

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](#)

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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

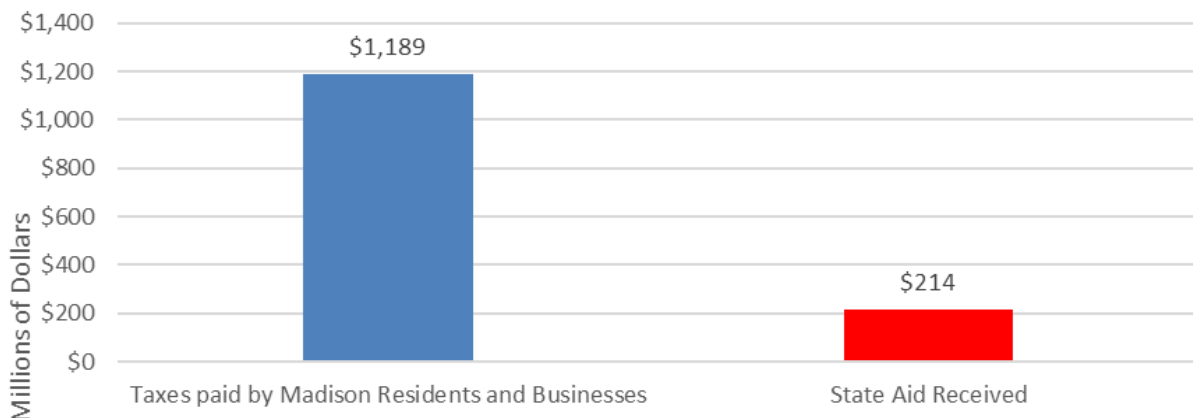
From: Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway

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

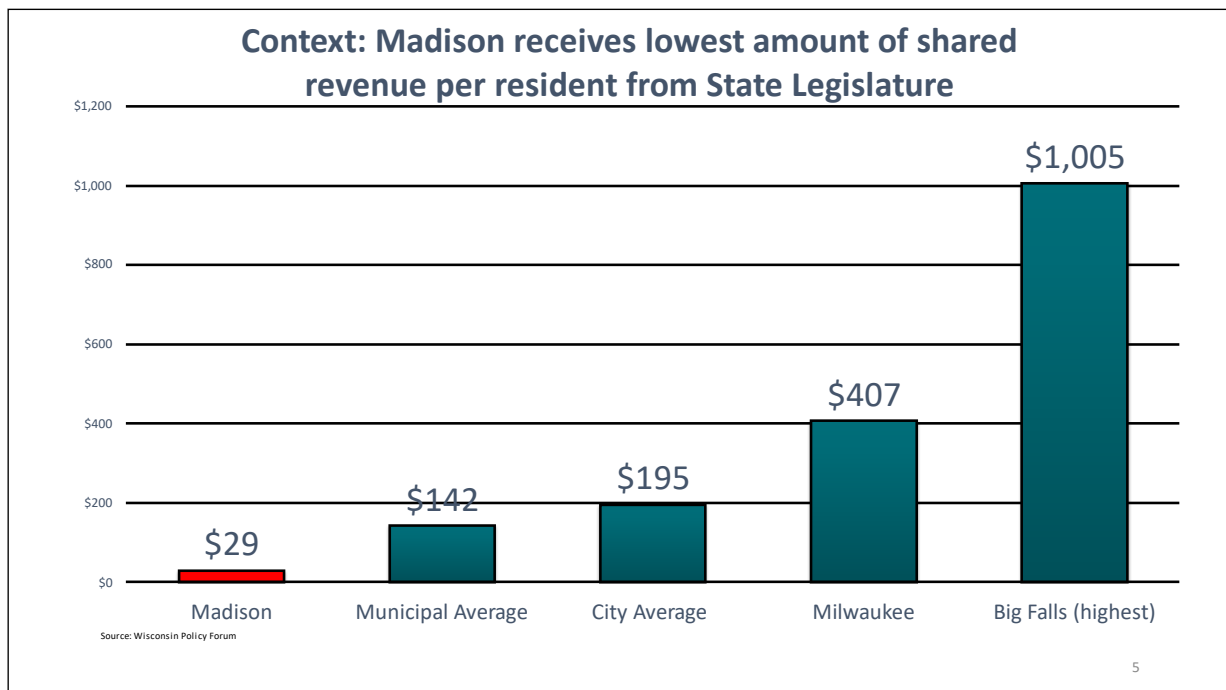


Note: Includes state aid for City of Madison, Madison Metropolitan School District, and City portion of Dane County
Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue; City Finance Department analysis

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.



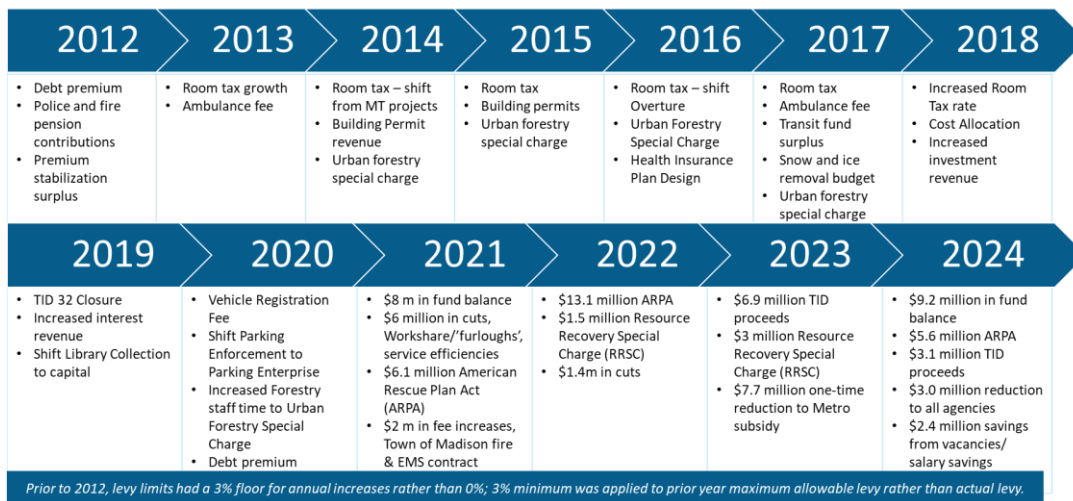
However, Madison is at the mercy of divisive politics at the state level, which has chosen to punish the state's largest cities for our politics by constraining our economy. Our ability to provide city services, supported by a vast majority of our residents, is fiscally impossible under the system created 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.

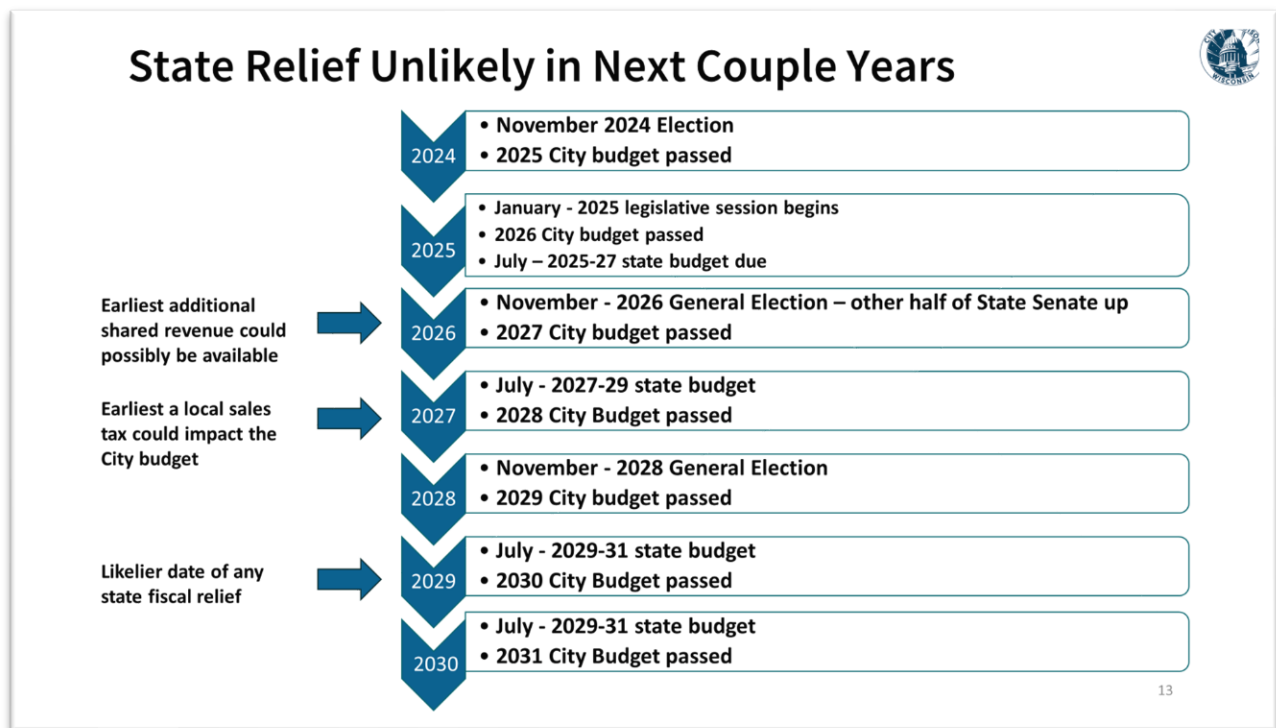
All of these efforts have been guided throughout by extensive community engagement (#7). This began as described above almost as soon as the 2024 budget was complete and include the Finance Department's comprehensive information series on the budget that was presented via a series of in-depth briefings 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.



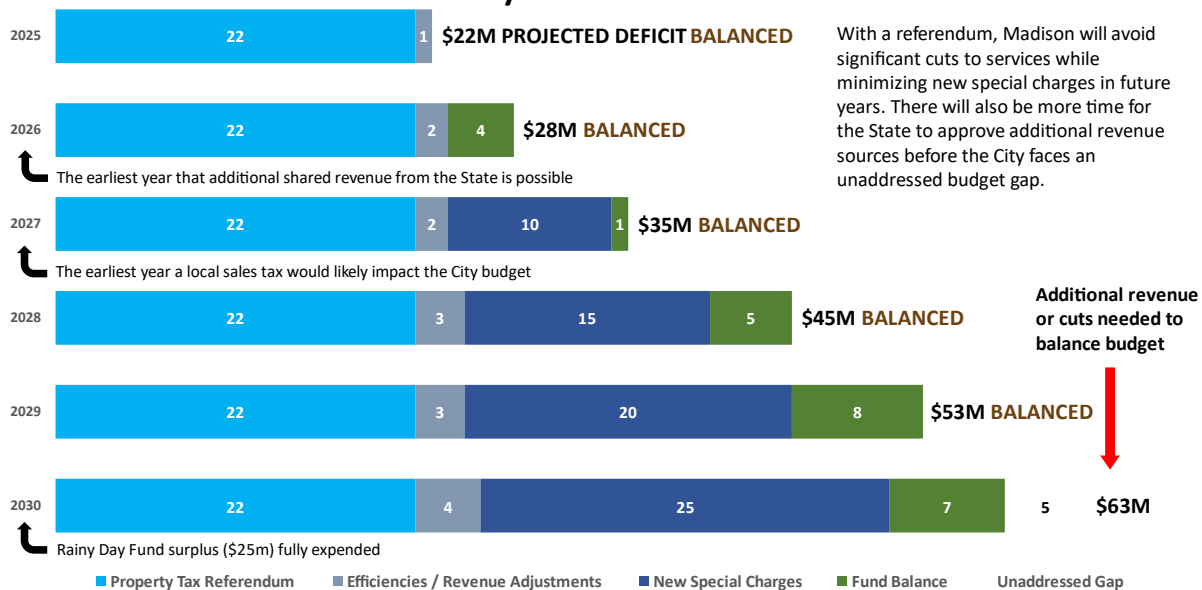
Even under relatively optimistic scenarios that account for changes in state legislative dynamics and assume a massive coalitional lobbying effort, the City must assume and plan for balancing budgets under the current draconian state restrictions for at least the next five years. Thus, guided by Council's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

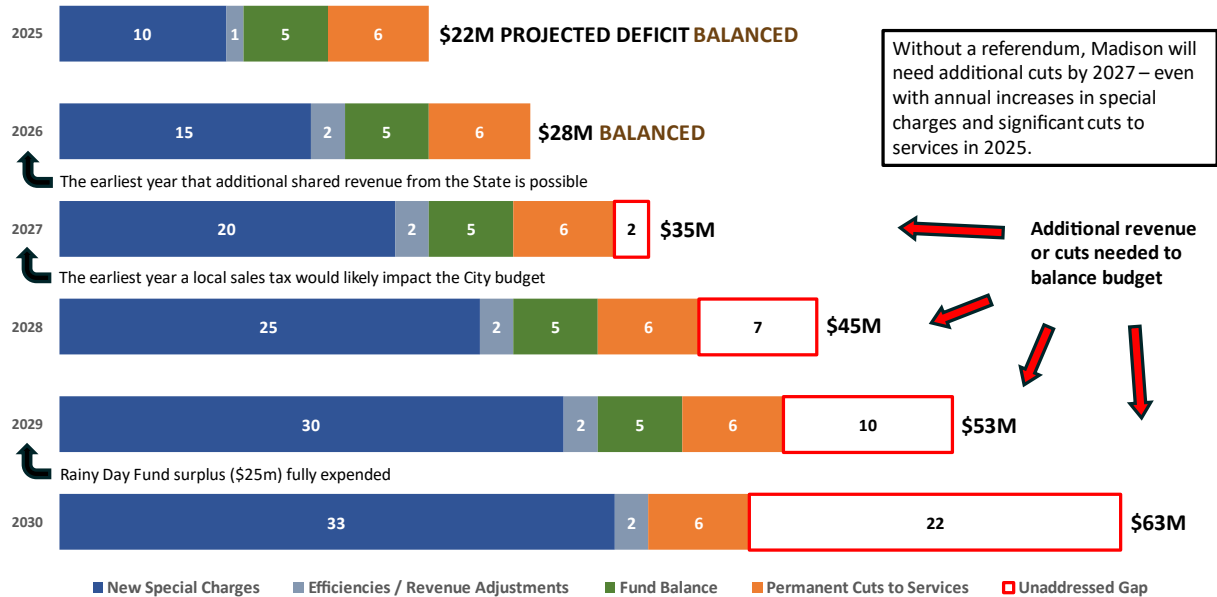
With A Referendum, Madison Can Avoid Significant Cuts or the Need for More Revenue for Another Five years



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

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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

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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



<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 they 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

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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

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

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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_8383994437e64c6ca725f5aaa4944c00.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

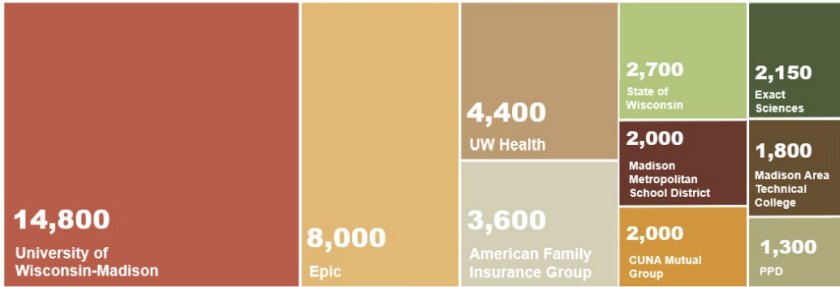
Age Cohort	≤ 14	15 - 24	25 -34	35 -54	55 -74	≥ 75
Dane County	+ 3.6%	+ 15.1%	+ 8.0%	+ 1.5%	+ 30.8%	+ 21.9%
Wisconsin	- 4.7%	- 1.7%	+ 2.2%	- 9.6%	+ 26.1%	+ 9.4%

Source: US Census Bureau 2020, SB Friedman

Background: Affordable Housing

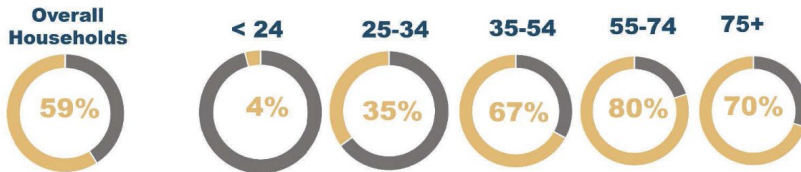
Major Employers

Figure 6. Dane County Major Employers, 2022



Source: Lightcast, SB Friedman

Figure 18. Homeownership Rates by Age Cohort in Dane County



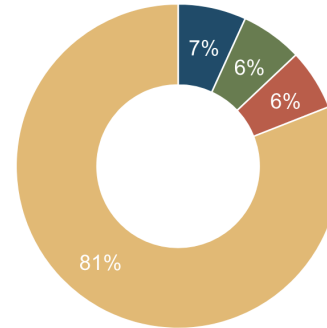
OWNER HH RENTER HH

Source: PUMS ACS 5-Year Estimates (2016-2020), SB Friedman

Dane County Land Area vs Population

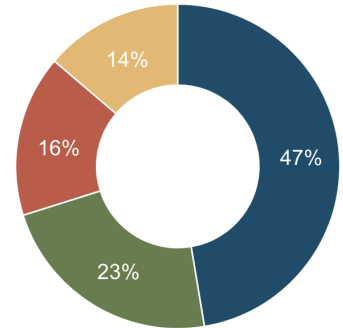
Madison accounts for rough 47% of Dane County's population.

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

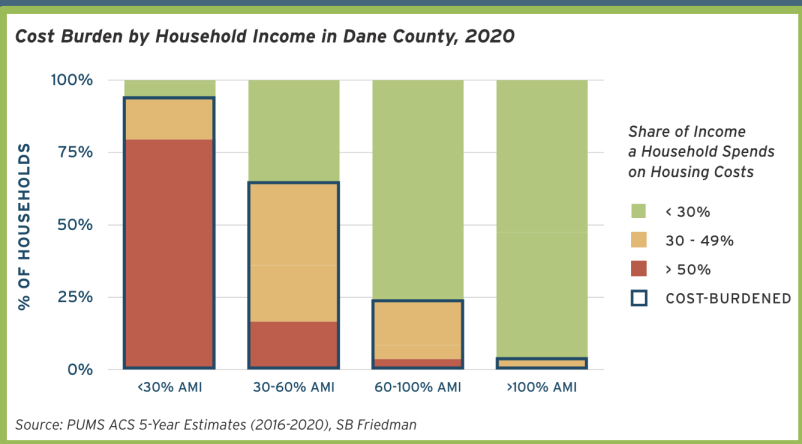
Source: HUD FY 2022, SB Friedman

* AMI = Area Median Income

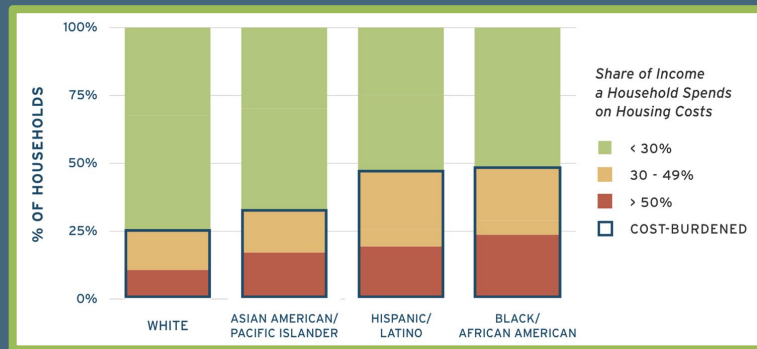
Cost Burden Inequity

Local Demographics on Household Cost Burden, 2020

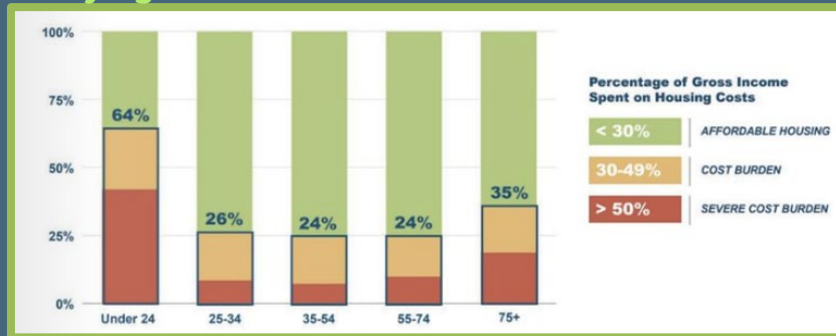
By Income Level



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

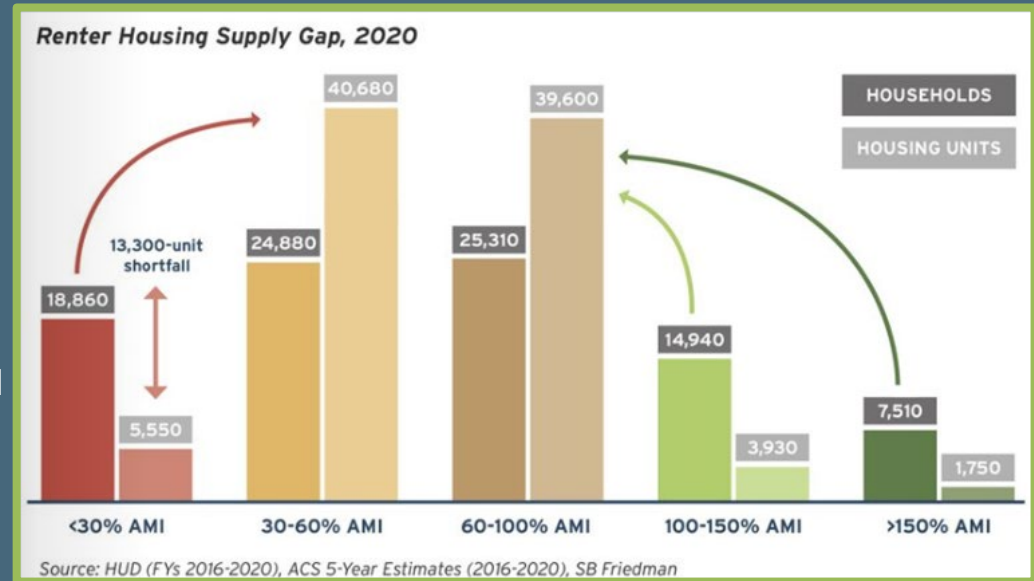
* Newer includes Market-Rate Units Built Since 2010

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.



* AMI = Area Median Income

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

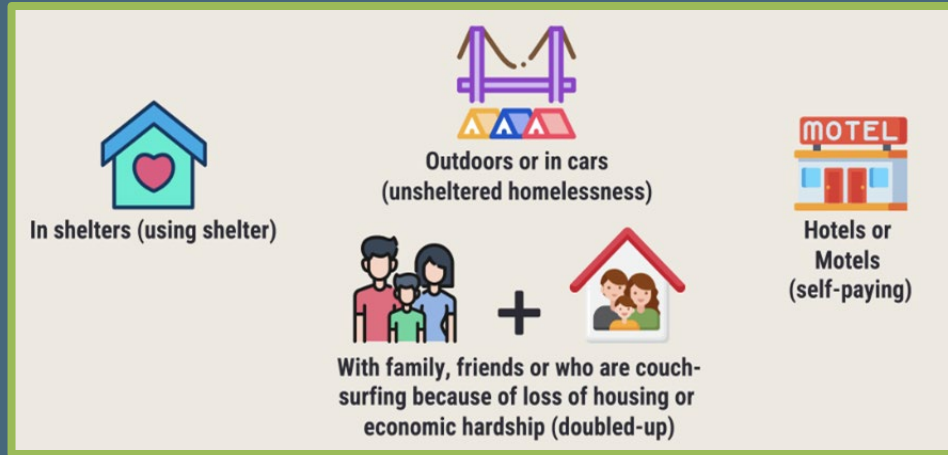
- In 2023, the number of eviction filings in Dane County nearly doubled compared to 2022. In 2024, the number of eviction filing rate rose another 9%.
- Currently, most small claims records are retained for **twenty years** after entry of judgment or final order. SCR 72.01(8), 72.01(9), and 72.01(10).
- 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

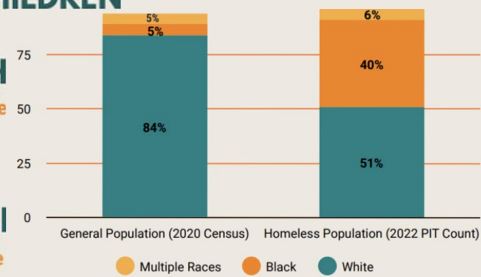
187 (17%) exited to a place considered permanent or long term

Housing Instability Inequity

Homelessness Demographics

701
 People Experience Homelessness
 on a given day¹

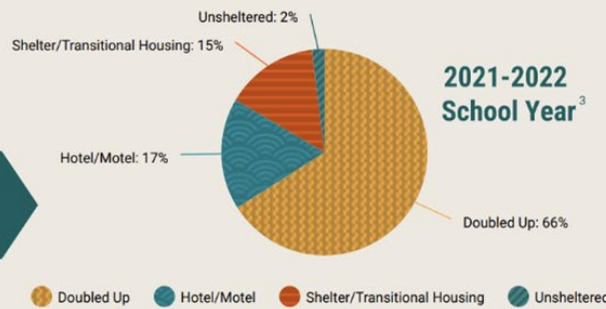
- 36% HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN
- 21% HOMELESS 12+ MONTH
In the Past 3 Ye
- 12% UNSHELTERED
- 24% CHRONIC HOMELESSNI
Increased Since



Black people are **8x overrepresented** in the homeless population relative to the general Dane County population.



55% Households with a Disabling Condition²



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>]

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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](#)

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

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](#)

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

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](#)

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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](#)

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

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*.