



I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library.

~Jorge Luis Borges

In November 2009, the Common Council decides Mayor Cieslewicz's 2010 Capital Budget, which includes funding for a new Central Library.

Following are some quick facts about the Central Library.

Q. How does the Central Library support my branch library?

A. The Central Library, while a "branch" for the 38,000 people who live in the Isthmus area and the many others who work there, is also a resource library for all Madison branch libraries and all the public libraries in the seven-county South Central Library system. As a resource library, the Central Library houses services, staff, and special collections that serve all Madisonians and Dane County residents.

In 2008, Central Library staff:

- ▶ selected, purchased, and processed 98,844 new items; 72% of those items went to branch collections
- ▶ spent \$1.2 million for new library materials; 69% was for branch materials. Central Library material costs also include subscription database fees for materials available in all Madison libraries
- ▶ supported and maintained 91 public internet computers, including software upgrades, troubleshooting, and providing internet and wireless internet access. 72% of those computers were located at branch libraries, and 70% of internet access occurred at branch libraries

Other centralized support services include city-wide outreach through the Readmobile and Home Services, system- and state-wide borrowing of special materials from other libraries, email and chat reference, web site maintenance, and administrative, budgeting and personnel functions. Maintaining these centralized services in one location maximizes public space in branch libraries, and creates operational efficiency throughout the system.

Q. Will a new Central Library divert usage or funds from branch libraries?

A. In the past two decades, Madison has spent \$14 million dollars upgrading and expanding its eight branch libraries. Another \$7.45 million in branch library improvements or additions is included in the Capital Budget estimates for 2011-2015.

Consider the successes of a few of our new or recently remodeled libraries in the last decade:

- ▶ The Alicia Ashman Branch was the fourth busiest library in Madison one year after it opened in 2000 (in check outs, visits, and meeting room use). Use at other Madison public libraries did not drop significantly.
- ▶ The Lakeview Branch was expanded and remodeled in 2003. By the end of 2004, check outs had increased by 211%, visits were up by 62.4%, and public internet use increased 402% over the previous year.
- ▶ The recently relocated and expanded Sequoia Branch experienced an 9.1% increase in check outs, a 15.2% increase in visits, a 157% increase in public internet/multimedia computer use, and a stunning 789% increase in meeting room use over last year (as of end of July, 2009).

Q. How much will a new Central Library cost?

A. Mayor Cieslewicz has included \$37 million in the 2010 Capital Budget for the Fiore-Irgens proposal that would include a new library on the corner of West Washington Avenue and Henry Street, and redevelopment of the entire block. A breakdown of the \$37 million includes \$17 million borrowed by taxpayers, \$6 million from New Markets Tax Credits, \$4 million from sale of the land, and \$10 million from private fundraising. A complete budget breakdown and different "scenarios" are available on the library's web site.

Q. Why build now, in the middle of a recession?

A. Mayor Cieslewicz explains the reasoning behind building now rather than waiting for the economy to improve:

"After many years of planning, this budget includes funding over the next three years for a new Central Library. Since I have been in office, we have made significant investments in our branch libraries. In today's economic climate we can take advantage of the lowest bid process in decades to now invest in our Central Library. This project also opens up the entire block for further development and further tax revenue for the city. With a combination of private fundraising, New Markets Tax Credits and the new tax revenue generated by further development of the block, the City is able to build a new library for the same net cost over 15 years as renovation of the existing library. We also estimate the project will also create 200 to 300 good paying construction jobs." - Mayor Cieslewicz, 2010 Capital Budget, Budget Narrative

For more detail and updates, please see the library's web site at www.madisonpubliclibrary.org/central