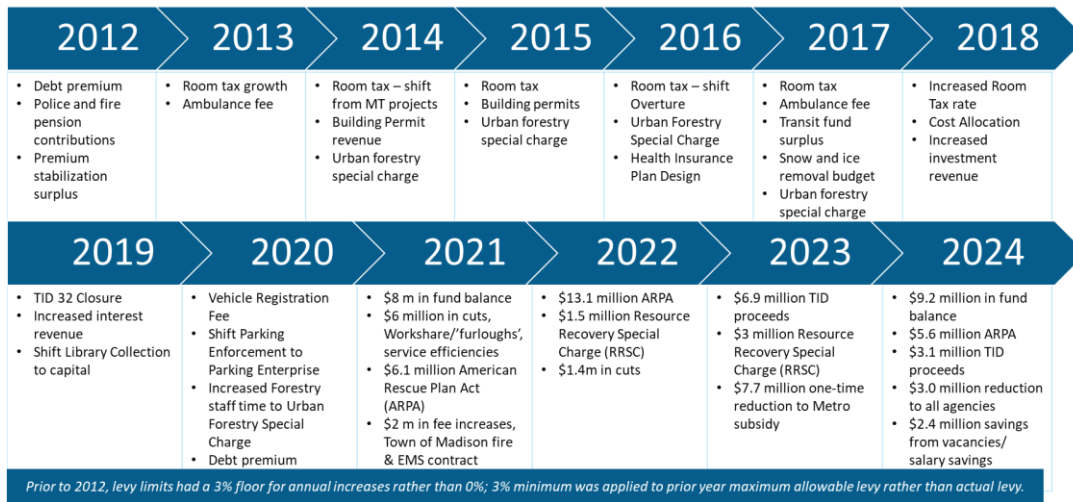
However, Madison is at the mercy of divisive politics at the state level, which has chosen to punish the state's largest cities for our politics by constraining our economy. Our ability to provide city services, supported by a vast majority of our residents, is fiscally impossible under the system created by former Gov. Scott Walker and the current leadership of the State Legislature. Wisconsin is sitting on a \$3 billion surplus and yet communities around the state are forced, every year, to balance budgets with higher costs and stagnant revenue. Residents in Monona, Fitchburg, Middleton, Oregon, Maple Bluff, and communities across the state are confronting the same frustrating dilemma and feel the same pain.

As a result, the City has had to close deficits in every City budget since 2011. The City has done many things to balance its budget over the past 13 years: increasing the amount that employees pay for their pensions and health insurance, increasing existing fees, cutting expenses, finding efficiencies, limiting hiring and creating new special charges. With belt tightening, workforce efficiencies, new fees, soon-to-be depleted federal pandemic aid, and other one-time measures we have avoided major disruptions in city services for the past decade. But Madison has exhausted all but two paths moving forward: an austerity budget we can't afford; or a voter-approved property tax referendum that could be easily avoided under a less draconian State Legislature.

Increased interest rates and higher staff vacancies have resulted in a modest increase in the City’s general fund balance, or “Rainy Day Fund.” While this increase can and will absolutely be part of the solution to the budget gap, it is one-time funding and spending it down will do nothing to address the structural deficits occurring every year or to solve the City’s long-term budget situation.

What has the City done so far?

Madison has faced a budget deficit **every year** since the State imposed strict levy limits in 2011. The problem is bigger in 2025 than before because of the lasting impacts of the pandemic and end of federal recovery funds.



The 2025 Budget

Knowing that we were almost out of options, we undertook a series of conversations that began immediately after the 2024 budget was adopted last November. First, the Finance Department developed a comprehensive information series on the budget. This was followed-up by in-depth briefings of the Council in February and March of this year. In April, the Council adopted values, priorities, and guiding principles for developing a budget that is balanced in the long-term using the very limited options allowed by the State Legislature.

The Council established the following values and priorities for the City budget ([Legistar #82456](#)):

1. Maintaining services for residents.
2. Preventing layoffs or furloughs of city staff who deliver those services.
3. Maintaining wage parity for general municipal employees.
4. Meeting the needs of a growing city.
5. Choosing the most progressive revenue options that consider housing affordability for residents.

With these values and priorities as a foundation, the Council provided the following guidance for developing the 2025 budget:

1. Evaluate service levels, staffing and fiscal impact when developing budget requests.

2. Seek ways to increase efficiencies in operations.
3. Develop language for a property tax referendum for some or all of the projected budget deficit, as well as options to replace existing non-property tax revenues, for consideration by voters at the November 5, 2024, general election.
4. Prepare contingency plans if voters do not approve the referendum.
5. Develop a multi-year plan to address the on-going structural deficit, including revenue options allowed under state law.
6. Consider the overall level of borrowing in the capital budget to help reduce the rate of growth in property taxes.
7. Develop a community engagement plan.

Each of these elements has, as much as possible, been incorporated into the City's budget development. To address the first two criteria, the City is implementing the Results Madison initiative, which is a strategic framework intended to align city services with the outcomes that matter most to Madison residents. As part of this process, City agencies are currently in the process of developing performance measures related to the services and activities they provide. City agencies are also audited on a 5-year cycle for review of internal controls and identification of ways to improve efficiency. Finally, all City agencies have been instructed to provide 1% reductions over their cost-to-continue budget to encourage continued savings and asked to identify potential service reductions of at least 5% of their budget.

While the financial fundamentals for the City's capital investments remain strong, as reflected in the highest possible rating on the City's general obligation debt from Moody's Investors Service (Aaa), which ensures the lowest possible interest cost, we have taken steps to address guideline 6 ("Consider the overall level of borrowing in the capital budget to help reduce the rate of growth in property taxes"). This year's capital budget strongly discourages agencies from requesting any additional general obligation borrowing (the kind that contributes to the cities debt burden). In order to be funded, any new requests must demonstrate how they improve the lives of residents who have been historically marginalized and address systemic disparities, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote climate resilience, and align with other long-range planning efforts.

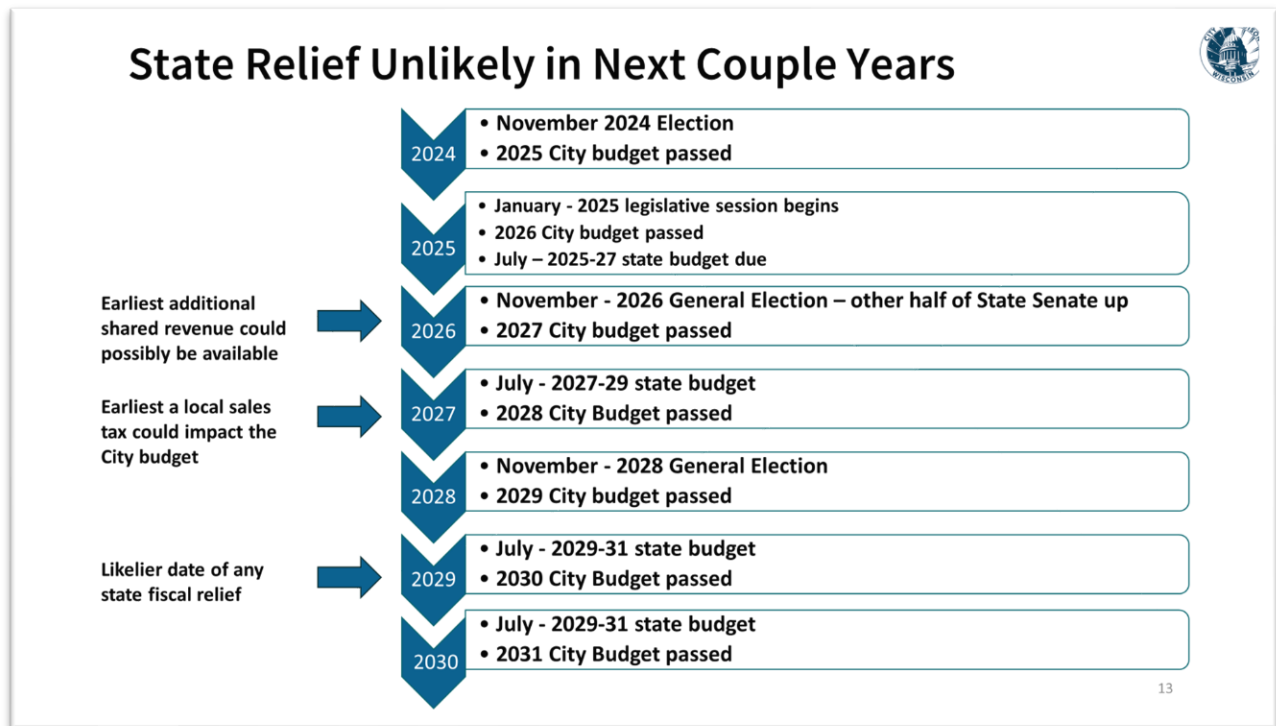
All of these efforts have been guided throughout by extensive community engagement (#7). This began as described above almost as soon as the 2024 budget was complete and include the Finance Department's comprehensive information series on the budget that was presented via a series of in-depth briefings of the Council in February and March of this year. The Council then spearheaded a series of in-person and virtual community budget conversations that were attended by hundreds of residents and generated scores of questions for City staff. We plan to continue this dialogue throughout the fall with continued public budget events and opportunities for community engagement.

Finally, this memo and the accompanying presentation to Council outline "a multi-year plan to address the on-going structural deficit, including revenue options" as well as "contingency plans if voters do not approve the referendum" (criteria 4 and 5). Language for a potential property tax referendum (#3) will be reviewed during the presentation and is being introduced tonight as part of the consent agenda.

A Responsible Long-Term Plan

As should by now be clear, the ultimate solution to the constant structural deficits faced by all Wisconsin cities has to originate at the state level in the form of returning more of cities’ own tax revenues to them in the form of shared revenue, allowing localities to tax themselves via a local option sales tax, or other relief (e.g., finally having state-owned properties like the UW and the Capitol to pay their fair share for the services they receive from the city or allowing municipalities to share transit costs via regional transit authorities). It is important to be realistic about the timeline on which such relief could occur, however.

Even in the most wildly optimistic scenario, wherein the state legislature convened for the 2025 legislative session in January and immediately took action to provide relief to Wisconsin cities – something that is exceedingly unlikely to happen given that they just addressed shared revenue in the previous session and that there will very likely still be a conservative majority in control– such relief would not impact the City budget until the start of 2026. If that relief came in the form of a local option sales tax, it is likely that would require a local referendum (that has been the case in most proposals for granting Wisconsin cities a local option sales tax). In that case, the additional revenue would not impact the City budget until 2027. State action will presumably be more likely after the 2026 mid-term elections when the other half of the state senate holds elections under the lines established in 2024. In that case, shared revenue could come in the 2027 state budget and be available to the city in 2028, while a sales tax would not impact the City until 2029.



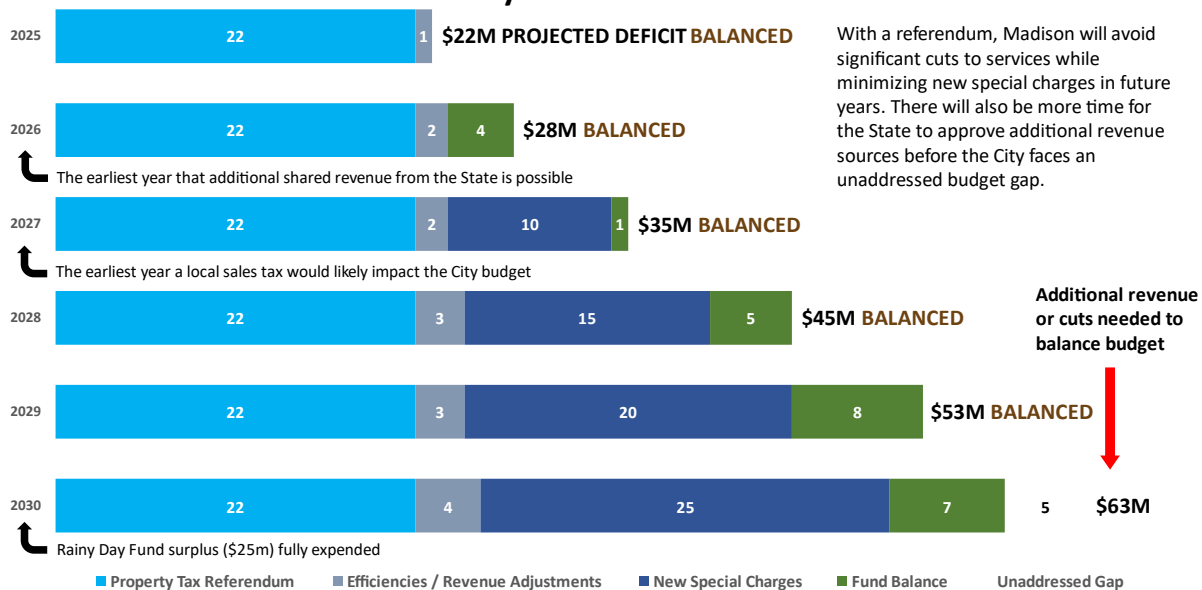
Even under relatively optimistic scenarios that account for changes in state legislative dynamics and assume a massive coalitional lobbying effort, the City must assume and plan for balancing budgets under the current draconian state restrictions for at least the next five years. Thus, guided by Council’s priorities

values, and guiding principles, we have worked to develop a responsible, long-term vision for the City budget avoids major cuts or having to increase taxes via referendum a second time, while we fight for a permanent solution to state-imposed structural deficits and continue to address the service needs and challenges of a growing city.

The major elements of our proposed plan

- A \$22 million property tax referendum on the November 2024 ballot. That would amount to roughly \$5 a month per \$100K of home value, or about \$20/month on the average home. The property tax is both the most progressive alternative available and the one that distributes the cost of running city government most broadly, to both residential and commercial properties across the city.
- Responsibly spending down the general fund balance (approximately \$25 million) over 5 years to the recommended 15% (beyond which it would begin to impact the City’s bond rating).
- Additional special charges starting in 2027 and gradually increasing to help close future budget gaps.
- Continued constraint on new city positions and further efficiency measures to continue to do more with less.
- No budget deficit or further cuts required until 2030.
- Escalated efforts to advocate for state relief.

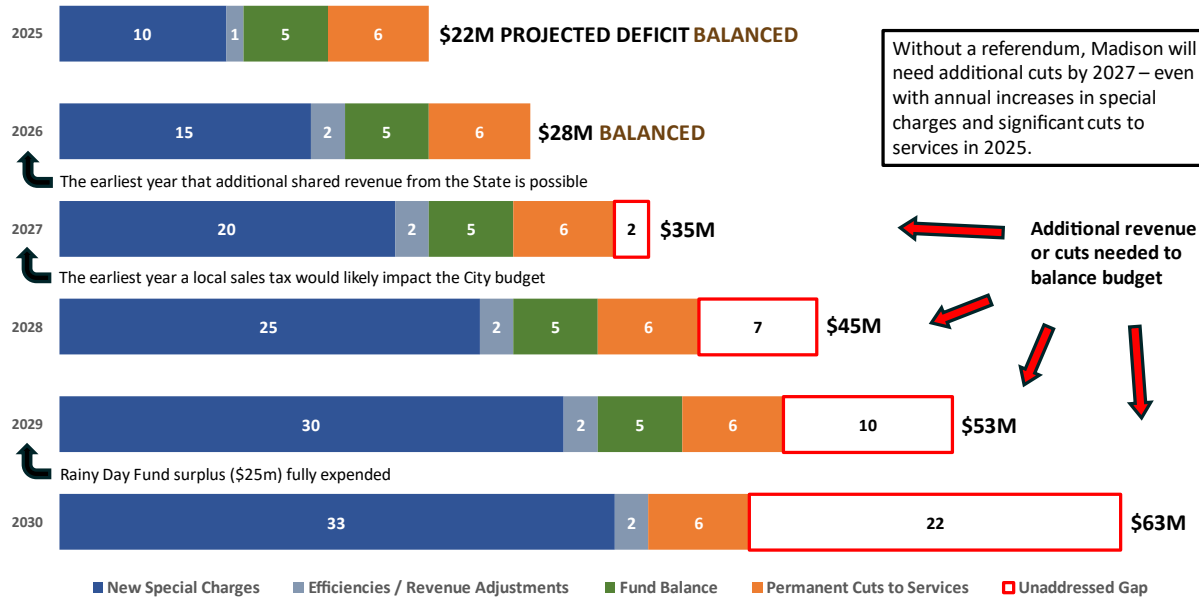
With A Referendum, Madison Can Avoid Significant Cuts or the Need for More Revenue for Another Five years



The alternative is bleak. To balance the budget without a referendum, the City would need significant cuts in 2025 – we estimate roughly \$6 million dollars, which equates to roughly 60 layoffs. The City would also need to begin to institute additional special charges this year, to the tune of an additional \$10 million. And even with those measures, we would start seeing budget deficits again as soon as 2027 with no obvious way to fill them.



Without a Referendum, the City Would Need Additional Cuts and Revenue by 2027



Conclusion

The State Legislature has systematically shortchanged our City and cities across the state. The only alternative they have left cities to pay for the services they provide is to ask residents to authorize an increase property tax – that is why so many cities across the state have been turning to that option. The budget outline above does so in the most responsible way possible, both avoiding massive cuts to City services such as police, fire, and libraries and also avoiding the need to return to voters to ask for yet another property tax increase. We want to thank all of you in advance as we move forward together to serve all of our City’s residents in light of this failure of the State Legislature to adequately and equitably support its second largest and fastest growing City. We appreciate your leadership in this challenging process and know that together we will do our best for Madison.

From: [Anne Benishek-Clark](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#)
Subject: Budget crunch and possible solutions
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 4:48:44 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from abenishekclark@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Folks! We live in an exceptionally lovely and loving environment. We live in a city with a high quality of life (streets, parks, planning for growth, Equity and Diversity, and more), provided by everyone's taxes and cooperation.

Since 2011, the gerrymandered Republican Legislature has tried to run us ragged, to pinch our City dry in their "Revenue Sharing".

Madison is a huge economic powerhouse for the State. Yet our City receives a much less proportionate amount of shared revenues compared to what we contribute.

Please put the question to us who live here. (And who have lived here for decades.)

Please put the referendum on the ballot. We will stand by our City and its budget. "A Change is gonna come."

Kindest regards,

Anne Benishek-Clark
District 15
3528 Atwood Avenue
Madison 53714

From: [Senji Benji](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Senji Benji](#)
Subject: Our public comments on City of Madison budget deficit/shortfall
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 7:26:36 PM

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Our comments are as follows:

People need to understand that there is a difference between NEEDS and WANTS in the City of Madison.

The Police and Fire Depts budgets should not be cut at all. The same with Streets division. No cuts there, either. These are NEEDS to run a city.

WANTS would include things like arts grants, etc. Things that are not NECESSITIES.

Also, as senior citizens, please consider the term "affordable housing." What about senior citizens like us, who have lived in Madison for most of our lives, paid our taxes for many years diligently, yet each year our property taxes go up by much, much more than our increases in social security do. What about us? We believe that there should actually be a property tax CAP for seniors who have lived in their house for more than 10 years, or something similar. Otherwise, for folks like us our home that we have lived in for almost 20 years, will soon be "unaffordable." We know we are not the only ones who feel this way, but are perhaps one of the only ones taking the time to write.

Bluntly put, yes, there need to be CUTS in the City budget. Cuts in areas that are not necessities. Sure, it's nice to have libraries open until late in the evening, but once again, this is not a necessity. Also, Metro buses run practically empty during late nite hours or on Sundays. Metro buses should not be running just to accommodate just a few folks. The BRT program is a total waste of money and should be stopped now. Madison already has a robust Metro bus service and even a tiny fraction of the BRT money could have been used to improve a few things in the Metro bus service, such as perhaps more shelters at more stops, etc.

These are our views and we would like them put into the public record. Thank you.

Vaira and Ron Akselis
13 Julia Circle
Madison , WI 53705

608 238 4191

From: [Dorothy](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: BUDGET CUTS
Date: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 9:08:22 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from dborchardt1@charter.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hey alders, which one of you are strong enough to stand up to the mayor and remove the \$1.1 million Police Civilian Oversight Board from the budget?

Stop taxing the middle income folks out of their homes.
Dorothy Borchardt

CONSPICUOUSLY MISSING from the Mayor's proposal if the referendum does not pass is the \$1.1 million taxpayers spend on the Police Civilian Oversight Board, a do-nothing agency created to solve a non-existent problem.

Five years after its creation, this sop to Defund-the-Cops still can't write up a complaint form.

We retired, fixed income folks are being taxed out of our homes. That is a fact.

Norman Sannes, Madison

From: [Randy Bruegman](#)
To: [City Budget](#)
Subject: Tax Referendum
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 1:26:31 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[No on Placing the Tax Referendum on the November Ballot.pdf](#)

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Chief Randy Bruegman (Ret.)
PRESIDENT + FOUNDER



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No on Placing the Tax Referendum on the November Ballot

Item number 84443.

With the 31.2 million dollar surplus in this year's budget, there is no need at this time to call for this referendum. From my calculation the city would only be in an approximate six million dollar deficit for the next fiscal year, not accounting for any other gains realized from the city investment funds for the remainder of this fiscal year. This could be made up by use of one time funds from the "rainy day fund," and leave the city well within the guidelines of the GFOA. This would provide over a year for the Mayor and Aders to develop other strategies that could balance the budget. The mayor has stated "a referendum is not my preferred solution. But it is the most progressive and realistic option for Madison given the current political makeup of the state government." The fact is, that property tax is the most regressive on people that own homes and rent who are in low to middle income.

There are other strategies that are far more progressive and realistic than driving people from their apartments and homes due to increased taxes. The city has over the past five years used federal ARPA funds not for one time expenditures, but those that create long-term operational cost. The use premium, the additional money that is paid to a lender to service funding when doing borrowing, has contributed to the deficit, and then rolling that into the ongoing operational budget is also an issue. Continuing to use the cost-to-continue budgeting approach enables and even encourages the mayor to overspend, and stifles innovation. The mayor is not compelled to exhaust the entire property tax and other tax windfalls each year. According to the city's admission, spending on transportation is 320 percent higher, and on human services is a staggering 700 percent higher compared to our peer cities. One of the troubling issues in this budget process is that the city appears to have rolled a significant amount of the one-time COVID relief money of 47 million dollars into its ongoing budget. If that is the case, that raises a host of questions regarding proper budget practices, ethics, and transparency. In addition, debt service should be in the area of 12% of the operating budget. Presently it's over 16% and is heading toward a 20% threshold. A high ratio threatens the AAA bond rating of the city which, if lost, will increase borrowing cost.

The city ordinance requires a fiscal note on major projects which seems to be no longer in use. The fiscal note should provide the total cost of the project, the annual operating cost, and the revenue source for the initial cost of the project and its long-term operating cost. As an example, has there been fiscal note provided for the operating costs of the new Bus Rapid Transit system?

It is recommended that you place this referendum on hold and take the following actions over the course of the next year to resolve this deficit.

1. You have an exceptionally talented core of department heads and senior staff, ask them how they would innovate services and reduce cost. The city has done business the same way for many years. If you promote the need and desire for innovation, which starts with you, the elected officials, you may be surprised with what they come back with.
2. The consolidation of services across the entities of this county would not only be cost effective, but would likely improve serviced delivery to all resident of the county. I know

this to be true, as I have consolidated several agencies in the past, and each time it improved services and saved money for the taxpayer. It is time to stop being so parochial and become an innovative organization.

3. Take a page out of Milwaukee playbook and revisit the State Allocation Policy. Milwaukee was successful because they brought the Mayor, Alders, Chamber of Commerce, Labor, and business together to collectively lobby the State Legislature for the changes that were passed last year. The city of Madison should do the same, but it will require leadership to bring those factions together toward a common goal of meeting and lobbying our State Representatives. Yes, that will require you to speak to Republicans and develop a professional relationship with them. The city should seek changes to the shared revenue formula, authorization for a sales tax for the city and/or a transit district covering the Madison metro service area, and an increase in the state payments for municipal services for state office buildings and the University of Wisconsin.
4. The city should also exercise more fiscal discipline by:
 - a. By not using one time revenues to create long term operational expenses.
 - b. Discontinue the use of premiums when borrowing money.
 - c. Reduce the amount the city is currently borrowing.
 - d. Properly providing fiscal notes on projects that are proposed within the city.
 - e. Examine all contracted expenditures, particularly in social services, for proven results.

I believe that these efforts are necessary before you ask your constituency for more money. The other point to keep top of mind is this. Property tax hurts those that can least afford it, the most. People in lower to middle income are disproportionately impacted by property tax whether an owner or renter. The city has said “well it is only going to 20 to 30 dollars a month on the average value of a home”. But for many people, that is often money the don’t have. Couple with that with the two other referendums that are on the ballot, if all three were to pass, that would likely put many people on the streets or into a subsidized housing situation. I think it is your responsibility to get your fiscal house in order first before you ask the taxpayers for more.

Randy R. Bruegman

Madison Resident

From: [Tom Cox](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget
Date: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 10:34:29 AM

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The Mayor and her budget are both slightly disappointing and disingenuous. The same with the mini alder meetings held this spring. The focus seems to be primarily on cutting the most basic and used services in an effort to scare voters into approving more money. There are so many secondary programs and expenses which could be reduced. While most of these items are desirable, they are not absolutely essential. Today's Cap Times includes articles on two such issues. While not the best examples, was the 4.5 million for the Badger Mill Creek purchase and \$461,000 for additional speed bumps absolutely needed? Where is controlling or freezing employee benefits and wages in this conversation? Also didn't the Mayor's office add a Communications Manager this Spring for like \$90,000? And of course there is our BRT. Again, a pragmatic forward thinking possibly beneficial program funded largely by the Federal Government. But isn't it still costing the city \$80 million not to mention the disruption and confusion?

I plan to vote "no" on ALL referendum tax increases this fall. As far as the city budget, Paul Soglin's approach is much more desirable and practical. Cut costs, borrow or use the rainy-day fund, and this fall work with a Wisconsin legislature hopefully more receptive on returning a greater portion of our taxes to Madison.

From: [noreply](#)
To: [City Budget](#)
Subject: Form submission from: Contact
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 11:31:38 AM

Monday, August 5, 2024 – 11:27am

Name

Jess Draws

How would you like us to contact you?

Email

Email

jessicalyndraws@gmail.com

Reason for Contact

Budget

Message

No Cuts to Libraries: Support Option C

My name is Jess Draws and I have been a resident of Madison and a user of the Madison Public Library system since 2012. I am writing to you to express my strong support for the libraries in the face of potential budget cuts for the next fiscal year.

I am aware of Option A and B as proposed by the Madison Public Library Foundation. I do not find either of these acceptable. I want Option C. I support the proposal for a \$22 million referendum that would increase property taxes by about \$20 a month to balance the budget rather than taking \$6 million in cuts from city services. This is agenda item #84443 (Authorizing the Scheduling of a Referendum Relating to Exceeding the Municipal Property Tax Limits in the City of Madison) at the Common Council Meeting tonight (8/5/2024). I have already registered my support, although I will not be able to attend the meeting.

Libraries are essential to marginalized communities, providing free access to resources such as books, internet, educational programs, and safe spaces. They serve as a lifeline for low-income families, the elderly, immigrants, and people experiencing homelessness. Cutting library funding would disproportionately impact these vulnerable populations, deepening existing inequities in our city. Furthermore, maintaining robust library services is a smart financial choice; libraries contribute to the local economy by supporting workforce development, literacy, and lifelong learning, which in turn fosters a more informed and connected community.

Thank you for your time,
Jess Draws

From: [william dye](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Rhodes-Conway, Satya V.](#); [Mayor](#)
Subject: Concerns Regarding City Budget, Services and Referendum
Date: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 10:22:07 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from dyewilliam@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Mayor Conway and Members of the Madison City Council,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the current state of our city's budget and the impact it is having on essential services. It has come to my attention that we are facing budget overruns which have led to proposed cuts in city services. Additionally, I am troubled by the decision to put a referendum on the ballot to increase property taxes.

As a resident in District 12 (Alder Amani Latimer Burris area) and taxpayer in our community, I understand the importance of fiscal responsibility. However, I believe it is equally important to ensure that our city continues to provide necessary services that contribute to the well-being and safety of all residents.

I urge you to reconsider the decision to pursue a referendum on property taxes. While I understand it could help raising taxes in the short term, it is crucial that we explore all viable options to maintain the quality of life in our city. Transparency and community input are essential in making such decisions, and I believe if a referendum passes it would only provide a band-aide.

We need to focus on our basic city services. Water, Santitaion, Police, Fire, Garbage, Recycling, Snow Removal, Public Transit, Schools, Streets and Traffic services.

As of today, the city needs to STOP all construction of the Public Market, Brand New Homeless Shelters, BRT and other non-essential City Services . The Mayor's office needs deep cuts...half of her lieutenant Mayors need to resign or all of them need to take 50% pay cuts. Anyone else involved in creating and approving these last two budget also need to take pay cuts of resign. Until the budget is back in line.

What worries me the most, you proved all the Conservatives and MAGA extremist right. Your spending is out of control. Let's pull this back so they don't come praying on our beautiful city next.

Furthermore, I kindly request more information on the specific areas where cuts are being proposed and their potential impact on residents. Understanding these details is crucial for residents to fully comprehend the implications of the budgetary decisions being made.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my concerns. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this matter and hope we can work together to find solutions that benefit our city and its residents.

Sincerely,

William Dye
2205 Fremont Ave.
dyewilliam@hotmail.com
608-347-4051

From: [Jordan Ellenberg](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Madison Mayor](#)
Subject: Support for the referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 5:17:48 PM

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Dear Alders,

My name is Jordan Ellenberg; I'm a Madison resident and homeowner and I support the referendum to increase the property tax levy. I consider myself fortunate to live in a city that provides such great municipal services, and I think it's only fair for those of us in the best financial position to pay more than we do now to keep those services healthy.

Thanks for your service to the city!

Best,

Jordan

From: [Kayla Every](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: [TaMaya Travis](#)
Subject: Homeless Services Consortium
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 8:43:57 PM
Attachments: [Education and Advocacy Statement \(1\).pdf](#)
[Aug 6th Referendum Advocacy Points Common Council.pptx](#)

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Hello Alders,

Thank you for your time tonight, and the consideration of so many complex issues in relation to the proposed referendum.

Here are our full comments and a short presentation on behalf of the Dane County Homeless Services Consortium Education and Advocacy Committee. While we have many considerations to uphold as a large consortium, we believe the linked community plans can provide further understanding of the complexities within our intersectional work.

Thank you!

Kayla Every

**Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program
Program Coordinator | YAB Coordinator | She/Her
e. KaylaE@yabdanecounty.com | w www.yabdanecounty.com**

"You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world.
And you have to do it all the time."
-Angela Davis



Homeless Services Consortium of Dane County Re: City of Madison Proposed 2024 Referendum

As a group made up of over 100 diverse organizations, the Homeless Services Consortium (HSC) at this time is not in direct support or opposition of this item, but instead our Dane County's Education and Advocacy Committee would like to share relevant information concerning the City's proposed referendum, as it poses a significant risk to the sustainability of the progress made during the COVID-19 pandemic, should an addendum go to vote and fail. The Consortium has responded to the pandemic alongside our collaborative applicant, the City of Madison to implement substantial improvements to ensure basic safety of our unsheltered, housing-insecure, and health-sensitive community members in various areas, including the centralization and enhancement of shelter conditions, the successful transition of individuals from hotels to permanent housing, and robust eviction prevention measures. These advancements have been pivotal in addressing local homelessness and housing insecurity during an unprecedented national housing crisis.

Despite these many achievements, we have also experienced setbacks, such as the loss of housing units due to the unexpected sale of [Madison's Rethke and Tree Lane properties](#), the conversion of hotels to housing, and other vital programs which leave us facing a projected deficit of 1,683 housing units needed to meet local service needs entering 2025.¹ Additionally, numerous unmet needs persist within our community, such as the lack of affordable housing where the average studio apartment in Dane County, inadequate shelter conditions, the need for supportive services and organized resources. The proposed referendum may maintain crucial funding for these services and sustain significant progress we have worked tirelessly to achieve, but asking Madison homeowners to increase their property taxes could pose additional risks, pushing our community further away from the solution. While rent costs continue to rise, the average cost of an efficiency apartment (0 BR) requires renters to make at least \$52,000 annually to reasonably afford it². This prices out many individuals making less than \$26 an hour, directly correlating to the significant number of young single adults staying in our homeless shelters. Asking Madison homeowners to increase taxes could further raise local rents, especially for smaller or private landlords, therefore spreading the cost burden across those already significantly impacted by the national housing crisis. Instead, invest into our 2025 budget to further to ease housing cost burdens for all Madisonians, 49% of whom are already cost burdened.³

The HSC and many organizations across our consortium partnered in major collaborative community plans alongside both the City of Madison and Dane County Human Services to evaluate and inform our response to the ongoing housing crisis, including [Dane Forward: A](#)

¹ Please see Appendix D: Dane County Housing Needs Estimates
https://www.danecountyhomeless.org/files/ugd/73dee7_8383994437e64c6ca725f8aa4944c00.pdf

² Please see PG 154: Housing Costs for Newer Market Rate Rental Units Built 2010-2021
<https://rhs.danecounty.gov/documents/pdf/DCRHS-SAPReport-FNL-web.pdf>

³ Please see PG 143: Share of Cost-Burdened Renters Across All Income Levels by Municipality
<https://rhs.danecounty.gov/documents/pdf/DCRHS-SAPReport-FNL-web.pdf>

Homeless Services Consortium of Dane County
Re: City of Madison Proposed 2024 Referendum

[5 Year Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#), [Regional Housing Strategy: A Roadmap to Solving Dane County's Housing Crisis](#), and YHDP: [Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness](#). In each of these plans, the City of Madison committed to partnerships that provide transparency between the general public, government officials, nonprofit and business partners about funding, programs, and priorities. These expert reviews present data surrounding the state of this housing emergency, the appropriate mix of community wide services we would need to provide, the impacts on our most housing-insecure, and has organized coordination to ensure homelessness is rare, brief and nonrecurring in Madison and across Dane County.

We urge the city to consider supplementing this plan with alternative funding solutions outlined throughout these plans so that we do not compromise essential services or pose a significant increase to the cost of housing in our community. One viable approach would be to reevaluate and reduce expenditures on costly non-emergency services carried out by other city departments when our work aims to ensure do not most appropriately fit the intention of the department. If you invest in prevention, diversion and [housing first programs](#), the cost and need for emergency services will go down. By strategically reallocating a relatively small resources towards maintaining and expanding vital services, you can ensure the continued support and stability is delivered to those in need and decrease the need for emergency services.

The Homeless Service Consortium of Dane County remains committed to evaluating and advocating for the needs of our community and ensure progress made over the past few years is not only preserved, but built upon. We rise the need for the City officials and stakeholders to prioritize the welfare of our entire community by exploring more equitable and sustainable funding alternatives that do not overextend the cost burden on homeowners and renters, but instead and improve the likelihood of approval and curb unnecessary risks while introducing a potentially divisive addendum, should one be introduced to the upcoming ballot.

As Jim O'keefe recently present to this Council, the homeless service programs the City now operates were organized to meet the minimum requirement needed to confront crisis. The City and County have jointly funded multiple community plans which have organized efforts to increase funding and expand effective programs, as well as for a shelter where staff, volunteers and nonprofits can collaborate to provide effective and streamlined support.

Supporting a relatively small amount of additional funding as outlined in these plans could end the housing crisis. Adjusting the funding to meet the increasing costs alone could be just enough to soothe our growing crisis, but the potential of a failed referendum that results in decreased funding to human services programs is unsettling and out of touch with the commitments made by the City and processes happening across our community.

HOMELESS SERVICES CONSORTIUM OF DANE COUNTY

**Points of consideration regarding
the City of Madison 2025 budget and referendum
and the subsequent impact on the local housing crisis**

Background: Affordable Housing

Housing Availability Factors In and around Madison between 2010-2020

- Dane County added 42,000 households from 2010-2020, making it the fastest growing county in the state.
- Dane County job market grew 14% adding over 38,000 jobs more than double the rate of Wisconsin overall.
- During that time, Dane saw growth at a rate of 4 rental units built to every 5 households entering the county.

Dane County Population Growth by Age Group, 2010 - 2020

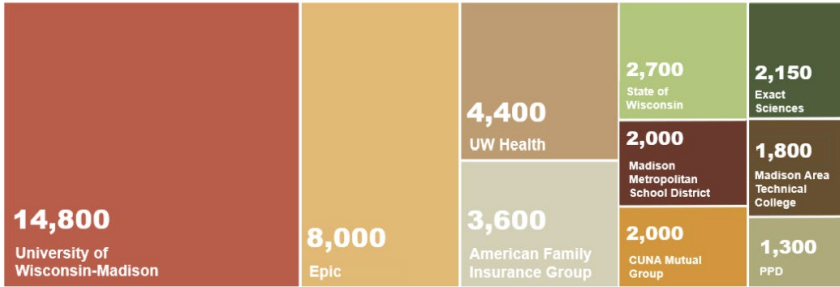
Age Cohort	≤ 14	15 - 24	25 -34	35 -54	55 -74	≥ 75
Dane County	+ 3.6%	+ 15.1%	+ 8.0%	+ 1.5%	+ 30.8%	+ 21.9%
Wisconsin	- 4.7%	- 1.7%	+ 2.2%	- 9.6%	+ 26.1%	+ 9.4%

Source: US Census Bureau 2020, SB Friedman

Background: Affordable Housing

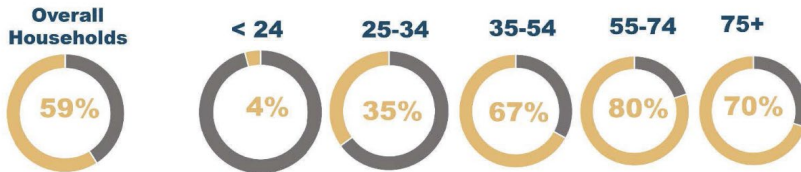
Major Employers

Figure 6. Dane County Major Employers, 2022



Source: Lightcast, SB Friedman

Figure 18. Homeownership Rates by Age Cohort in Dane County



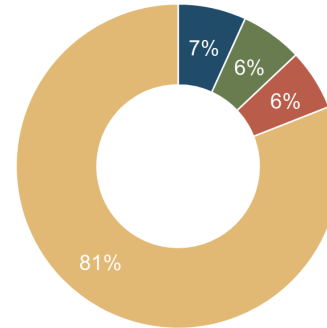
OWNER HH RENTER HH

Source: PUMS ACS 5-Year Estimates (2016-2020), SB Friedman

Dane County Land Area vs Population

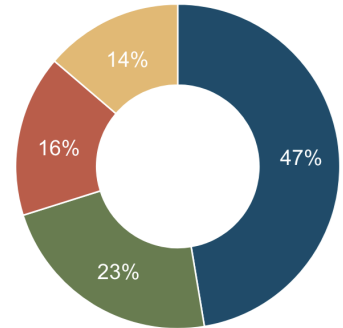
Madison accounts for rough 47% of Dane County's population.

Dane County Land Area by Jurisdiction Type, 2020



MADISON VILLAGES
OTHER CITIES TOWNS

Dane County Population by Jurisdiction Type, 2020



Source: WI DOA, US Census Bureau 2020, SB Friedman

Background: Affordable Housing

Local Housing Affordability

- Housing is Affordable when a household spends **less than 30%** of their gross income on housing costs.
- For renters, this includes rent and utilities.
- For homeowners, this includes their monthly mortgage payment, utilities and other owner costs (property taxes, homeowner association fees, homeowners' insurance).
- **One in Four** households in Dane County are housing-cost burdened, meaning they spend more than they can afford on housing costs.

HUD Income Limits by AMI, 2022

	Area Median Income	2-Person Household
Extremely Low Income	30%	\$27,700
Very Low Income	50%	\$46,200
	60%	\$55,400
Low Income	80%	\$73,800
Median Income	100%	\$92,300
Moderate Income	120%	\$110,800

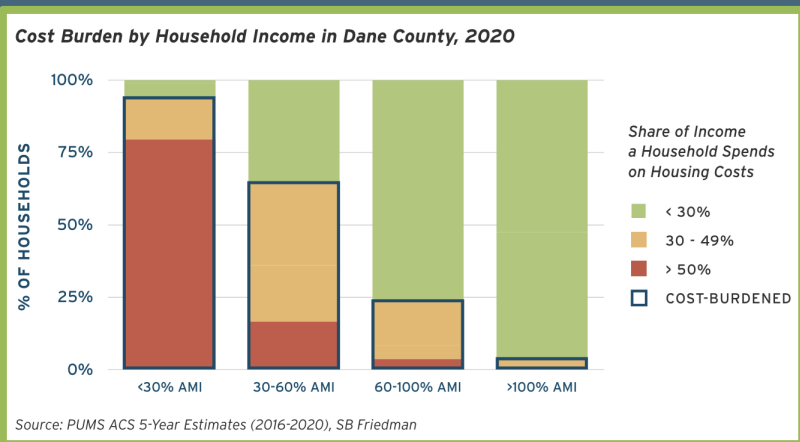
Source: HUD FY 2022, SB Friedman

* AMI = Area Median Income

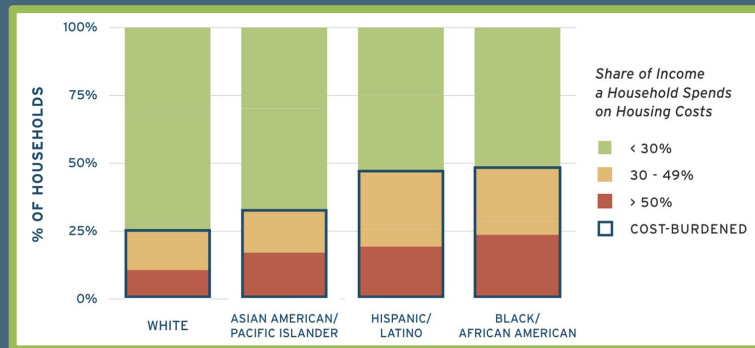
Cost Burden Inequity

Local Demographics on Household Cost Burden, 2020

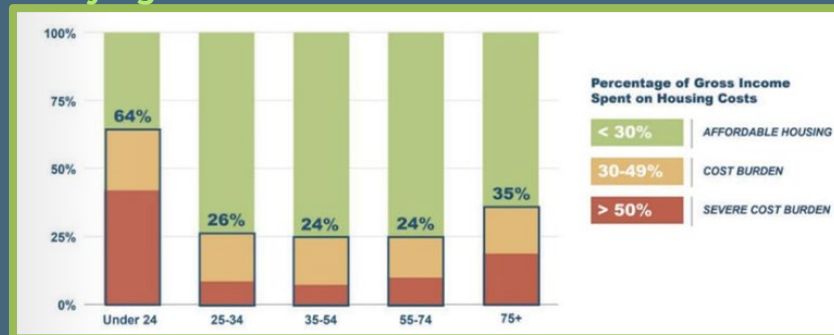
By Income Level



by Race/Ethnicity



by Age



Source: PUMS ACS 5-Year Estimates (2016-2020)
| Dane County Regional Housing Strategy

Housing Cost for Newer* Units

Current Rental Climate

				
	STUDIO	1-BEDROOM	2-BEDROOM	3-BEDROOM
AVERAGE RENT FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION	\$1,250	\$1,500	\$1,950	\$2,240
MIN. INCOME FOR UNIT TO BE AFFORDABLE	\$52K	\$64K	\$83K	\$101K

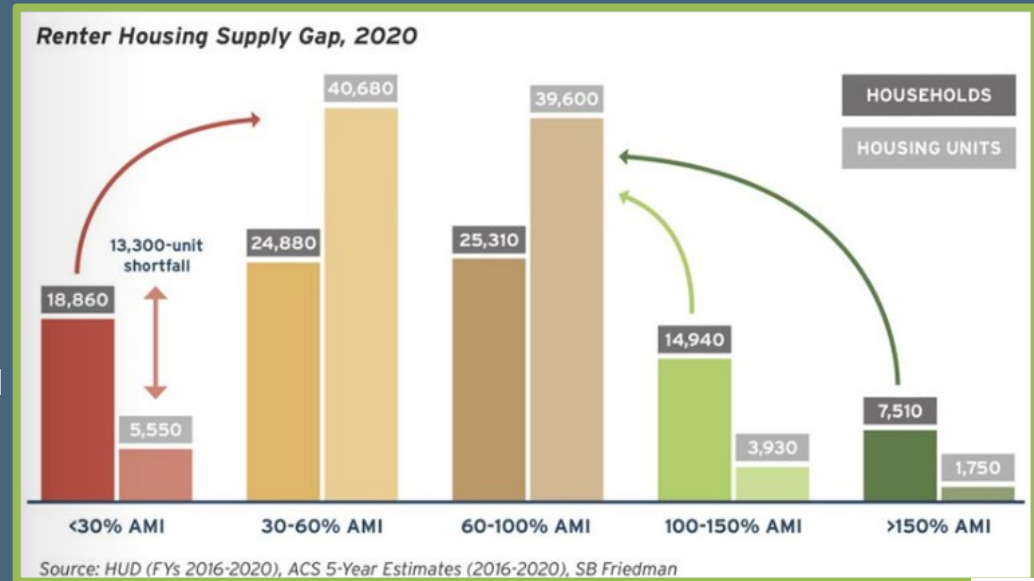
* Newer includes Market-Rate Units Built Since 2010

Source: CoStar, SB Friedman | Dane County Regional Housing Strategy

Competitive Rental Market

Housing Equity Gap

- Competitive market created where households who are able to afford higher rents are securing housing below 30% of their income and are willing to pay more for historically-cheaper units. This drives up local housing prices and prices lower income Households out of Madison and often out of Dane County.
- Dane County will need to produce 139,000 new housing units by 2040, or approximately 7,000 per year to address expected need and growth.
- At least 35,300 new rental units should be affordable to lower-income Households at or below 60% AMI.



Impact of Housing Crisis

Eviction Filings

Eviction Filings

	TOTAL
2019	27,026
2020	19,427
2021	17,727
2022	25,819
2023	28,196

Judgment

	TOTAL
2019	4,264
2020	2,254
2021	1,737
2022	1,621
2023	1,999

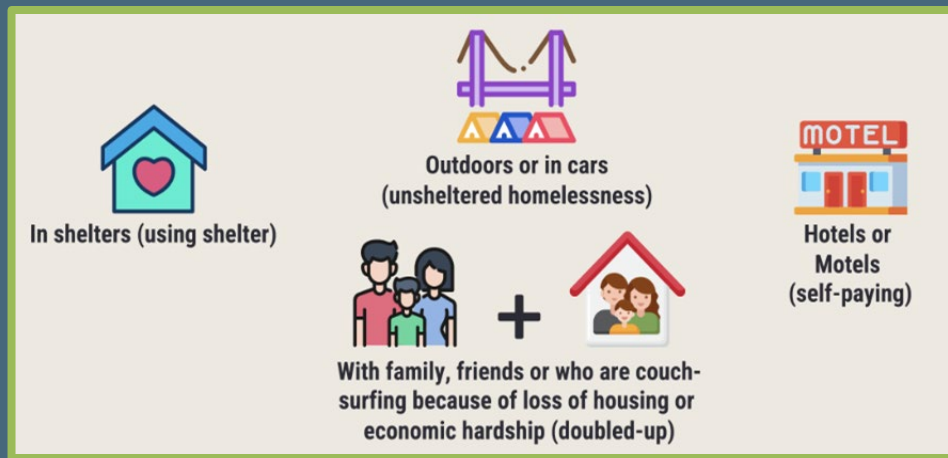
- In 2023, the number of eviction filings in Dane County nearly doubled compared to 2022. In 2024, the number of eviction filing rate rose another 9%.
- Currently, most small claims records are retained for **twenty years** after entry of judgment or final order. SCR 72.01(8), 72.01(9), and 72.01(10).
- This is **regardless of whether an eviction was granted and regardless of whether a money judgment was entered.**

*Re amendment to SCR 72.01(8), 72.01(9), and 72.01(10)

- Many Landlords report using Eviction filing as a form of **late rent-collection** and never intend to remove the tenant.
- Tenant Resource Center reports Quarterly and Annually
 - “Eviction is often concentrated at properties where disproportionate numbers of the tenants are in poverty and/or Black.”

When Housing Is Not Available

Homelessness Can Look Like..



Our system only captures numbers of people accessing shelter or calling our Coordinated Entry

2,724 Households Total served in Dane County Homeless System in 2023

2,414 (89%) used Emergency Shelter in Madison staying an average of 88 days

128 (9%) of those Exited to permanent destinations returned after an average of 121 Days

1,096 (85%) only ever used Shelter, disconnecting without further program connection/successful referral

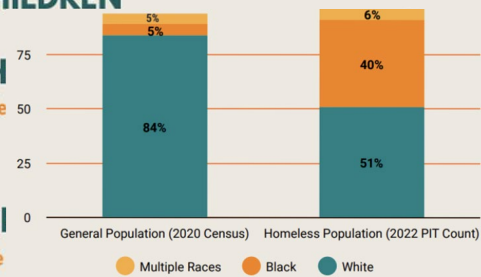
187 (17%) exited to a place considered permanent or long term

Housing Instability Inequity

Homelessness Demographics

701
 People Experience Homelessness
 on a given day ¹

- 36% HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN
- 21% HOMELESS 12+ MONTH
In the Past 3 Ye
- 12% UNSHELTERED
- 24% CHRONIC HOMELESSNI
Increased Since

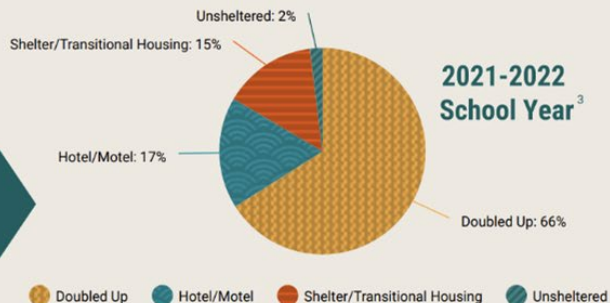


Black people are **8x overrepresented** in the homeless population relative to the general Dane County population.



55% Households with a Disabling Condition ²

1,507
 K-12 Students Experienced Homelessness ³



¹ data source: 2022 Point in Time (PIT) Count. This does not include households experiencing doubled up homelessness.
² data source: 2022 HMIS

³ data source: 2021-2022 Dept. of Public Instruction

Homeless Service System Performance

Current System Performance

1,165
+
121
 Households Currently Enrolled in the Homeless System of Care Who are Underserved*
 +
 Households Each Year Who Enroll in the System and Don't Get Served

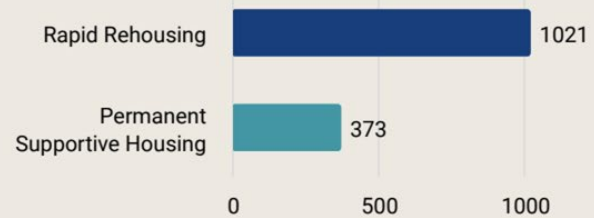
Giving people shelter or long stays in shelter only prolongs their homeless experience and increases costs to the community.
Permanent Housing is the solution to addressing and ending homelessness.

Total Underserved	1,165	This is the number of households currently underserved. This is calculated by counting the number of households enrolled in the homeless system of care and subtracting those that have exited or entered permanent housing. It does not include households who are not enrolled in the system.
Annual Inflow	1,461	This model assumes inflow will continue to remain the same. (Ideally, inflow will decrease as system improvements are made).
Total unserved population with unit loss and no additional changes made	1,340	To reach Functional Zero, this average number needs to match the inflow number.
Annual Unmet Need	121	Annual inflow minus annual outflow. With no action, this is the projected addition to the population each year.

How Much Housing is Needed?

Temporary funding for 431 permanent housing units may end
 ➔
 This would create 276 additional unserved households each year

Additional Permanent Housing Units Needed If Temporary Funding Ends:



*This number represents people who have enrolled in the homeless system of care (CES) who have not exited it for permanent housing. Because this number only includes people who have enrolled in the homeless system of care, it likely under represents the actual number of people experiencing homelessness in Dane County.

Plans Responding

Local Plans and Goals

- **Regional Housing Strategy:**
Roadmap to Solving Dane County's Housing Crisis 5 Year Strategic Plan
 - Plan Objectives focus on housing equity and stock
- **Dane County CoC:**
Dane Forward 5 Year Strategic Plan
 - Plan Objectives focus on community response to homelessness
- **Dane County Youth Action Board:**
Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness
 - Plan Objectives focus on community response to youth homelessness

The [City of Madison](#) and [Dane County](#) are leading the cross collaboration across county in partnership with many housing providers, nonprofits, funders, and partners!

Example Talking Points

- We all deserve a safe and stable place to call home [*safety*].
- Affordable housing ensures Wisconsin kids have the stability to bring their best, full selves to the classroom, that hard working folks can live in the communities they work in, and that all of our families have a roof over their head at night. [*opportunity*].
- No one should have to choose between keeping a roof over their head or putting food on the table [*cost of living/ equity*]
- Housing is a basic human need and ensuring every Wisconsinite has a stable living situation will make our state thrive and our economy prosper [*equity /opportunity*]

Affordable Housing is a gateway to equity, opportunity, and moving Wisconsin forward.

Value-based Language

Equity -

Housing is a basic human need

Safety -

Framing people first values
rather than profit

Opportunity -

Point to opportunity for Wisconsinites
and providing stability

Ways to Take Action

Take action in your community and advocate for legalized cannabis.

- Dane County's Housing Plans
 - [Regional Housing Strategy: Roadmap Action Plan](#)
 - [Dane Forward: 5 Year Strategic Plan \(Link to Participate!\)](#)
- Support the Homeless Services Consortium to continue launching innovative new projects, like our new youth homeless services system, which newly opened doors on Madison's first and only young adult system navigation center.

[Homeless Services Consortium](#)
[YAB Dane County Website](#)

From: [Faith Fitzpatrick](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: city council meeting agenda item 84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 6:05:48 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from fafitzpa@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear alders, I am opposed to the referendum and am appalled by how the Mayor is threatening our basic services and critical city staff positions against a increase in taxes. All of which could have been avoided with better fiscal planning.

Faith Fitzpatrick
5156 Spring Ct
District 19

From: [Greg & Kathy](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 7:59:13 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from gkathome@chorus.net. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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As tax payers in the city of Madison, the proposed property tax increase will be unacceptable. The State has set tax increase limits to protect property owners.

Why does the City want to skirt this protection? We are slowly being taxed out of the home and city that we love. Separately, the school referendums are totally out of line for the tax payers. I understand the need for good schools, but this is too much of a burden.

I can offer no real solutions, but taxing average people out of their homes is not the way to build a city for the future. Please consider every option and implement these options before raising our property taxes again! Sure our roads are awful, but I'd rather have some bumps and be able to live where I choose.

Thank you - Greg and Kathy Gebhard

From: [Samantha Cora Christian Haas](#)
To: [Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Comment in Support of Referendum: We need thriving libraries and parks
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 8:12:21 AM

You don't often get email from samanthacoraphoto@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello,

I have called Madison home for the last 10 years, and ever since starting a family during the pandemic I've become more aware of the importance of city services. At the top of the list are the beautiful libraries and parks, which would suffer tremendously by the proposed budget cuts. I support the \$22 million referendum, because I recognize how vital services like libraries and parks are to connecting our community with local resources and each other. We need "Third Places" like libraries and parks that are multicultural and multigenerational for our city to thrive. Please do not cut funding to the programs and people who make these spaces wonderfully welcoming, accessible, and inclusive.

Thank you,
Samantha Haas
5717 Hempstead Rd, Madison
920-248-2676

From: [Bill Hamilton](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum Resolution # 84443
Date: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 10:35:03 AM

You don't often get email from billhamilton@execs.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

We, as residents of the city, have no control or oversight of the spending or expenses incurred by the city. As our elected officials, you should work with the funds you have and develop a budget that provides essential city services, to the best of your ability. No one can fault you for making tough decisions. If that means postponing projects, not filling vacant positions, curtailing non-essential services, etc., then that is what should be done. Our property taxes are some of the highest around and should not be raised to cover budget shortfalls. Thank you for your service to our city. Bill

Ps- Is there any way the city can look at taxing or charging a fee to not-for-profit organizations that get the benefit of and use city services.

From: [noreply](#)
To: [City Budget](#)
Subject: Form submission from: Contact
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 3:46:27 PM

Tuesday, August 6, 2024 – 3:41pm

Name

Amelia Hansen

How would you like us to contact you?

Email

Email

amhansen97@gmail.com

Reason for Contact

Budget

Message

Dear City Finance Department,

I will support the referendum to increase the percentage cap on raising property taxes (agenda item #84443 on today's Madison Common Council agenda) to fund Madison public services, if the purpose of the increase is to fund all Madison public services except the Madison police. To clarify, I will support a referendum that clearly states that the increased percentage cap on raising property taxes will not allow any revenue collected from increased property taxes beyond the current percentage cap to be given to the Madison police department budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amelia Hansen
18 S Bedford St
Madison, WI 53703

From: [Eileen Harrington](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: [Madison Mayor](#)
Subject: Support for property tax referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 4:35:47 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from eilieh@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Alders,

I am writing to support the proposed referendum to increase Madison property taxes to fund city services. I favor this approach rather than the alternative severe reductions in municipal services. Given that this is item 68 on tonight's agenda, I am sending this message rather than registering to speak because I doubt I will be up that late!

Why do I support an increase in my property taxes for the City of Madison? Quite simply, this city provides a wide array of services and resources that make it a wonderful place to live. I was born and raised in Madison before moving away from 1976 to 2012. I have lived in several other cities. Whether talking about streets or parks, libraries or CARES, emergency services or public safety I could go on and on Madison shines. I am most willing to pay a modestly higher tax to maintain services. Of course, we would not be here but for the grossly unfair state revenue sharing formula.

Thank you for considering my views.

Eileen Harrington
4209 Veith Avenue
Madison
202-256-5337

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

From: [Patrick Hasburgh](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: We Can't Lose Essential City Services!
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 5:33:43 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from patrick.hasburgh@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Greetings Alders,

I don't have time to go into the MANY reasons why referendum resolution #84443 agenda item 68 needs to pass tonight, but I'm sure you all know the City is facing a crunch like they have never seen and something has to be done to try and prevent a budget disaster.

Thank you all for your time and service to our City!

--

Patrick Hasburgh
1801 Melrose St.
608.692.3459

From: [brenna.holzhauer](#)
To: [Finance](#); [Finance Committee](#)
Cc: [Peter Schroepfer](#)
Subject: City Budget / Libraries
Date: Friday, August 2, 2024 1:19:46 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from brennawells@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello,

I am writing to advocate for our libraries as I've heard there may be cuts to library hours and services. We have 2 young children, and we visit our library at least once a week - for books, play time, programs, and more. One of the reasons we bought our house was proximity to Pinney Library. We most often visit evenings and weekends when we are not at school/work/daycare. In addition to being a wonderful educational resource, it's one of the only free kid-friendly places to go in inclement weather. I know there are many factors at play in the city budget, but please consider library accessibility and amenities for busy families.

Thank you!

Brenna Holzhauer & Peter Schroepfer
405 Bowman Ave
Madison

From: [Maryanne Huttleston](#)
To: [Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 2:44:14 PM

[You don't often get email from maryannehuttleston@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Good afternoon.

I stand in opposition to the property tax referendum. You have purposely fed the media with information designed to scare citizens into thinking the only choice is approve an outrageous increase or lose the amenities that define Madison as a wonderful city. Lift the veil that is covering the layer of administrative fluff that is actually the basis for the increase. We as citizens live within our budgets the city must do the same.

Maryanne Huttleston
7 Honeylocust trail
Madison
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Shawn](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Comment/Suggestion on Budget Crisis
Date: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 10:34:59 AM

You don't often get email from shmlowry71@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Alders,

As a new resident to Madison, I must say that the property taxes here are insane already. Until recently moving to Madison, my girlfriend used to live in Lake Geneva in a gated, aviation-oriented neighborhood with a private airstrip called Lake Geneva Aire Estates. Her home was 4600 sq. ft. and the lot was 2.75 acres. She NEVER paid more than \$4,200 in property taxes in all the years she lived there. Now we live on the east side of Madison in a Veridian neighborhood with a 1600 sq. ft home on a postage stamp sized lot and my taxes are projected to be over \$8,000. What's wrong with this picture?

I have a solution to the problem, though. The city of Madison currently operates 9 libraries across the city. 9! Plus a mobile library. In this day and age of the internet, where every written work in history is no more than a click away, the city thinks that supporting 9 libraries is a sound idea? How about we cut those down to 4 libraries? One for each compass point of town? I've no idea of these libraries' budgets but closing 5 of them would save a ton of money.

Again, this is the age of the internet. There is no earthly reason to be hanging on to these relics of the past. Our libraries have become, like our city parks, overrun with addicts, homeless, and some pretty scary people. You know, the libraries and parks for our city's children and families to recreate in and enjoy? Not even safe for a school-aged kid to enter any longer. Supporting 9 ancient relics is completely insane.

Have we forgotten that inflation and the cost of living is already at record levels? Have we forgotten that most rent payments these days resemble mortgage payments? Have we forgotten that the cost to feed your family for a week has gotten way, way out of control? Have we forgotten what gasoline costs? Utilities? How much more blood can you get from the stone? This is the absolute wrong time to be asking for more tax money when we're already one of the highest taxed counties in one of the highest taxed states with fears of a recession yet to come. This is a losing proposition no matter what side of the aisle you happen to be on. Money is money to all people. And all people are hurting right now.

Oh, and don't worry about the students and the kids...they don't use the library anyway. They have a library in their pocket 24/7, rendering the brick and mortar library obsolete. Just look at the latest reading scores. Most of them have already been failed by our lackluster education system and cannot or do not read anyway.

To recap, close 5 libraries, eliminate those employees completely and the problem is fixed. 9 libraries in 2024 in a city this size is far too many. You are welcome. If you need me to help solve any other issues without fleecing people any more than they've been fleeced already, let me know. Happy to help.

Respectfully,
Shawn Lowry

From: [James Mand](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: AGENDA ITEM 68 OF BUDGET
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 7:19:03 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jimmand1948@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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TO ALL:

Cut the \$1.1 million taxpayers spend on the Police Civilian Oversight Board, a do-nothing agency created to solve a non-existent problem.

Five years after its creation, this sop to Defund-the-Cops Wokeness still can't write up a complaint form.

Sincerely,

James F. Mand

49C Golf Course Rd., Madison WI 53704

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: emosse@aol.com
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Item 84443 - (Oppose) Authorizing the Scheduling of a Referendum Relating to Exceeding the Municipal Property Tax Limits in the City of Madison
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 6:18:21 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from emosse@aol.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear City of Madison Alders,

I am writing to **oppose** the Scheduling of the Referendum Relating to Exceeding the Municipal Property Tax Limits in the City of Madison. I am a homeowner, who resides on the northside of Madison. I am a retiree, living on a fixed income. It is a struggle now to pay bills and stay afloat, and the thought of having additional taxes imposed is unbearable. It is unfair to place the burden to city services on the backs of homeowners.

The City of Madison has a Rainy-Day Fund. Unfortunately, I don't because with every opportunity the city, state and/or county are finding ways to make the property owner pay more for the services we receive. I believe the City of Madison and the residents should coalesce, and demand that the State of Wisconsin Legislature improve it's formula for shared revenue, and stop stranglehold the cities (especially Madison and Milwaukee), to the point that they have to raise taxes to be able to provide residents with the level of services we deserve and expect.

Gun violence is a big issue in most cities nowadays, and of course we want to be safe in our communities. That said. on many occasions, I see many police squad cars in a small radius when driving through various communities. If the city has a shortage of officers, how does it afford to have 3, 4, 5 squad cars at a single stop or within a mile of each other. I understand sometime this is necessary at accident scenes or when shots are fired, but other times it look like an overkill to me. If you must cut budgets, maybe the Police Department is a place to look at.

It is cost prohibitive for homeowners to keep up when every entity look to increase the tax burden on the homeowner, with every opportunity. And it's scary!

Alder Myadze, I **oppose** the scheduling of a referendum, relating to exceeding the municipal property tax limit, and I encourage you and fellow alders to vote **NO!**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

Sincerely,

Earnestine Moss
1729 Browning Road
Madison, WI 53704

From: jonnmns@juno.com
To: [City Budget](#)
Subject: Budget deficit
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 9:48:28 AM

You don't often get email from jonnmns@juno.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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To whom it may concern:

This morning I read an article by Alder Derek Field which was posted July 14, explaining causes of and option for the City Operating Budget Deficit for 2025.

He states, "The largest expense is public safety and public health, which makes up 42.5% of the budget (\$172.4 million). This includes police, fire, emergency medical services, and public health. The second largest expense is debt service, which is how the City pays back borrowing for capital projects for long-lasting improvements in the City's infrastructure (15.8%; \$63.9 million). The third largest expense is public works, which includes services like street and facility maintenance, trash pickup, snow clearance, parks, and more (12.4%; \$50.1 million)." I'm curious - where does the BRT project (\$195 million), the Public Market project and the construction of the Bartillon men's shelter (\$23 million) fit into these categories for the operating budget?

How much is the bike bridge over Hwy 30 costing the City and which category does that fit into?

I couldn't even find an up-to-date estimate on the cost of the Public Market. What is that number as of today and how much is the City responsible for?

In Alder Field's article, he says, "One of the main reasons (for the bigger gap) is because it will be the first year since 2021 that we will not have access to federal COVID relief funds. The City will have to make hard decisions about services and how to pay for them as a result." Did our City leaders think those COVID funds were going to last forever? What were those monies used for?

It appears to me that the City of Madison led by the Mayor has been irresponsibly spending money on unnecessary projects the past 3 years and is now trying to blame our day-to-day essential services for the deficit. What poor management and what a waste of our hard-earned taxpayer money.

Cindy Natvig

From: [Adam Nelson](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: speaking tonight
Date: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 10:35:06 AM

You don't often get email from adam@uxharbor.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hi, I registered to speak virtually at the common council meeting tonight. Is there a zoom link I should use for that?

Adam N

From: [Gregory Reed](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Madison Mayor](#)
Subject: Madison City Budget
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 5:41:19 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from gregoryr.reed@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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My name is Greg Reed and I currently serve as the Vice-Chair of the Community Development Authority with Alders Evers and Knox and live in Alder Vidavers district. I also had Alder Bennet as one of my real estate students in class several years ago as a real estate instructor in the Wisconsin Real Estate Program / Graaskamp Center.

I fully support authorizing the \$22 million referendum for the following reasons:

Instituting short-term budget cuts to balance the City of Madison's budget this upcoming fiscal year will have long-term negative implications on the future growth and development of this city. As home and property owners can readily attest, with each passing year of deferred maintenance, the long-term cost to repair or fix the issue mounts. What may yield near-term cost savings now will cost far more over the long-term.

Draconian budget cuts to operations, staffing and investment in public infrastructure now will result in long-term damage to the city's ability to grow and address the issues that accompany tremendous population and development growth during the most recent inflationary time period.

The prospect of different shared revenue formulas for Wisconsin cities could become a reality if the future composition of the Wisconsin State Assembly and State Senate shifts based on updated legislative districts. While the ability to see meaningful results from these revised shared revenue formulas could be years away, they offer a longer-term solution that could help thwart having to consider future budget referendums as currently proposed.

With 30+ years of commercial real estate experience in multiple jurisdictions nationwide, I have extensive budgeting experience and have had to make difficult budget decisions regarding raising revenues (rent increases) versus managing or reducing expenses. The positive multiplier effect of addressing sources of revenue always outweighs both the near and long-term effects of cutting expenses or in this case, city services.

I worked for nine years at Moody's Investors Service (now Moody's Ratings) conducting surveillance of commercial backed mortgage securities (CMBS). In that role I learned about ratings, methodologies, managing and measuring risk and how rating agencies view credit risk. Madison enjoys an enviably high credit rating right now and that rating is considered stable according to Moody's. Failure to address the looming budget shortfalls, with even a meaningful short-term solution, could jeopardize not only the stability of the current rating but also trigger future downgrades. By approving the \$22 million referendum now with the prospect of revised shared revenue formulas in future years, Madison could continue to enjoy a stellar credit rating for the foreseeable future and incur lower borrowing costs as a consequence.

Failure to authorize the \$22 million referendum could result in budget cuts that could thwart the amazing work of the Madison Police Department, the much needed infrastructure improvements planned and underway (including implementation of the new BRT system) and the quality of life that makes Madison such an exceptional place to live.

As a homeowner, I am willing to pay more to ensure that the City of Madison's finances are on solid footing and hope that you vote to authorize a referendum.

Thank you for your service to the City of Madison and for your consideration tonight.

Best regards,

Greg Reed
973-722-8144 cell

From: [noreply](#)
To: [City Budget](#)
Subject: Form submission from: Contact
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 1:51:48 PM

Tuesday, August 6, 2024 – 1:51pm

Name

Rachel Rovinsky

How would you like us to contact you?

Email

Email

rachorovinsky828@gmail.com

Reason for Contact

Budget

Message

Hi, I am a graduate student at UW-Madison and Madison resident. I am urging the City Finance Department and Common Council to approve the \$22 million referendum that would balance the budget and allow for continued support of public services, including our libraries. This money collected from property tax should go towards services that support our most marginalized communities. This means allocating more money towards libraries, fire department, garbage collection, and parks, NOT police, as police primarily harm BIPOC residents of Madison.

From: [Glori Sabin](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget Cuts
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 5:14:32 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from kdietzman@sbcglobal.net. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Dear Alders,

It was just recently brought to my attention that proposed cuts do NOT include the \$1.1 million taxpayers spend on the Police Civilian Oversight Board that is a do-nothing agency created to solve a non-existent problem. If I was aware of this before, I would have included it in a previous comment I sent to all of you earlier today. Remember, we are all watching and listening. Thank you

Glori D Sabin
10 Jubilee Cir
Madison Wi 53718
Email: kdietzman@sbcglobal.net

From: [Norman Sannes](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: [Steve Rammer](#)
Subject: BUDGET CUTS
Date: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 8:11:07 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from norman.sannes@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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CONSPICUOUSLY MISSING from the Mayor's proposal if the referendum does not pass is the \$1.1 million taxpayers spend on the Police Civilian Oversight Board, a do-nothing agency created to solve a non-existent problem.

Five years after its creation, this sop to Defund-the-Cops still can't write up a complaint form.

We retired, fixed income folks are being taxed out of our homes. That is a fact.

Norman Sannes, Madison

From: [Maggie Schnell](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: No Cuts to Library Services!
Date: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 10:17:06 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from mgschnell1014@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Madison alders,

I have been a resident of Madison for 10 years, and I am writing to urge you not to cut library funding. All of the arts programming is really worth it, and if evening and weekend hours are removed or limited there is a huge portion of Madison residents, including myself, who will simply no longer be able to use the libraries in person at all due to their work schedule. For example, libraries are the most convenient places to vote early absentee, or to turn in an early absentee ballot by mail, especially given the legal fights over drop boxes and potential delays in the USPS. Cutting library hours will simply make it more difficult for people in Madison to vote, especially for disabled folks, single parents, those with inflexible schedules or who are working multiple jobs.

Library services in general are the most essential for those of our neighbors who are in the most vulnerable of circumstances. An extra \$20 a month from property owners seems a more than reasonable price to pay for what Madison Public Libraries offer to this community.

Thank you for your consideration,
Maggie Schnell

From: [LeeAnn S Sinclair](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Regarding upcoming possible referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 4:55:26 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from lassinclair@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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To Madison City Alders,

I am a citizen of Madison who is concerned about climate change. I believe our city staff has done impressive work to create and implement a climate sustainability plan for our city. When it comes to addressing the climate crisis, we all know that we have passed the point of taking no action.

Though I would prefer alternative ways to address our city budget deficit, I am asking you to carefully examine the referendum resolution (Legistar 84442) on August 20 because to balance the upcoming budget without a referendum, the city would need to make significant cuts in services in 2025, which would also no doubt result in employee layoffs. Budget cuts presumably would effect the funding for the climate sustainability plan.

With a referendum, Madison will be able to continue actively working to reduce the on-going effects of climate change.

Without it, the future cost to our residents to cope with increasingly devastating climate events will be higher.

Please carefully consider the long-term consequences of delaying this referendum. Thank you.

LeeAnn Sinclair
1516 Langley Lane
Madison, WI 53718

From: [Mikael Snitker](#)
To: [Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Time to cut costs, and get a grip
Date: Wednesday, July 24, 2024 7:32:05 AM

You don't often get email from snitker@msn.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Greetings,

Year over year taxes have spiraled, without relief for owners and renters alike. When will the city get a grip, on its spending, and debt problem—and start respecting the heavy tax and rent burdens faced by each family?

Instead—try living within your means first, before asking for more money to fill in the gaps. And, as these things go, every tax dollar collected is a dollar from the mouth of a family, aging resident, veterans, people with disabilities, and average people—and some people who can least afford it.

In case there is any doubt—I will be voting 'no' on the City's referendum-- as a vote of conscience. In my 34 years of voting—this is my first no vote for a funding increase request--ever--and a funding request which couldn't come at a worse time for residents. This includes many 'yes' votes in Portland, Oakland, and Santa Cruz , all with high costs of living. Not this time.

Think what you want-but it's time to make do with what you have, stop making excuses & reckless spending, talk with your finance people, and ask taxpayers--they will tell you the alarm they have, too. Maybe you are alarmed as well.

But, it doesn't take a doctor to see that the patient is gravely ill.

Mikael Snitker, PhD

From: [noreply](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: [All Alders] city budget
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 5:36:49 PM

Recipient: All Alders:

Tuesday, August 6, 2024 – 5:35pm

Robert Tews
4901 Buckeye Rd

Madison, Wisconsin. 53716 No, do not contact me. All Alders city budget After 2 years of doing almost nothing maybe you should get rid of the Police Civilian Oversight Board and save \$1million.

From: [JW](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Regarding the property tax referendum
Date: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 7:03:24 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from madcitymail@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello, we are sorry we are late in sending our input, but we were not in town.

We disagree with the additional 22-million-dollar funding, even though it may involve making cuts to the operating budget. Homeowners and private companies are facing the same choices and decisions, in times of change. The economy and inflation, including layoffs at our employers or cut backs on hours, has caused us to tighten our belts at home too. We just don't have it to spare.

In good times, it is easier to absorb financial requests like you are asking, but it is not those times right now, and we fear what is coming in the next few years after watching our 40i K's dive this past week.

You need to make these hard choices like we do at home. So do it and don't burden those who pay a lot of taxes already. Decide on NEEDS versus WANTS. Maybe those flush years of federal government aid have made it too easy to fund everything, but now it's time to get back to reality, like we have had to do.

The stimulus packages and covid aid were like opioids, once you start, you are hooked, and it's hard to stop. The American people have suffered the same fate from being rescued and are now entitled and expectant of constant bailouts and sit with their hands out. They, like government do not understand sometimes you have to sacrifice in tough times and grow stronger as a result, but in fact they are now much weaker and can not handle normal fluctuations and stresses in life...and want to be rescued. Seems that is the same with the city government. You can't have your cake and eat it all the time, especially when you can't pay for the cake.

Paying fair taxes is a social obligation and is right, but overspending and extorting taxpayers when times are tough and programs can be forced to budget or be put on hold until funds are there is right too—but forcing people to pay more when taxes are already the highest in the state is immoral, unethical and frankly stealing.

So, do the right thing. We watched the testimonies on the news last night and realize the majority were city workers who may be affected through job cutbacks and offloading of more work on them, a loss of some nice conveniences but not necessities for the public, but when

times get better and other projects are done and come off or decrease on the city's budget sheet, you can add money back to projects, social programs and new projects as it come in.

A budget is a balance of incoming revenues and correlates with expenditures. So overshooting the budget with over spending does not give license to lay the cost on hard working already highly taxed residents who are all effected by the last few years of soaring inflation in all life costs with dwindling pay checks. We all love to dream of living and providing the ideal for all in Madison, but now is not the time to pressure the taxpayers into submitting to your shortfall. Manage your budget like we do. We wonder how businesses will be affected when people have discretionary money to keep their doors open.

Do the right thing. It is so easy to sit in the council chambers and write your dream lists, pet projects and agendas, but before you just pass the buck, try having more public meetings in your districts, many of us are busy working or are not able to come to you when you decide to have meetings, so you don't hear the masses, just the benefactors who live down town and are served will by the changes you are forcing on the rest.

Tom and Liz

Sent from [Outlook](#)

From: [dvm222](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: \$22 million referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 5:31:06 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from dvm222@charter.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello,

As a property owner in madison for over 30 years, I feel you need to find the money some where else and not the property owners.

I have been planning and living a life that fits in my budget. Now that I am retired, adding to my property taxes seems a little much to me. Try raising corporate taxes for once or do without as many of us do.

If you can't find the money else where, then services will need to be cut back. Go back to work and figure this out Mayor Satya.

Thank you,
Deb V.

Sent from my Galaxy

From: [Kathy Viets](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget/referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 6:15:04 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from kaviets@charter.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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I was once very proud to live in Madison. It was a great place to live.

It is no longer and I am greatly concerned by this proposed budget and referendum.

From: [j.w](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Tax meeting
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 5:36:32 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jgwittwer@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Thank you for the meeting on this issue. I would like to voice my opinion against the tax increase especially in my district in the Williamson Street area. I have been living in this area for 35 years so I've seen the decline in our neighborhood.. The Williamson Street area does not seem to get the basic city resources that are common in most or all other districts.

There was recently a murder, a half a block down from my home yet the police presence has not increased on Friday and Saturday nights when these people party on the street.

I heard there is now a dedicated Willy Street police liaison yet they have not reached out or shown their face in this area.

We need police officers walking down Williamson Street on Friday and Saturday nights 11pm until 3 AM to see the crime

The large amount of street people drinking and sleeping on the sidewalk and in the bushes, makes it hard to get people to move into our rental units. Telirium the co-op the social justice center, and a few others bad players need to work with the police to deal with this issue. They are the cause of so many desperate people gathering here.

In my 35 years here, I have never seen a speed trap on Willy Street yet they are all over the city and other neighborhoods. People drive well over 100 miles an hour here regularly and with no police around there's no reason for them to stop.

Please pull over the vehicles with the mega sound systems and give them a ticket!!!! my home shakes from their music every 15 minutes all day and night.

In conclusion, the actions of the city in the neighborhood I love are just driving the good people away and raising taxes just sends a message get out.

We don't use the schools or the police or most of the city resources yet we pay a huge amount of our income in taxes .

I hope you respectively act on the issues I have raised here.

Thanks, Willy st Homeowner

From: [Sally Young](#)
To: [Liz D.](#)
Cc: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Re: Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 4:47:19 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from sallyyoung@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Thanks, yours was too. And you spurred me on to actually write it and send it rather than just thinking about it.

Sally R. Young, Ph.D., LPC
Lifeline Connections, LLC
5900 Monona Drive, #305
Madison, WI 53716
608.219.2277

On Tue, Aug 6, 2024, 2:00 PM Liz D. <liz.winter.dannenbaum@gmail.com> wrote:
Excellent! ♡♡

On Tue, Aug 6, 2024, 11:41 AM Sally Young <sallyyoung@gmail.com> wrote:
To: Madison City Council

In the past, Madison residents have been generous with voting to voluntarily increase their property taxes. However, I would like to go on record as being against the city's upcoming referendum. I am on a fixed income that is not keeping up with inflation. We have an ambitious mayor and I have not seen the city council doing much to restrain her ambitions. It is no surprise that the state has unfairly targeted us with a paltry amount of state funding. It is no surprise that the pandemic funds would end soon. So, why did this 'crisis' materialize in the past year? Why were we not working harder to balance the budget by forgoing wonderful, forward-looking but unnecessary projects two, three, four years ago?

Sally Young

4112 Major Ave.

"One of the most dangerous illusions of the climate crisis is that the technology of modern life makes us invincible...our bubble of invincibility is far more fragile than we know."

Jeff Goodall author of *The Heat Will Kill You First: Life and Death on a Scorched Planet*.

From: [James Bucket](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Fiscal Responsibility
Date: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 1:20:04 PM

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Greetings,

Growing up in the 50s, 60s and 70s a phrase often heard from my elders was, "Money doesn't grow on trees". While it might be a cliché saying by today's standard the message is still relevant. You learn fiscal responsibility by living within a budget and saving money whenever you can.

The Mayor and City Council of Madison continue to live under the impression that whenever they want to spend more money on programs their money tree is city taxpayers. Reducing expenditures should be a priority investigation; not threatening the loss of basic services if city residents don't agree to an egregious increase in our property taxes.

The last ten years of my career at UW Madison was dealing with the harsh reality of serial budgets that would never increase while the cost of serials continued to skyrocket. The only option was to cut subscriptions in order to keep within budget. There was no money tree or citizens to tap into and the cuts occurred, year after year.

I will not vote in favor of any tax referendum increases. The City of Madison needs to learn how to live within its means by reducing unnecessary expenses and cutting costs on things that are not essential city services.

Regards,

Jim Bucket
Madison, WI

From: [Mike](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: No to \$22 vote million tax hike
Date: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 2:19:19 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from mrcarrusa@aol.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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I will vote no for any tax hike referendum. The shortfall caused by mismanagement and waste should be made up by cuts and fundraising.

The Mayor has 4 Deputy Mayors. The President of the United States has only one Vice President. Deputy Mayor positions should be cut 1 - 3 full positions, not the half position the 1/2 position I have heard proposed. Cutting full positions save the most due to not funding benefits and retirements for half time positions.

Garbage and recyclables could be every other week with 26 weeks garbage and 26 weeks recyclables. This would cut garbage collection 33%.

Libraries could be closed Sundays. As for night hours the other 6 days would have alternating early / late hours. 3 days with 9 am - 5 pm hours and 3 days 1 pm - 9 pm hours. Extra funding could come from fundraising "Friends of Libraries".

Social and Community Programs: Increase fundraising from private sources. Many programs I am sure already rely on the private sources of funding.

The Mayors office and City Council Members should not threaten citizens to make cuts in community safety, such as Police and Fire services.

Michael Carr
2137 Commonwealth Ave
Madison, WI 53726

From: [Sara Meredith](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [council](#); [Finance](#)
Subject: Support for Agenda Item #84443
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 8:38:10 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from smeretactics@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Good morning Alders, Common Council Members and City Finance Department,

Emailing to let you know of my support for having a \$22 million referendum to increase property taxes \$20 a month rather than cutting city services - including the library, parks, and elimination of arts grants (to name a few)

I'm also emailing in my capacity as an artist AND full time volunteer of arts non- profit Communication. We believe cuts to many of the city services like the library would have an unfair impact on the city's poorest and disabled residents.

We want our city to be accessible and if that means those who can afford homes and properties pay a bit extra to ensure vital and most accessible city services remain available - then that is what needs to happen.

Thank you for your time and dedication!

photo  **Sara Meredith**
Communication Shop Manager, Artist Smere Tactics
She Her Hers| smeretactics@gmail.com
www.smeretactics.com


Create your WiseStamp [email signature](#)



From: [Emily Reynolds](#)
To: [Finance](#); [council](#); [LI Administration](#); [mpl-libraryboard](#)
Subject: Please Support our Libraries with Option C
Date: Monday, August 5, 2024 8:39:01 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from emilymargrit@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello,

My name is Emily Reynolds and I live in District 2.

Today I went to Central Library with a bag full of VHS tapes and audio cassettes I kept from when we cleared my mom's house out after she passed away. A library worker named Sean taught me how to use the digital archiving equipment there so I could digitize these precious memories and have them forever. Sean walked me through not just the technical stuff, but also best practices for archiving. We chatted about what kids learn in school today and that he spells his name the same way as my brother. I might never talk to Sean again, but his teaching me to digitize my tapes will be with me forever, and make it possible to easily share with relatives living in other states. The library will let me come--for free--and spend 3 hours at a time digitizing what I have using their equipment--for free! My brother's kids can watch him play Timon in his middle school's production of The Lion King from way back in 1994. I can finally listen to the tape my mom labelled "Emily, age 4, freestyles the colors of the rainbow for 20 minutes."

This is just one of many things our libraries do for us. Libraries are a foundation of a healthy community. They are a critical service and supporting them shows we care about people, learning, helping, teaching, growing, and togetherness. They are already struggling and stretched thin and can't take more cuts. *We must* fund our libraries, and not at the expense of Youth Services or Bubbler staff.

I am writing in strong support of Option C on agenda item #84443 to support Youth Services and programming and the Bubbler. I have registered my support officially, but I wanted to email you too. There are immeasurable stories about how libraries have helped our community from others out there, and this was one of mine.

Thank you,

Emily

From: [Michael J Wish](#)
To: [council](#); [Mayor](#)
Subject: \$22 Million Dollar Referendum
Date: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 9:22:54 AM

You don't often get email from mjwish46@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Madison Alders and Mayor:

I have never been this upset about a budget, ever. Where was the sense of sustainability, as you glibly banter about, as the lot of you overspent and decimated our resources, like drunken sailors. **Shame on each and everyone of you!** A high school freshman with a completed introductory business course, could have managed costs and revenues and balanced the budget better than any of you. Your action in incurring the \$22 million deficit isn't criminal, but should be. You were entrusted with managing the City's resources with responsibility to arrive at a balanced budget year to year. You failed miserably and now you want the taxpayers to bail you out !!! Enough said.

Taxpayer bailout, without a flat moratorium on new spending is a joke. You need your powers to spend, managed by a third party or a commission, similar to the unneeded police and fire oversight commission, or a special master with staff to curb the ravenous spending by the City. There a start to managing the budget get rid of redundant functions. If the Police and Fire Commission can't do the job, replace them with people who can.

I see that if we don't knuckle under, existing services and people will be cut. Let me see existing positions, 5 assistant mayors would be a start, pay cuts at the top positions mayor, alders, managerial positions, etc. Nothing about cuts in unimplemented new services, or projects or that are on the table, or a needed mandated moratorium on new spending . Someone must take an axe to new buildings, and other large expenditures items. If I had the power you would fire all of you for impotent and follow-the-leader-behavior, follow the lemmings over the cliff, that has placed the City in the position its in !!!

Sincerely,

Michael J Wish

From: [chrissy ary](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: tax money
Date: Thursday, August 8, 2024 12:24:43 PM

You don't often get email from lunchlady20101@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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As a retired person I feel that the money from our taxes should support all those who are citizens and need help and take care of the services that they are to cover. Why not have the people who want to sponsor undocumented families do so. The newcomers are stretching all of our services to the max. I have no one in school so I do not want to support a school system that is failing. As a small addition.. why not have the people who have bicycles get a license plate or tag for a few \$\$ to help pay for the new bike paths that I will never use. But I also would like to see more police and have them unshackled to enforce the laws on the books which would do a great deal to protect against crimes that effect the innocent. Hold people accountable for their actions and that may make Madison a place ALL would like to live in. DO NOT RAISE MY TAXES. Thanks (EVEN THOUGH I KNOW MY WISHES WILL BE DISMISSED!!!!)

From: [tom Beck](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Re: Over budget \$\$
Date: Thursday, August 8, 2024 2:42:56 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from cnse55@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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18 people, no replies, sad.
Thanks,
Tom

Protect our 1st. & 2nd. Amendment rights
FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

On Aug 5, 2024, at 12:14 PM, tom Beck <cnse55@yahoo.com> wrote:

to solve the budget problem, stop scare tactics about cutting FD & PD cuts. Start common sense , reduce the unnecessary positions.
See below, why does the mayor need to travel overseas?

Tom

Protect our 1st. & 2nd. Amendment rights
FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

Begin forwarded message:

From: tom <cnse55@yahoo.com>
Date: June 19, 2024 at 10:05:37 AM CDT
To: City of Madison <district10@cityofmadison.com>, district1@cityofmadison.com, district11@cityofmadison.com, district12@cityofmadison.com, district2@cityofmadison.com, district3@cityofmadison.com, district5@cityofmadison.com, district6@cityofmadison.com, district7@cityofmadison.com, district8@cityofmadison.com, district9@cityofmadison.com, City of Madison <district4@cityofmadison.com>, district14@cityofmadison.com, district16@cityofmadison.com, Mayor <mayor@cityofmadison.com>, Our Rep <district15@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Over budget \$\$
Reply-To: tom <cnse55@yahoo.com>

Easy fix:

1. eliminate both asst.mayors
2. Mayor takes 10% pay cut, travel budget cut 20%
3. Alder's take 10 % pay cut
4. All DEI positions cut

**Tom,
Protect the 1st amendment, stop the censorship Google,
FB, Twitter, MSM!**

From: [Beverly Bednar](#)
To: [All Alders](#); TCTVoice@captimes.com
Subject: Nov. 5 Referendum
Date: Thursday, August 8, 2024 2:37:29 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from garnette85@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

I am not voting for the referendum or any referendum that raises taxes. Are you kidding me? This is so disgusting I can hardly stand it. Why did the city spend \$50 million on a bus system that goes nowhere? They ruined the bus system that was in place. Now it takes me 2 bus rides to get anywhere and then they don't even take you as far as the damn malls. You end walking all over, in bad weather, hot weather, cold weather, rain. So this is why the city is asking for another \$25 million, because they already spent \$50 on the dumbest bus system I ever encountered.

I rode the bus for more than 50 years. I knew global warming was on its way 50 years ago. This is my reward for riding the bus all these years; that it would take 2 buses to get anywhere that one bus took me before. I see thousands of cars go by on University Avenue when one bus alone goes by. This is the reward I get for taking all those bus rides and never owning a car.

You all have a lot of nerve asking for \$25 million when you already spent \$50 million on a terrible bus system and no one has mentioned this. Why are you out \$25 million? And by the way, I take the buses as little as possible and every bus driver I have spoken to has agreed with me how bad the bus system is.

You already knew the city would be out \$25 million when you paid \$50 for the stupid bus system. You knew it; why did you do it? And now you want the taxpayers to pay for your colossal mistake.

Beverly Bednar
Madison Wisconsin

From: [linda.carr](mailto:linda.carr@cityofmadison.com)
To: al-lalders@cityofmadison.com
Subject: Budget comments

Dear Council,

I for one will be voting NO for your referendum this fall. The mayor has spent without consideration for the future. Our property taxes are already very high, as we all know. With high taxes and inflation, and a fixed income, we have had to make daily sacrifices to stay afloat. The city could do the same. I do not appreciate the scare tactics of cutting police and fire. I think there are many other places to start.

1. The mayor's staff. Seriously, one chief of staff, 4 deputy mayors, 3 coordinators, one assistant and 2 clerks. One deputy mayor and one coordinator could go. I'm thinking back on all the staffing cuts I experienced in health care - lean staff.
2. Trash collection every other week.
3. Cut back on street sweepers. Could also reduce brush collections.
4. Trim city street workers - usually there are 1-2 watching while just 1 does the actual work.
5. Increase parking fees, tickets

I'll stop short of having out of town workers pay toll to use our roads. I live near many schools and the UW campus and watch daily September - June the amount of drivers from surrounding towns using our streets and parking. FYI...they are not riding the bus, but rather driving in individual cars causing more congestion.

Thank you,
Linda Carr

From: [Jeanette Clawson](#)
To: [All Alders](#); agarfield@captimes.com
Subject: tax hike
Date: Thursday, August 8, 2024 3:36:36 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from clawsonj15@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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To whom it may concern,
I read about the tax hike in the Cap Times and I'm curious about what a 22M hike would look like to me. Taxes in Madison are significant, but I believe that it is worth the investment. I can afford to pay some more, but I'm concerned about what the increase would be. Is there any discussion of future financial support from the federal government for any of the services listed? What options have been explored to sustain the current systems? Don't local businesses have a responsibility to the community to take on some of the expense?

The services that are listed to be cut are vital to what makes Madison a great place to live. In particular, the CARES program, police programs, bus services and library hours are vital to the care of the most vulnerable population in our community. However, raising taxes puts more people at risk of economic insecurity. Our country has abandoned so many people and I am proud to live in a community that strives to live up to its progressive ideals. I look forward to more discussion on this important matter. Thank you for your service.
Jeanette Clawson
3430 Richard St.53714

From: [Fields, Debbie](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: FW: Budget
Date: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 4:51:25 PM

Alders,

The following message was received in the Council Office inbox.

Best,
Debbie Fields
Program Assistant 2
Common Council Office
608-266-4297

From: Jerry Darda <jerryxdarda@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 4:11 PM
To: council <council@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Budget

You don't often get email from jerryxdarda@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Madison Alders

Please consider serious cuts to the Community Development Division proposed budget before going to referendum at a time when MMSD is doing the same.

In addition there are other areas to cut such as the police oversight group which do nothing!

And make some common sense judgements distinguishing WANTS from NEEDS. Don't cut basics, police, fire, trash, etc. and don't threaten use with across the board cuts to these basics services when you have significant Wants available to cut most notably in the CDD.

And thanks to alder Vidaver for her transparency, timely, and regular communications.

Jerry & Bonnie Darda

From: [Fields, Debbie](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: FW: Budget
Date: Thursday, August 8, 2024 10:30:06 AM

Alders,

Following please find a message that was received in the Council Office inbox.

Best,
Debbie Fields
Program Assistant 2
Common Council Office
608-266-4297

From: Jerry Darda <jerryxdarda@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 8, 2024 8:03 AM
To: council <council@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Fwd: Budget

You don't often get email from jerryxdarda@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Jerry Darda <jerryxdarda@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Aug 8, 2024 at 8:02 AM
Subject: Re: Budget
To: Figueroa Cole, Yannette <district10@cityofmadison.com>

Alder Cole,

Thank you for your response to our budget concerns. Obviously, you and the other alders are much more privy to budget issues than we are. However as housing providers with 3 buildings (10 apartment units) all on the near West side, it pains me to have to raise rents on my hard working tenants, and get blamed by city officials as being greedy when the city council has a significant share of responsibility here by constantly raising property taxes with increased spending on arguably some non essential programs.

I suggest the following in terms of cutting the CDD budget

1) Look at using schools (after school hours) and libraries for senior, child care, and

youth services. Cut some of the \$8.5 there.

2) Cut some of the \$3M for small business employment and job training--what the heck are the schools and Madison college doing in this regard.

3) \$1.3 M community centers--use school buildings

4) \$15.5M FTE's We have no idea what this is, but it can't be more important than safety and sanitation (police fire, trash)

Simply, get creative on sharing public facilities where possible as well as eliminating non essential services

Certainly the police oversight (do nothing) committee can be eliminated immediately that's an \$0.5 M start

Every organization has waste and non essential expenses. We request you look hard at these before going to the referendum.

It's time to get Religious organizations (churches, synagogues, mosques) involved in solving some social problems such as providing meeting places for seniors and youth--and out of government hands.

At this point, although, certainly not a model for prudent budgeting either, we will support the MMSD referendums but not the city's referendum because we believe there is too much waste and we resent the implication (threats) of cutting essential services.

Thank you for your consideration to our request.

Jerry & Bonnie Darda
15 Sturbridge Circle
Madison WI 53717
608-219-1623----Jerry's cell

On Wed, Aug 7, 2024 at 6:25 PM Figueroa Cole, Yannette
<district10@cityofmadison.com> wrote:

Hello!

Thank you for your email! The Community Development Division has a general fund budget of about \$15.6 Million which is 3.8% of the City Budget and about 45 Full time positions. What are you suggestion we eliminate? The Senior Center,

Neighborhood Centers, support to DAIS, Unidos, the shelter, Daycare?

Once your services selection is eliminated, do you expect MPD service calls to increase or decrease, while keeping their same budget? MPD's Budget is ~\$91M or 22% of the City Budget

2024 Budget in Millions	Example of Services (not inclusive list)
\$2.8	Renters, tenant resource services, rehabbing dwelling units to convert to low-income home ownership and rentals, the shelter
\$8.5	Senior Services, Senior Center, Childcare, MOST (out of school time), domestic violence, other VP youth services
\$3	Small businesses, young and adult employment, and job training
\$1.3	Community centers, and non-profit facility loans
\$15.6	45 FTE's

Looking forward to your input.

Thanks,
Yannette

Alder Figueroa Cole
[Subscribe for Updates](#)

From: Fields, Debbie <DFields@cityofmadison.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 4:51 PM
To: All Alders <allalders@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: FW: Budget

Alders,

The following message was received in the Council Office inbox.

Best,
Debbie Fields
Program Assistant 2
Common Council Office
608-266-4297

From: Jerry Darda <jerryxdarda@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 4:11 PM
To: council <council@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Budget

You don't often get email from jerryxdarda@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Madison Alders

Please consider serious cuts to the Community Development Division proposed budget before going to referendum at a time when MMSD is doing the same.

In addition there are other areas to cut such as the police oversight group which do nothing!

And make some common sense judgements distinguishing WANTS from NEEDS. Don't cut basics, police, fire, trash, etc. and don't threaten use with across the board cuts to these basics services when you have significant Wants available to cut most notably in the CDD.

And thanks to alder Vidaver for her transparency, timely, and regular communications.

Jerry & Bonnie Darda

From: [Brian King](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Against Tax Increase
Date: Thursday, August 8, 2024 7:39:11 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from brian king5@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

The city is gradually pushing us away from being a resident here. We are retired on a fixed income. No pension or health insurance subsidy by former employers do we enjoy. City, School and County property taxes as a proportion of our income have gone up every year that we have lived here - over 10 years. Get on with slimming down the city government. No tax increase or school referendum will get our support.

From: [Josh Olson](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Raising the Levy Limit is a Must
Date: Thursday, August 8, 2024 7:45:06 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jo.olson03@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Hi Alders,

After reviewing the potential cuts proposed by city agencies (<https://www.cityofmadison.com/news/2024-08-05/update-on-2025-budget-process>), seeing other cities struggling with increased operating budgets and similarly going to referendum, and reviewing the data showing inflation and home values being markedly up compared to property taxes I've been convinced that we need to raise the levy limit.

It's not our fault that the State placed restrictions on property taxes. It's not our fault that we succeed compared to other cities, towns, and villages in Wisconsin so we receive less state funding. But we have to play within the existing rules.

There are only a few items on the budget cutting list I'm only mildly okay with cutting. Many of these would make me very upset, some of them are non-negotiable with how I live. It is worth a \$200 increase in property taxes a year to ensure we don't lose those services.

For alders that are looking for solutions to budget restrictions, the housing shortage, and rising property taxes that people with fixed incomes are worried about affording: let's build more housing, specifically small and more inexpensive housing. The City itself can't build it all, but we would do ourselves a great service in allowing developers (big and small) find opportunities to build Missing Middle homes to upgrade our low density, high maintenance cost single family detached homes that don't fit well in a city. That means updating the zoning codes so we can build more in traditionally SFH-only districts, which are bleeding us dry (see https://datarocks.github.io/madison_parcel_data/). If someone can turn a large, 5 bedroom SFH with only 2 occupants looking to downsize into a new duplex or triplex, let's make it easy for them to do that. And let's ensure the people looking to downsize have options so they can stay in the neighborhood too. That means increasing all kinds of housing supply and it means relying less on "planned and finished development" of communities and more dynamic, adaptable growth.

If we do this, if we build more in Madison with homes that thicken our neighborhoods, increasing quality of life, we can also make a more financially resilient city.

Please raise the levy limit and please look towards making a more prosperous city by letting people build more. Thank you.

Josh Olson

From: [hregnier](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: property tax increase, again
Date: Thursday, August 8, 2024 7:54:40 AM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from hsoregnier@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Please help us understand how, as retirees who worked for over 35 years and are on fixed incomes, are supposed to come up with well over \$1,000 per month to cover property taxes with the amount constantly increasing. And why are our property taxes so much higher than almost any other city in the U.S.? This system is absolutely not working and we are constantly asked to approve property tax increases to fund schools. Where is the money going? How does it compare to places like Cambridge, Massachusetts where property values are very high but property taxes are 75% LOWER?

I am happy to pay my fair share of taxes but there seems to be no end in sight here with no explanation as to why our property taxes are among the very highest in the country.

Thank you for reading -

Henny Regnier

From: [noreply](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: [All Alders] \$22 million proposed referendum
Date: Sunday, August 11, 2024 6:31:31 PM

Recipient: All Alders:

Sunday, August 11, 2024 – 6:30pm

Jane Albert

she/her

2144 West Lawn Ave.

Madison, Wisconsin. 53711 Yes, by email. jalbert4410@gmail.com All Alders \$22 million proposed referendum I will not even consider voting for this until I see a list of belt tightening measures Mayor Satya will implement in her own office!

The proposed referendum hurts children, families and the most vulnerable of our citizens.

From: [Nino Amato](#)
To: [All Alders](#); [Mayor Nino Amato](#)
Subject: 2025 Budget | Referendum & Proposed Budget Cuts
Date: Sunday, August 11, 2024 9:51:05 PM

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.



“Cut the Mayors bloated Staff by 50% & Cut the Mayors out of state travel = Funding for the Goodman Community Pool”

Community Pool.
— Nino Amato

From: [Joan bellkaul](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: UPCOMING REFERENDUM ON GARGANTUAN PROPERTY TAX INCREASE
Date: Friday, August 9, 2024 10:21:23 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from joanbellkaul@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

I, together with many other property owners in the City of Madison, am poised to vote **NO** on the upcoming referendum. I am not alone. City of Madison residents on the ND General site are expressing outrage at the prospect of adding so much more to their already-crippling burden of city property taxes.. It is an "all-the-traffic-will-bear" situation this city is facing.

Decision Makers in the City of Madison need to **halt** ALL NON essential, "frill and pet-project /showboat" spending; **and, rather**, use the same kind of careful, budgeting and discretion on the use of our hard-earned taxpayer money, just as **we** have been forced to do as individuals, in the face of rising, unprecedented cost of living expenses, in order to remain solvent.

And when election time rolls around again, you can be sure that your stand on this issue will be a key factor in your re-election.

Sincerely,

Joan Bell-Kaul, Lead
NEXTDOOR: Environmental, Nature and Wildlife Group, Admin. and Originator (1,125+ current membership).

From: [Books24u](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Re: No to a possible city budget referendum in November
Date: Friday, August 9, 2024 4:22:18 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from books24u@aol.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Hello Alders,

While reading about a possible \$22M city referendum for the November election in the Cap Times, a loud jet at the airport, most likely an F - 35 was taking off. True story. My thoughts were that at the federal level too much money is going to the War/Military Industrial Complex. At \$100M each for an F - 35, this is an example of too much money going somewhere else other than to on the ground funding to keep Madison great.

With Madison homeowners currently facing already high assessments, I'm planning on voting "no" on a referendum if one is placed on the ballot in November for a \$22M tax hike.

The city can always look at implementing more integrity and basic grit to efficiency measures that are helpful for all departments. The proposed cuts are bad for safety measures. And it doesn't make sense to cut bus routes and service after spending so much for the new bus stations and all of the red paint. I "see red" over that proposal. A stand against wasteful federal spending, especially for militarism, is something to stand for when it affects various budgets in Madison. What would former U.S. Senator William Proxmire say about the F - 35s in Madison? If federal funds helped cities in the past as Esser Funds did, why can't Madison fine some other federal funds to help out now?

Keeping Madison affordable is a stand to continually take for this great city!

Sincerely,

Steve Books
625 Spruce St.
Madison, WI 53715
(608)358-7906

From: [Donna Coughlin](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Property tax hike
Date: Monday, August 12, 2024 1:29:22 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from dcoughlin12@charter.net. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Please budget more effectively. The \$22 million tax hike is outrageous & should not be approved.
Donna Coughlin (Madison resident and taxpayer).
Sent from my iPad

From: [Jean](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: agarfield@captimes.com
Subject: About the Proposed \$22M Tax Hike
Date: Friday, August 9, 2024 12:49:14 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from jkdemuzio@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Greetings,

My husband and I have a few suggestions about how to get the city budget under control without raising taxes. They are:

- 1) Reduce the Mayor's office staff and research staff.
- 2) Reduce the salary of the city alders.
- 3) Reduce the salary of the mayor.
- 4) Mow the city parks less frequently.
- 5) Reduce city tree trimming to a minimum and do not cut down trees that still are alive but have been damaged. There is far too much over trimming with the city trees.
- 6) To the mayor: Be more efficient in your city management. (I did not vote for you because you have been fiddling with the rezoning of single family housing use.)
- 7) Make little budget cuts in every city department including the mayor's office.
- 8) Don't make blanket cuts to services or propose enormous property tax increases to home owners who are already not happy about rising property taxes.
- 9) Stop the Rapid Transit Project now! Embracing this project has already reduced bus routes in many parts of the city where bus service is the only means to get around.

I hope you and your office will consider some of these ideas.

Jean DeMuzio

Tony Milanowski

3313 Derby Down

Madison, WI 53713

From: [noreply](#)
To: [City Budget](#)
Subject: Form submission from: Contact
Date: Thursday, July 11, 2024 4:11:54 PM

Thursday, July 11, 2024 – 4:07pm

Name
Jessica

How would you like us to contact you?
Email

Email
jegilkison@gmail.com

Reason for Contact
Budget

Message

I'm writing with concern about the possible cuts to library services. Libraries provide essential services to our community, including to some of the most marginalized people. Cuts to our libraries impact all of us, whether directly or indirectly. We are better served by cutting the law enforcement budget, as their services benefit a smaller group of people and continue the cycle of the carceral system, perpetuating white supremacy and capitalism.

From: [Sharon Goss](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: proposed tax hike
Date: Sunday, August 11, 2024 6:29:04 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from smleg68@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

I am opposed to any raise in property taxes. I live on Social Security and a small pension. My taxes on a modest home in Madison are well over \$8000/yr. I've lived many places and have never paid such high taxes. I can't afford to stay in my home if you keep raising taxes. .

I think alders and the mayor should look at whether all the growth you keep pursuing is paying its way. If not, then why not tax the people benefiting from growth? Perhaps the city could increase user fees on nontaxable properties, which we have a lot of. Are there other ways to generate income?

If the city is going to cut services, some would be ok with me. For example, my nearest library already has no Sunday hours so that seems like a place to start. Fees for parking is ok with me because I hardly go out. Cuts in bus service and social programs would also not impact me a lot. I would be happy to see less street repair; I think it's way overdone compared to other cities. We could all haul our own brush.

Thanks for asking.
SG

From: [Terry Heiliger](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Feedback
Date: Friday, August 9, 2024 11:44:28 PM

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from badgerhm@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

I know you're dealing with the psycho GOP legislature but we need to focus on getting our fair share of the state revenue sharing (I think that's what it is).

The fact the City is proposing some of these cuts is ridiculous. If we can't afford those things for our safety and/or our benefits then we are in trouble especially since our property taxes have already skyrocketed.

Sent from my iPhone

From: ckot@azkot.com
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: NO to \$22 million referendum
Date: Monday, August 12, 2024 8:23:57 AM

You don't often get email from ckot@azkot.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

This increase in property taxes places the burden on only real property owners. Tax renters as well. Renters use the same services without paying for them. Your property taxes are so high now that we have considered selling and leaving.

Thank you for your consideration,
Carla Kot

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: [noreply](#)
To: [City Budget](#)
Subject: Form submission from: Contact
Date: Wednesday, July 31, 2024 9:06:48 PM

Wednesday, July 31, 2024 – 9:03pm

Name

Lj meister

How would you like us to contact you?

Email

Email

frdm1203@gmail.com

Reason for Contact

Budget

Message

The library is the most important part of the budget. It needs to expand or remain the same. Figure out how to balance without cutting the library. People of middle n low income use this service. It also educates the next generation. Lj meister 2626 moland st

From: [Gayle Nimmerguth](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum & Bus Service
Date: Saturday, August 10, 2024 8:45:53 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from gayle1spirit@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

If there is no property tax referendum or it doesn't pass, please do not cut evening and weekend bus service. The unnecessary bus system overhaul has made things hard enough, so please give us a break and don't make things worse.

From: [Lynn Marie Pauly](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Referendum opinion from a District 15 resident
Date: Saturday, August 10, 2024 12:06:05 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from lpauleau@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

To the Madison alders:

I'm submitting my comments regarding the propose \$22 million referendum that would raise property taxes to avoid service cuts.

I am strongly opposed to this referendum. The mayor's past spending obviously did not take into consideration the funding for the future years. Plus I do not believe she pushed hard enough to get state assistance.

Go back to the drawing board and reduce your referendum request by half and I will be more apt to support a referendum.

The mayor is not looking out for home owners who see property tax increases every year. I honestly feel that way.

Lynn Pauly
District 15

In the last five years (Deficits of \$10-20 million) it is mostly the mayor and council adopting new spending initiatives without having a plan to fully fund them in the future years. Most of my structural deficits were in the range of \$2-3 million the result of increased energy or insurance costs.



Virus-free. www.avast.com

From: [George Shinnors](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Budget - referendum question
Date: Saturday, August 10, 2024 11:03:37 AM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from georghinners217@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Hello I have heard nothing regarding necessity of cutting back on spending multi-millions of dollars on “social engineering” projects. For instance, it appears the various housing projects are creating significant hidden costs in over site and control. I hope the Council has learned from this.

George Shinnors
null

From: [Rosemary Sprenger](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: possible service cuts etc.
Date: Saturday, August 10, 2024 3:15:44 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from respren@uwalumni.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

I saw the recent article in the Cap Times and am giving you my feedback. Instead of raising taxes a lot, I'd prefer minor service cuts and also using much of the money in the rainy-day fund to avoid major cuts. I rent an apartment and am a senior citizen.

I'd like to be able to use the South Madison Library on Sundays in the cooler months, but eliminating evening hours might not affect me. When I've been there on a Sunday in the past, the staff have ample time to socialize, so reducing staff on Sunday would also reduce the time they'd have to visit with each other. I don't want the staff there to know I complained about this & appreciate the help they've given me over the years.

If bus service was cut on evenings, I might not be affected in the winter. I still want bus service on weekends, but use my car to get to the grocery store etc. I'm also eligible for paratransit service but rarely use it; if you cut that, you might be violating the Amer. with Disabilities Act.

Rosemary Sprenger

From: [dave stecher](#)
To: [Streets; All Alders](#)
Subject: 2025 City of Madison Budget Referendum Comments
Date: Monday, August 12, 2024 3:48:26 PM

Some people who received this message don't often get email from dave.stecher@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Hi, I am writing in support of the budget referendum and the necessary tax increases.

However, if cost reductions are necessary, I see an opportunity to save costs in snow removal.

A typical residential street in many suburban style single family residential areas in the city requires two passes from the plow to clear the whole width. However, part of this street width is intended for street parking which is sparsely used in many single family areas due to ample driveway and garage space. Instead of using two passes to clear the whole street including the unused parking spaces, a single pass by the plow should provide sufficient width for two vehicles to pass by each other.

I request that the council and streets division look at the potential cost savings from providing just a single plow pass in all single family residential streets with minimally used on street parking - such as most neighborhoods to the West of Midvale. Providing a single plow pass would cut the required plowing time in half for these streets and would allow the city to save on plowing while ensuring the typically used portion of the streets are cleared quickly.

I would prefer to see city resources allocated to ensure sidewalks, crosswalks, and other pedestrian infrastructure are cleared as quickly as the streets, rather than having our overly wide residential streets cleared curb to curb.

-Dave Stecher

District 11 resident

From: [noreply](#)
To: [City Budget](#)
Subject: Form submission from: Contact
Date: Sunday, July 21, 2024 2:31:44 PM

Sunday, July 21, 2024 – 2:29pm

Name

Hannah Stocklein

How would you like us to contact you?

Email

Email

stocklein@wisc.edu

Reason for Contact

Budget

Message

To whom it may concern,

I would like to voice my support for Option C for the 2025 Madison Public Library budget moving forward, to continue to fund youth services and the Imagination Center at Reindahl Park. MPL is an absolutely crucial component of Madison, to cut the library's funding is to directly harm the community, especially those who rely on the library's free access to books, wifi, and youth services the most.

I have lived in Madison most of my life and I began using MPL as soon as I learned to read. As a child, I spent many hours at the Sequoya library in the old strip mall doing the scavenger hunts and reading Lemony Snicket books. Cutting Sunday hours would take this joy away from children who are unable to go to the library during school hours. To this day I continue to rely on the public library to read new release books in print and digitally through the Libby app. As a veterinary medical student, it is nice to use weekend and night hours to get off campus to study. Many other members of the community rely on the library as a safe place outside of the home to work.

Please consider how harmful cutting funding to MPL will be to the community.

Sincerely,

Hannah Stocklein (she/her)
Co-president of Pathology & Lab Animal Medicine Club (SLAC)
Class of 2026 DVM Candidate
School of Veterinary Medicine
University of Wisconsin - Madison