

From: [Mary Mullen](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: 4506-4514 Verona Rd Development, file 87879
Date: Thursday, May 15, 2025 2:09:35 AM

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From: Mary Mullen, 4337 Milford Road, Madison, WI 53711, mmullen0843@gmail.com, (608) 298-0843

To: Madison Plan Commission

Subject: Opposition to the “Timberline Terrace” 5-story, 93-unit apartment proposal for 4506-4514 Verona Road

POINT #1: I am completely opposed to the 5-story, 93-unit “affordable housing” apartment development. There are many reasons, the most important of which is that this location is an **unhealthy and dangerous residential location**.

1. It is located right at the intersection of the Beltline (118,000 ADT) and Verona Road (67,000 ADT) and actually on the CURVE of frontage road which itself has 8,000 ADT according to figures given at the May 8 public meeting. Air pollution – chemicals and particulates – right next to busy highways is terrible. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) notes in an August 2014 online publication that

- “People who live, work or attend school near major roads appear to have an *increased incidence and severity of health problems associated with air pollution exposures related to roadway traffic including higher rates of asthma onset and aggravation, cardiovascular disease, impaired lung development in children, pre-term and low-birthweight infants, childhood leukemia, and premature death.*”
- “Research findings indicate that *roadways generally influence air quality within a few hundred meters – about 500-600 feet downwind* from the vicinity of heavily traveled roadways or along corridors with significant trucking traffic or rail activities.” [This apartment is within 10s of feet from highways.]
- “certain activities like congestion, stop-and-go movement or high-speed operations can increase emissions of certain pollutants. *The combination of rush hour and calm winds in the morning often leads to the highest concentrations during this time of the day.*” [During rush hours there are lines of stop and go traffic on the Beltline exit which is right next to the frontage road and also on Verona Road where traffic enters the Beltline.]

2. Anyone trying to get across Verona Road or under the Beltline to use businesses to the north will have to cross the frontage road which curves around the building. That’s dangerous. I have often walked or biked from the Dunn’s Marsh Neighborhood (east of Verona Road) to use Planet Fitness or reach the Southwest Path. I have to swivel my head back and forth, back and forth to be sure there’s time to cross the frontage road before a vehicle comes from either direction. Vehicles are often going faster than the posted speed too. I would not trust a child under 12 to cross that frontage road alone, and then there’s the one on the other side if your direction of travel would be east. While there is a tunnel under Verona Road – and I use it – I have observed people crossing the many traffic lanes. Either they don’t know about the tunnel, don’t want to walk extra hundreds of feet out of their way, or they fear the tunnel. It is common to find that an unhoused person or more than one is camped out in the tunnel. I’ve never been bothered by any such person, but when once there were 3 people there, I was afraid.

POINT #2

So much traffic so close by is noisy. While some people claim that traffic noise doesn’t bother them, a July 2023 NPR article states “A growing body of research says that [chronic noise exposure](#) is putting nearly a third of Americans [at heightened risk](#) of hypertension, stroke, and heart attacks.” I myself live about 3 blocks from the Beltline and Verona Road. When I first moved here in 1963, the traffic noise was pretty minor, and I hardly noticed it. It almost completely stopped during the night. But now, with the about 185,000 ADT on those highways, there’s a constant din except between 2:30 am and 4:00 am. As I walk from the Beltline south to my home down Whenona Drive to Milford Road, I notice how the sound of traffic diminishes. As it diminishes, I

feel myself begin to relax. I didn't even know I was feeling stressed until I noticed I felt better. But what if I had to live right next to both those highways? It's a crime to build new housing in this location.

POINT #3

A third major reason I oppose this apartment location is that **there's absolutely no place for kids to play**, and undoubtedly there will be kids since there are 48 2- and 3-bedroom apartments. There aren't even any patios or balconies. There's a tiny bit of grass on either side of the sidewalk, but the property is almost completely covered by the parking lot and the footprint of the building. The rest of the area in the vicinity is parking lots for surrounding businesses: businesses in the little strip mall where the frontage road turns north, plus the larger businesses: Goodwill, Planet Fitness, Atomic Antiques, and Home Depot. I read that there are 600 parking spots for those bigger businesses. There are no parks close by. Across Verona Road and a block into the neighborhood is Britta Park, but it is just open space with no play equipment and not even a picnic table. The much larger and better equipped park is Marlborough Park which is a 15-minute walk if you don't have to wait for traffic on the frontage roads, but you have to know your way there. I wouldn't depend on a young child to get there alone. I don't even know what parks might be toward the west along or near Hammersley Road although I travel that route often. To summarize, you just couldn't tell your child to "go outside and play in the park."

POINT #4

This location is also a food desert. While there are some small grocery stores, a block to the north (have to go under the Beltline and cross MANY lanes of traffic to get to one of them) and two blocks up the opposite side of Verona Road (Luna's, across from MacDonalds), full-service grocery stores are several miles away. Is this location a good place for "affordable housing"? Affordable housing should be put close to full-service grocery stores.

CONCLUSION

While the developers pointed out the there's great "connectivity" from this location, by which they named access to bike paths and buses, this does not make up for the dangerous, unhealthful location between big highways and on the curve of the frontage road and for the lack of close by full-service grocery stores and no nearby green space. I believe it would be a travesty to allow an apartment building in this location. This location is much more suited for a restaurant or a hotel or a car repair shop (which it has now), all true commercial uses for this property. **I urge the Plan Commission to unanimously turn down this Conditional Use application.**

Mary (Mary Mullen)

*Carbon dioxide – a greenhouse gas – in my birth year (1940) was 311.3 ppm.
By 2011 it was already 391.15 .Year 2019 average was 409.9 ppm.
Pre-industrial level was 280 ppm.*