

**From:** [Andrew Lail](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#); [Rummel, Marsha](#)  
**Subject:** Voit Farms Support  
**Date:** Thursday, August 24, 2023 9:04:05 PM

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Hello members of the Plan Commission and Common Council,

I am writing today in support of the proposed plat for the Voit Farms development. Although only the plat is up for debate at the Plan Commission meeting on the 28th, I would also like to comment on the overall features of the plan:

- The mix of residential and commercial space is good to see in this development. I know I love my corner store, and future residents will appreciate the ability to shop within their neighborhoods to meet basic needs.
- The gridded streets are a good feature of this subdivision, and they help Madison extend its existing, walkable street grid. Extra connections on Milwaukee Street will make the pedestrian walking experience better and increase the neighborhood's connectivity with surrounding areas.
- I applaud the inclusion of permanent affordable housing through an option to the Madison Area Community Land Trust. Madison needs affordable housing at all price points, and it's promising to see it included in a new subdivision.
- I strongly feel that the Chicago Avenue extension should be exclusively bike-ped only. This will allow a high quality, low-conflict connection with the Starkweather Creek path extension. This path will be key both for residents of this new neighborhood and those neighborhoods to the north, so planning for it to be great will pay dividends long-term by attracting more people to travel by bicycle.
- I am fully in support of more than 1100 housing units in this area. We are deep into a housing shortage and we have an opportunity to help ourselves out of it during this area's development. The neighborhood as planned seems like a great place to live, with access to greenspace, transit, and groceries. Let's open up the opportunity to live there to as many of our neighbors as possible!

Thank you,  
Andrew Lail  
406 Castle Pl (District 6)

**From:** [Andrew Janda](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [Latimer Burris, Amani](#); [info@madisonisforpeople.org](mailto:info@madisonisforpeople.org)  
**Subject:** Voit Farms Development  
**Date:** Friday, August 25, 2023 7:40:22 AM

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Hello members of the Plan Commission and Common Council,

I am writing today in support of the proposed plat for the Voit Farms development. Although only the plat is up for debate at the Plan Commission meeting on the 28th, I would also like to provide thought on the overall features of the plan:

- The mix of residential and commercial space is good to see in a new development. Too often new subdivisions focus solely on residential uses, which forces residents to go farther to meet their basic needs and promotes car-oriented development.
- I applaud the inclusion of permanent affordable housing through an option to the Madison Area Community Land Trust. Madison needs affordable housing, and it's promising to see it included in a new subdivision.
- I strongly feel that the Chicago Avenue extension should be exclusively bike-ped only. The city has a goal of reducing carbon emissions, and an important way to do that is to prioritize walking and biking over driving. It is difficult to effectively build a bridge that accommodates ped-bike-auto movement together, and a bridge that allows cars will preclude good bike and ped connectivity to the new neighborhood.
- The gridded streets are a good feature of this subdivision. Although the extra connections on Milwaukee Street may not be nice for drivers, they will make the pedestrian walking experience better and should be included in the plat. An alternative would be to limit car intersections to every other crossing, but create bike/ped connections at every crossing point.
- I am disappointed that the proposed units have been reduced to around 1,100 from the previous versions of the proposal. This site is the perfect location for affordable, sustainable homes, and it should be home to even more of them. I urge you to resist any future attempts to decrease the number of units, and instead explore the possibilities of adding more residences.

I hope you will take a moment to consider my comments, and think about what will be best for Madison in the future, not just now. Please think about what will be best for residents of this development, and not just people who are here now.

Thank you,

Andrew Janda

**From:** [Jay Kaiser](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [info@madisonisforpeople.org](mailto:info@madisonisforpeople.org); [Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina](#)  
**Subject:** Improvements to Voit Farm Proposal  
**Date:** Friday, August 25, 2023 10:37:39 AM

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Hello members of the Plan Commission and Common Council,

I am writing today in support of the proposed plat for the Voit Farms development. Although only the plat is up for debate at the Plan Commission meeting on the 28th, I would also like to provide thought on the overall features of the plan:

- The mix of residential and commercial space is good to see in a new development. Too often new subdivisions focus solely on residential uses, which forces residents to go farther to meet their basic needs and promotes car-oriented development.
- I applaud the inclusion of permanent affordable housing through an option to the Madison Area Community Land Trust. Madison needs affordable housing, and it's promising to see it included in a new subdivision.
- I strongly feel that the Chicago Avenue extension should be exclusively bike-ped only. The city has a goal of reducing carbon emissions, and an important way to do that is to prioritize walking and biking over driving. It is difficult to effectively build a bridge that accommodates ped-bike-auto movement together, and a bridge that allows cars will preclude good bike and ped connectivity to the new neighborhood. This plot is close to many amenities, such as a Woodmans and a Walmart; it's in the perfect spot to continue to enhance car-free living in the city.
- The gridded streets are a good feature of this subdivision. Although the extra connections on Milwaukee Street may not be nice for drivers, they will make the pedestrian walking experience better and should be included in the plat. An alternative would be to limit car intersections to every other crossing, but create bike/ped connections at every crossing point. Pedestrian safety should always be foremost in future development.
- I am disappointed that the proposed units have been reduced to around 1,100 from the previous versions of the proposal. This site is the perfect location for affordable, sustainable homes, and it should be home to even more of them. I urge you to resist any future attempts to decrease the number of units, and instead explore the possibilities of adding more residences. The city needs housing first and foremost; we cannot continue with old building patterns if we hope to overcome this shortage.

I hope you will take a moment to consider my comments, and think about what will be best for Madison in the future, not just now. Please think about what will be best for residents of this development, and not just people who are here now.

Thank you,  
Jay Kaiser

**From:** [Autumn Linsmeier](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [info@madisonisforpeople.org](mailto:info@madisonisforpeople.org); [Harry Graham](#); [Field, Derek](#)  
**Subject:** Voit Farms Development  
**Date:** Thursday, August 24, 2023 10:18:55 AM

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Hello members of the Plan Commission and Common Council,

I am writing today in support of the proposed plat for the Voit Farms development. Although only the plat is up for debate at the Plan Commission meeting on the 28th, I would also like to provide thought on the overall features of the plan:

- The mix of residential and commercial space is good to see in a new development. Too often new subdivisions focus solely on residential uses, which forces residents to go farther to meet their basic needs and promotes car-oriented development.
- I applaud the inclusion of permanent affordable housing through an option to the Madison Area Community Land Trust. Madison needs affordable housing, and it's promising to see it included in a new subdivision.
- I strongly feel that the Chicago Avenue extension should be exclusively bike-ped only. The city has a goal of reducing carbon emissions, and an important way to do that is to prioritize walking and biking over driving. It is difficult to effectively build a bridge that accommodates ped-bike-auto movement together, and a bridge that allows cars will preclude good bike and ped connectivity to the new neighborhood.
- The gridded streets are a good feature of this subdivision. Although the extra connections on Milwaukee Street may not be nice for drivers, they will make the pedestrian walking experience better and should be included in the plat. An alternative would be to limit car intersections to every other crossing, but create bike/ped connections at every crossing point.
- I am disappointed that the proposed units have been reduced to around 1,100 from the previous versions of the proposal. This site is the perfect location for affordable, sustainable homes, and it should be home to even more of them. I urge you to resist any future attempts to decrease the number of units, and instead explore the possibilities of adding more residences.

I hope you will take a moment to consider my comments, and think about what will be best for Madison in the future, not just now. Please think about what will be best for residents of this development, and not just people who are here now.

Thank you,  
Autumn



August 23, 2023

To: The Madison Planning Commission  
Re: Voit Farm Development Plan

Dear Commissioners,

I am Rabbi Bonnie Margulis, Executive Director of Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice and a Madison resident who is very concerned about the ongoing affordable housing crisis in Madison and Dane County. I am writing to express my support for the Voit Farm development plan, in particular the plan for the Madison Community Land Trust and Habitat for Humanity to purchase sections of the land for affordable housing.

Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice works through clergy, congregations, and people of all faiths and no faith to work toward a more just and compassionate society. Safe and affordable housing is recognized by our faith communities as a right that every human being deserves. It is a moral imperative for our governmental bodies to address the need for affordable housing.

The Voit Farm development plan is one avenue to make a dent in the affordable housing crisis. The plan includes options for the Madison Community Land Trust and Habitat for Humanity each to purchase parts of the development for the express purpose of building affordable housing. These efforts must be supported by the city. Indeed, the city should make every effort to increase the number of affordable units that can be built on that land.

In addition to the affordable housing plans, the project also envisions plentiful park, greenery, and recreational space, and a community garden. It is a well-thought through project which should be supported. The mixed use of both commercial and residential space means that residents will not have to travel to access public accommodations.

For all these reasons, I support this project and urge the Planning Commission to approve the zoning and platting that needs to happen to bring this project to a reality.

Thank you for your attention,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rabbi Bonnie Margulis". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a white rectangular box.

Rabbi Bonnie Margulis

Executive Director  
Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice  
608-513-7121



**From:** [Blake Glueck](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [info@madisonisforpeople.org](mailto:info@madisonisforpeople.org); [Duncan, John](#)  
**Subject:** In Support of Abundant Housing  
**Date:** Thursday, August 24, 2023 7:10:02 AM

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

Hello members of the Plan Commission and Common Council,

I am writing today to strongly support the proposal to build 160 homes at the current site of Essen Haus and Come Back In.

The current proposal is a major step forward for housing affordability, the environment, and the vibrancy of downtown Madison. The developer has operated in good faith to systematically address concerns that prevented past proposals for this site from moving forward.

To keep up with Madison's booming job market and population growth, the city needs to build at least 2,000 housing units a year. Falling short leads to increased competition between tenants for homes and results in explosive rent hikes we're living with today.

Adding 160 homes to this site represents a good down payment on the city's years of underbuilding, and news that some of the units will be affordable to folks making 60% of the area median income is especially welcome news.

The proposal will invigorate the area by allowing hundreds more people to live and stay downtown, frequenting our local shops and restaurants and keeping them thriving.

Finally, the proposal will increase sustainability by replacing an impermeable parking lot with homes for hundreds of people right on the new Bus Rapid Transit line. It will enable families to go car-lite, to live in the city instead of driving to their jobs from the suburbs, and will decrease pressure on Madison to sprawl into surrounding farms and wild areas.

Some have quibbled with the setbacks, demanded shadow and traffic studies, or shared strong personal feelings about aesthetics and facades.

These privileged perspectives often come from those who have managed to beat the odds and secure affordable housing for themselves. The result of feedback like this is to slow down approvals, deny proposals, and prevent other working families from having the same opportunities they had.

We need to prioritize 160 homes and a sustainable environment ahead of shadows, traffic fears, and facades. Personally, I think if you care about the housing affordability situation in Madison, or if you care about growing the sustainable, livable, lovable, vibrant downtown that brought so many people to Madison, you have a duty to support the current proposal without delay.

I wholeheartedly support this proposal.

Blake Glueck,  
District 1 Resident,  
Avid Bus and Bike Rider

**From:** [Blake Glueck](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [info@madisonisforpeople.org](mailto:info@madisonisforpeople.org)  
**Subject:** In Support of Abundant Housing at Voit Farms  
**Date:** Thursday, August 24, 2023 7:16:21 AM

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

Hello members of the Plan Commission and Common Council,

I am writing today in support of the proposed plat for the Voit Farms development. Although only the plat is up for debate at the Plan Commission meeting on the 28th, I would also like to provide thought on the overall features of the plan:

- The mix of residential and commercial space is good to see in a new development. Too often new subdivisions focus solely on residential uses, which forces residents to go farther to meet their basic needs and promotes car-oriented development.
- I applaud the inclusion of permanent affordable housing through an option to the Madison Area Community Land Trust. Madison needs affordable housing, and it's promising to see it included in a new subdivision.
- I strongly feel that the Chicago Avenue extension should be exclusively bike-ped only. The city has a goal of reducing carbon emissions, and an important way to do that is to prioritize walking and biking over driving. It is difficult to effectively build a bridge that accommodates ped-bike-auto movement together, and a bridge that allows cars will preclude good bike and ped connectivity to the new neighborhood.
- The gridded streets are a good feature of this subdivision. Although the extra connections on Milwaukee Street may not be nice for drivers, they will make the pedestrian walking experience better and should be included in the plat. An alternative would be to limit car intersections to every other crossing, but create bike/ped connections at every crossing point.
- I am disappointed that the proposed units have been reduced to around 1,100 from the previous versions of the proposal. This site is the perfect location for affordable, sustainable homes, and it should be home to even more of them. I urge you to resist any future attempts to decrease the number of units, and instead explore the possibilities of adding more residences.

Personally, I had initial reservations about greenfield development, but the Voigt Farms property is as good as greenfield development gets. It's close to the Woodman's on Milwaukee. It's close to the D line which has decent frequency. It's the line I currently use

most on the west side. It's a greenfield in the middle of town. It's worth developing into a livable, vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood for as many people as possible to enjoy.

I hope you will take a moment to consider my comments, and think about what will be best for Madison in the future, not just now. Please think about what will be best for residents of this development, and not just people who are here now.

Thank you,  
Blake Glueck  
District 1 Resident

**From:** [Cailey Jamison](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [Rummel, Marsha](#)  
**Subject:** Essen Haus and Voit Farm proposals  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 23, 2023 12:05:10 PM

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

Dear Members of the Plan Commission (cc: Alder Rummel),

I am writing to strongly support the proposal to build 160 homes at the current site of the Essen Haus and Come Back In, and additionally, in support of the proposed plat of the Voit Farms development up for debate at the commission meeting on the 28th. I look forward to welcoming the new neighbors these developments will bring to our city, and hope that you will support the proposals as well.

I would like to echo the following talking points provided by the organization Madison is for People regarding these two developments.

In regard to the Essen Haus/Come Back In proposal:

The current proposal is a major step forward for housing affordability, the environment, and the vibrancy of downtown Madison. The developer has operated in good faith to systematically address concerns that prevented past proposals for this site from moving forward.

Adding 160 homes to this site represents a good down payment on the city's years of underbuilding, and news that some of the units will be affordable to folks making 60% of the area median income is especially welcome news.

The proposal will invigorate the area by allowing hundreds more people to live and stay downtown, frequenting our local shops and restaurants and keeping them thriving.

Finally, the proposal will increase sustainability by replacing an impermeable parking lot with homes for hundreds of people right on the new Bus Rapid Transit line. It will enable families to go car-lite, to live in the city instead of driving to their jobs from the suburbs, and will decrease pressure on Madison to sprawl into surrounding farms and wild areas.

Some have quibbled with the setbacks, demanded shadow and traffic studies, or shared strong personal feelings about aesthetics and facades.

These privileged perspectives often come from those who have managed to beat the odds and secure affordable housing for themselves. The result of feedback like this is to slow down approvals, deny proposals, and prevent other working families from having the same opportunities they had.

We need to prioritize 160 homes and a sustainable environment ahead of shadows, traffic fears, and facades.

In regard to to Voit Farms:

- The mix of residential and commercial space is good to see in a new development. Too often new subdivisions focus solely on residential uses, which forces residents to go farther to meet their basic needs and promotes car-oriented development.
- I applaud the inclusion of permanent affordable housing through an option to the Madison Area Community Land Trust. Madison needs affordable housing, and it's promising to see it included in a new subdivision.
- I strongly feel that the Chicago Avenue extension should be exclusively bike-ped only. The city has a goal of reducing carbon emissions, and an important way to do that is to prioritize walking and biking over driving. It is difficult to effectively build a bridge that accommodates ped-bike-auto movement together, and a bridge that allows cars will preclude good bike and ped connectivity to the new neighborhood.
- The gridded streets are a good feature of this subdivision. Although the extra connections on Milwaukee Street may not be nice for drivers, they will make the pedestrian walking experience better and should be included in the plat. An alternative would be to limit car intersections to every other crossing, but create bike/ped connections at every crossing point.
- I am disappointed that the proposed units have been reduced to around 1,100 from the previous versions of the proposal. This site is the perfect location for affordable, sustainable homes, and it should be home to even more of them. I urge you to resist any future attempts to decrease the number of units, and instead explore the possibilities of adding more residences.

I hope you will consider these comments and decide in the interests of addressing our housing crisis, preventing further suburban sprawl, and considering the needs those whose voices are not often heard at community meetings, including renters, lower-income folks, and future neighbors. These two developments both offer excellent opportunities to help close the gap on Madison's chronic housing shortfalls in a manner that addresses issues of sustainability and affordability.

Warmly,

Cailey Jamison

District 6 resident

**From:** [Ian Jamison](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [Rummel, Marsha](#)  
**Subject:** Please support Essen Haus and Voit Farms!  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 23, 2023 11:27:17 AM

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Dear Members of the Plan Commission,

I am in favor of the recent proposals for Essen Haus and Voit Farms. My rationale mirrors that of Madison is for People, shared below. I hope you will support them too.

#### Essen Haus/Come Back In

- The current proposal is a major step forward for housing affordability, the environment, and the vibrancy of downtown Madison. The developer has operated in good faith to systematically address concerns that prevented past proposals for this site from moving forward.
- Adding 160 homes to this site represents a good down payment on the city's years of underbuilding, and news that some of the units will be affordable to folks making 60% of the area median income is especially welcome news.
- The proposal will invigorate the area by allowing hundreds more people to live and stay downtown, frequenting our local shops and restaurants and keeping them thriving.
- Finally, the proposal will increase sustainability by replacing an impermeable parking lot with homes for hundreds of people right on the new Bus Rapid Transit line. It will enable families to go car-lite, to live in the city instead of driving to their jobs from the suburbs, and will decrease pressure on Madison to sprawl into surrounding farms and wild areas.
- Some have quibbled with the setbacks, demanded shadow and traffic studies, or shared strong personal feelings about aesthetics and facades.
- These privileged perspectives often come from those who have managed to beat the odds and secure affordable housing for themselves. The result of feedback like this is to slow down approvals, deny proposals, and prevent other working families from having the same opportunities they had.
- We need to prioritize 160 homes and a sustainable environment ahead of shadows, traffic fears, and facades.

#### Voit Farms

- The mix of residential and commercial space is good to see in a new development. Too often new subdivisions focus solely on residential uses, which forces residents to go farther to meet their basic needs and promotes car-oriented development.
- I applaud the inclusion of permanent affordable housing through an option to the Madison Area Community Land Trust. Madison needs affordable housing, and it's promising to see it included in a new subdivision.
- I strongly feel that the Chicago Avenue extension should be exclusively bike-ped only. The city has a goal of reducing carbon emissions, and an important way to do that is to prioritize walking and biking over driving. It is difficult to effectively build a bridge that accommodates ped-bike-auto movement together, and a bridge that allows cars will preclude good bike and ped connectivity to the new neighborhood.
- The gridded streets are a good feature of this subdivision. Although the extra connections on Milwaukee Street may not be nice for drivers, they will make the pedestrian walking experience better and should be included in the plat. An alternative would be to limit car intersections to every other crossing, but create bike/ped connections at every crossing point.
- I am disappointed that the proposed units have been reduced to around 1,100 from the previous versions of the proposal. This site is the perfect location for affordable, sustainable homes, and it should be home to even more of them. I urge you to resist any future attempts to decrease the number of units, and instead explore the possibilities of adding more residences.

**Dominique Jamison, District 6**



**From:** [ianjjamison@gmail.com](mailto:ianjjamison@gmail.com)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [Rummel, Marsha](#)  
**Subject:** Essen Haus & Voit Farms Proposals -- Strong Support  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 23, 2023 11:18:18 AM

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

Dear Members of the Plan Commission (cc: Alder Rummel),

I would like to share my strong support for the proposals for Essen Haus & Voit Farms. They're both big steps in the right direction and should be approved by all involved bodies. The summary below provided by Madison is for People best represents my thoughts.

**Essen Haus/Come Back In proposal:**

The current proposal is a major step forward for housing affordability, the environment, and the vibrancy of downtown Madison. The developer has operated in good faith to systematically address concerns that prevented past proposals for this site from moving forward.

Adding 160 homes to this site represents a good down payment on the city's years of underbuilding, and news that some of the units will be affordable to folks making 60% of the area median income is especially welcome news.

The proposal will invigorate the area by allowing hundreds more people to live and stay downtown, frequenting our local shops and restaurants and keeping them thriving.

Finally, the proposal will increase sustainability by replacing an impermeable parking lot with homes for hundreds of people right on the new Bus Rapid Transit line. It will enable families to go car-lite, to live in the city instead of driving to their jobs from the suburbs, and will decrease pressure on Madison to sprawl into surrounding farms and wild areas.

Some have quibbled with the setbacks, demanded shadow and traffic studies, or shared strong personal feelings about aesthetics and facades.

These privileged perspectives often come from those who have managed to beat the odds and secure affordable housing for themselves. The result of feedback like this is to slow down approvals, deny proposals, and prevent other working families from having the same opportunities they had.

We need to prioritize 160 homes and a sustainable environment ahead of shadows, traffic fears, and facades.

**Voit Farms:**

- The mix of residential and commercial space is good to see in a new development. Too often new subdivisions focus solely on residential uses, which forces residents to go farther to meet their basic needs and promotes car-oriented development.
- I applaud the inclusion of permanent affordable housing through an option to the Madison

Area Community Land Trust. Madison needs affordable housing, and it's promising to see it included in a new subdivision.

- I strongly feel that the Chicago Avenue extension should be exclusively bike-ped only. The city has a goal of reducing carbon emissions, and an important way to do that is to prioritize walking and biking over driving. It is difficult to effectively build a bridge that accommodates ped-bike-auto movement together, and a bridge that allows cars will preclude good bike and ped connectivity to the new neighborhood.
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- I am disappointed that the proposed units have been reduced to around 1,100 from the previous versions of the proposal. This site is the perfect location for affordable, sustainable homes, and it should be home to even more of them. I urge you to resist any future attempts to decrease the number of units, and instead explore the possibilities of adding more residences.

Taken together, these two proposals will bring much-needed homes to the market, improve the environmental footprint of the city, and increase affordability. I hope you join me in supporting them.

**Ian Jamison**  
District 6, Marquette Neighborhood

**From:** [Will Stedden](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** In support of Voit Farms development  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 23, 2023 10:49:06 AM

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

Hello members of the Plan Commission and Common Council,

I am writing in support of the proposed plat for the Voit Farms development. I am personally interested in opportunities like this location to settle down and could see myself moving to an area like the one you've proposed someday. I just wanted to point out some of the features I really like:

- I really love the mix of commercial and residential space. I've fallen in love with my little 15 minute city living on the Isthmus and think it's awesome we're trying to create more spaces like that. I don't ever want to be forced into using a car just to get to the basics around my neighborhood again!

Some things I think could use a little improvement:

-One thing I wanted to mention is that I think it would be preferable for Chicago Avenue to be bike/ped path only. I'm an all year cyclist and think it would be really helpful and safer to keep that area free of cars..

-Finally, I just wish there were more units being put in! We need places like this to be as dense as possible to prevent more and more sprawl as people move to Madison from all over the country.

I really appreciate the public comment opportunity and hope you think about people like me who could someday live there and not just current residents who happen to be lucky enough to live around there now.

Thanks  
Will Stedden

**From:** [Dana Maltby](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [info@madisonisforpeople.org](mailto:info@madisonisforpeople.org); [Tishler, Bill](#)  
**Subject:** Support of Voit Farms Development  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 23, 2023 10:48:49 AM

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

Hello members of the Plan Commission and Common Council,

I am writing today in support of the proposed plat for the Voit Farms development. Although only the plat is up for debate at the Plan Commission meeting on the 28th, I would also like to provide thought on the overall features of the plan:

- The mix of residential and commercial space is good to see in a new development. Too often new subdivisions focus solely on residential uses, which forces residents to go farther to meet their basic needs and promotes car-oriented development.
- I applaud the inclusion of permanent affordable housing through an option to the Madison Area Community Land Trust. Madison needs affordable housing, and it's promising to see it included in a new subdivision.
- I strongly feel that the Chicago Avenue extension should be exclusively bike-ped only. The city has a goal of reducing carbon emissions, and an important way to do that is to prioritize walking and biking over driving. It is difficult to effectively build a bridge that accommodates ped-bike-auto movement together, and a bridge that allows cars will preclude good bike and ped connectivity to the new neighborhood.
- The gridded streets are a good feature of this subdivision. Although the extra connections on Milwaukee Street may not be nice for drivers, they will make the pedestrian walking experience better and should be included in the plat. An alternative would be to limit car intersections to every other crossing, but create bike/ped connections at every crossing point.
- I am disappointed that the proposed units have been reduced to around 1,100 from the previous versions of the proposal. This site is the perfect location for affordable, sustainable homes, and it should be home to even more of them. I urge you to resist any future attempts to decrease the number of units, and instead explore the possibilities of adding more residences.

I hope you will take a moment to consider my comments, and think about what will be best for Madison in the future, not just now. Please think about what will be best for residents of this development, and not just people who are here now.

Thank you,  
Dana Maltby

**From:** [Olivia Williams](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Re: In support of higher density and a bike bridge at Voit  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 23, 2023 9:13:24 AM

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

Hi Plan Commission,

I wanted to add one brief note: I notice in Paul Schechter's email a claim that the bordering neighborhood associations strongly support Save the Farm. I serve as Secretary for the Eastmorland Community Association which will include the Voit property. ECA has to date had no vote or official statement on the proposal, so I just wanted to clarify that fact for you.

Thank you,  
Olivia

**OLIVIA R. WILLIAMS (they/she/Dr.)** | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



902 ROYSTER OAKS DRIVE | SUITE 105 | MADISON, WI 53714 | (608) 285-2691  
[OLIVIA@MACLT.ORG](mailto:OLIVIA@MACLT.ORG) | [MACLT.ORG](http://MACLT.ORG)

Office hours by appointment only



*MACLT is a proud member of Community Shares of Wisconsin*

On Thu, Aug 17, 2023 at 10:36 AM Olivia Williams <[olivia@maclt.org](mailto:olivia@maclt.org)> wrote:

Hi Plan Commission,

I wear two hats with regards to the proposed platting and rezoning at the Voit property:

First, I am the Executive Director of Madison Area Community Land Trust, and we have an Option to Purchase a lot from Starkweather Group after they have exercised their option. I am excited to have the opportunity to develop permanently affordable owner-occupied units on the parcel under contract, and I have found the Starkweather Group to be forthcoming and easy to work with as we developed the agreement.

Second, I am an area resident and I am excited to see the new development happening at the property. I just wish it had higher density as originally proposed by the development team. It's not clear to me why the number of units was reduced in the developers' proposal from 1400 (last winter) to 1100 (now). Especially given the housing crisis and need for construction of new units, this proposal for new construction on undeveloped land near major transit lines and along a growing bike network is an excellent opportunity to add more dense housing (ideally more than 1400 units). I see no need for the development to comply with the five year-old Milwaukee Street Special Area Plan so tightly, if city staff, the Mayor's office, and much of the general public agree that building more units is important (see the need for more units highlighted in the [2023 Housing Snapshot](#)). I would be in favor

of adding stories to every lot currently proposed on the site, and I urge Plan Commission to consider +1 zoning for this proposal on the whole.

Additionally, I am in support of a bike/ped bridge across Starkweather Creek at Chicago Ave instead of a car bridge. There is no need for car access at that juncture, but a bike/ped crossing would make the greenspace at the east end of the development even more accessible. I see no reason to keep open the possibility of a car bridge in the future.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Olivia

**OLIVIA R. WILLIAMS (they/she/Dr.)** | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



902 ROYSTER OAKS DRIVE | SUITE 105 | MADISON, WI 53714 | (608) 285-2691  
[OLIVIA@MACLT.ORG](mailto:OLIVIA@MACLT.ORG) | [MACLT.ORG](http://MACLT.ORG)

Office hours by appointment only



*MACLT is a proud member of Community Shares of Wisconsin*

**From:** [Olivia Williams](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Re: In support of higher density and a bike bridge at Voit  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 23, 2023 9:13:24 AM

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

Hi Plan Commission,

I wanted to add one brief note: I notice in Paul Schechter's email a claim that the bordering neighborhood associations strongly support Save the Farm. I serve as Secretary for the Eastmorland Community Association which will include the Voit property. ECA has to date had no vote or official statement on the proposal, so I just wanted to clarify that fact for you.

Thank you,  
Olivia

**OLIVIA R. WILLIAMS (they/she/Dr.)** | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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On Thu, Aug 17, 2023 at 10:36 AM Olivia Williams <[olivia@maclt.org](mailto:olivia@maclt.org)> wrote:

Hi Plan Commission,

I wear two hats with regards to the proposed platting and rezoning at the Voit property:

First, I am the Executive Director of Madison Area Community Land Trust, and we have an Option to Purchase a lot from Starkweather Group after they have exercised their option. I am excited to have the opportunity to develop permanently affordable owner-occupied units on the parcel under contract, and I have found the Starkweather Group to be forthcoming and easy to work with as we developed the agreement.

Second, I am an area resident and I am excited to see the new development happening at the property. I just wish it had higher density as originally proposed by the development team. It's not clear to me why the number of units was reduced in the developers' proposal from 1400 (last winter) to 1100 (now). Especially given the housing crisis and need for construction of new units, this proposal for new construction on undeveloped land near major transit lines and along a growing bike network is an excellent opportunity to add more dense housing (ideally more than 1400 units). I see no need for the development to comply with the five year-old Milwaukee Street Special Area Plan so tightly, if city staff, the Mayor's office, and much of the general public agree that building more units is important (see the need for more units highlighted in the [2023 Housing Snapshot](#)). I would be in favor



of adding stories to every lot currently proposed on the site, and I urge Plan Commission to consider +1 zoning for this proposal on the whole.

Additionally, I am in support of a bike/ped bridge across Starkweather Creek at Chicago Ave instead of a car bridge. There is no need for car access at that juncture, but a bike/ped crossing would make the greenspace at the east end of the development even more accessible. I see no reason to keep open the possibility of a car bridge in the future.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Olivia

**OLIVIA R. WILLIAMS (they/she/Dr.)** | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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**From:** [Jonathan Mertzig](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [Tishler, Bill](#)  
**Subject:** Essen Haus and Voit Farm proposals  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 22, 2023 6:53:31 PM

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

Dear Members of the Plan Commission (cc: Alder Tishler),

I am writing to strongly support the proposal to build 160 homes at the current site of the Essen Haus and Come Back In, and additionally, in support of the proposed plat of the Voit Farms development up for debate at the commission meeting on the 28th.

I wholeheartedly agree with the following talking points provided by the organization Madison is for People regarding these two developments.

In regard to the Essen Haus/Come Back In proposal:

The current proposal is a major step forward for housing affordability, the environment, and the vibrancy of downtown Madison. The developer has operated in good faith to systematically address concerns that prevented past proposals for this site from moving forward.

Adding 160 homes to this site represents a good down payment on the city's years of underbuilding, and news that some of the units will be affordable to folks making 60% of the area median income is especially welcome news.

The proposal will invigorate the area by allowing hundreds more people to live and stay downtown, frequenting our local shops and restaurants and keeping them thriving.

Finally, the proposal will increase sustainability by replacing an impermeable parking lot with homes for hundreds of people right on the new Bus Rapid Transit line. It will enable families to go car-lite, to live in the city instead of driving to their jobs from the suburbs, and will decrease pressure on Madison to sprawl into surrounding farms and wild areas.

Some have quibbled with the setbacks, demanded shadow and traffic studies, or shared strong personal feelings about aesthetics and facades.

These privileged perspectives often come from those who have managed to beat the odds and secure affordable housing for themselves. The result of feedback like this is to slow down approvals, deny proposals, and prevent other working families from having the same opportunities they had.

We need to prioritize 160 homes and a sustainable environment ahead of shadows, traffic fears, and facades.

In regard to to Voit Farms:

- The mix of residential and commercial space is good to see in a new development. Too often new subdivisions focus solely on residential uses, which forces residents to go farther to meet their basic needs and promotes car-oriented development.
- I applaud the inclusion of permanent affordable housing through an option to the Madison Area Community Land Trust. Madison needs affordable housing, and it's promising to see it included in a new subdivision.
- I strongly feel that the Chicago Avenue extension should be exclusively bike-ped only. The city has a goal of reducing carbon emissions, and an important way to do that is to prioritize walking and biking over driving. It is difficult to effectively build a bridge that accommodates ped-bike-auto movement together, and a bridge that allows cars will preclude good bike and ped connectivity to the new neighborhood.
- The gridded streets are a good feature of this subdivision. Although the extra connections on Milwaukee Street may not be nice for drivers, they will make the pedestrian walking experience better and should be included in the plat. An alternative would be to limit car intersections to every other crossing, but create bike/ped connections at every crossing point.
- I am disappointed that the proposed units have been reduced to around 1,100 from the previous versions of the proposal. This site is the perfect location for affordable, sustainable homes, and it should be home to even more of them. I urge you to resist any future attempts to decrease the number of units, and instead explore the possibilities of adding more residences.

I hope you will consider these comments and decide in the interests of what maximizes the benefits of providing the best quality and quantity of housing for Madison's future. These two developments both offer excellent opportunities to help close the gap on Madison's chronic housing shortfalls in a manner that addresses issues of sustainability and affordability.

Thank you,  
Jonathan Mertzig

[jmmertzig@uwalumni.com](mailto:jmmertzig@uwalumni.com)

District 11 resident / Midvale Heights neighborhood

**From:** [Lillian](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** VOIT FARM #78642  
**Date:** Friday, August 18, 2023 10:10:06 AM

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

I'm an Eastmorland resident and have been following the Save the Farm forums since the beginning.

I love the wide expansive views of open space along Milwaukee Street. The beautiful corn growing along with busy commuters, the sunsets lighting up the silo...

One soil specialist commented in the forum that the soil at VOIT farm is some of the most fertile in the STATE.

I fully understand housing is needed. So too, is a vibrant community, strong leadership, commitment to alternative thinking, building, and stewarding our precious land and resources. We are literally on fire.

I support the suggestions from Save the Farm group.

I fully advocate for fewer buildings and more green space, geothermal approaches, and fewer roads. I support an off-leash dog park in the plan.

The central plaza is a wonderful idea, and how lucky to live there and walk amongst gardens rather than a grid of streets?

Additionally: I advocate for including regional tradespeople and artisans in the development of creative and beautiful wayfinding signage, metalwork, woodwork, tiling, and stonework. Our craftspeople are highly-skilled, professional.

This project offers a unique opportunity for integrated training in the built environment.

We must pass these artisan trades on to the next generation or they will be lost.

I advocate for including a zone for LIVE-WORK space, to address the dearth of artisan workspace and studios in Madison.

This development could set a standard for other cities and how to live well into the 21st c. and beyond.

The team is smart and has already made good progress and modifications.

I trust this will continue as citizens speak up for the kind of community we need.

People Forward

Sincerely,

Lillian Sizemore  
Tulane Av. Madison WI

**From:** [Lauren Dilley](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Voit Farm  
**Date:** Thursday, August 17, 2023 10:36:46 PM

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

Hello,

I live on the eastside of Madison and I am just one of many community members interested in the future of the Voit property. This land is very special to many individuals for various reasons. For example, community members have memories of going to the Eastside Businessman festival held on the Voit's grounds many years ago. Among other reasons, people also appreciate and enjoy seeing the wildlife and the natural landscape of the Voit property in an otherwise urban area.

Please consider the following while thinking of the Voit property:

**Affordable Housing:** Rent is skyrocketing in madison. I have met a few college students who have had their rent increased by \$500 per month over the last year alone. There are plans to have affordable housing on the site, but please consider a greater number of affordable units as well as a variety of housing options. Some of these housing varieties could be: housing cooperatives, apartments, and tiny homes.

**Green Energy:** Fossil Fuel free energy systems are another way to keep costs down for renters and homeowners. One possibility is implementing a geothermal system on the property. Since the property is not developed yet, it would be far easier to implement a system like this now, then to try and add one later. Fossil fuels create poor air quality. Madison has experienced poor air quality, from the Canadian wildfires. The poor air quality has impacted sports and the amount of time the community has spent outdoors, in general. Fossil fuels have more of a negative impact on the economy than green energy. In the long run, due to the clean up of more environmental disasters, like increased flooding and wildfires, fossil fuels will cost more than greener options.

**Decrease Car Traffic On The Property:** The current plan is to have three streets crossing over Milwaukee street and onto the property. These streets would be Leon St, Harding St and Walter St. An increase in paved surfaces creates more runoff and can be detrimental to the watershed. Fewer paved streets and more permeable surfaces allows water to slow, sink and spread into the ground. Water that slows down, sinks into the ground and spreads out, helps protect the watershed from accumulating trash, chemicals, bacteria, and soil and other debris from construction sites. Systems put in place to decrease stormwater runoff, cost money and will ultimately need upkeep over the years. More permeable surfaces (less roads and sidewalks) helps decrease the need for stormwater runoff control systems. More green space would also be inviting for community members to gather on. Please consider decreasing the number of paved roads on the property.

**Urban Agriculture Space-** It is important for people to know where their food comes from and have access to affordable healthy food. An urban agriculture space would create opportunities for easier access to healthy food. This also gives the community the opportunity to learn where their food comes from, how it is grown and take part in the community. Supporting local food decreases transportation costs and decreases our footprint on the planet.

**Community Center-** A place where the community can come together to learn, create and share. The community center could create a space for food sharing, crafts, music, nature classes and other classes. The Urban Ecology Center, in Milwaukee, has really helped the neighborhoods around their centers and brought their communities together. Madison has the opportunity to do something very similar on this site.

Please, consider the many community letters and comments regarding the Voit property. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lauren

**From:** [Michael Vickerman](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Voit Farm Plat Application  
**Date:** Thursday, August 17, 2023 9:59:34 PM

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

I am a supporter of low-impact infill development in the City of Madison. The Voit Farm development is a rare opportunity to design a walkable and livable neighborhood close to existing transportation networks and open spaces. Out of this planning process should come a well-thought-out strategy for minimizing the use of carbon-based energy sources within the Voit Farm boundaries. I encourage the development team to investigate building designs, layouts, and energy management approaches that maximize the use of clean electricity, whether generated onsite or offsite. I would think that the Voit Farm parcel offers ample opportunity to employ ground-source heat pump technologies, ideally engineered as a district service. This can be accomplished without sacrificing open space.

An example of this integrated approach to low-carbon energy management is the award-winning 1300 Residences, a 50-unit affordable housing community in River Falls.  
<https://www.taxcreditcoalition.org/gallery/1300-residences/>.

I would encourage the Voit Farm development team to seek out the City of Madison's sustainability professionals (Jessica Price and Gregg May) for guidance and help in accessing federal and state clean energy incentives. Other local nonprofits who can provide assistance in pairing clean energy with affordable housing include Elevate Energy and RENEW Wisconsin, the organization I work for.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments at this early stage of the development process.

Michael Vickerman  
509 Elmside Blvd.  
Madison

RENEW Wisconsin  
[mvickerman@renewwisconsin.org](mailto:mvickerman@renewwisconsin.org)

--

Michael Vickerman  
Clean Energy Deployment Manager  
RENEW Wisconsin  
214 N. Hamilton St., Suite 300  
608.255.4044  
<http://www.renewwisconsin.org>





**From:** [Ellen Zweibel](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed Redevelopment of Voit Farm  
**Date:** Thursday, August 17, 2023 3:55:57 PM

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

Dear Planning Commission Members,

I have been following the proposed plans for redeveloping the Voit Farm with some consternation. I have lived on the Near East Side of Madison for 20 years this month and passing the farm has always been a source of joy. I understand that it cannot remain exactly as it was, but crushing its SPIRIT, as the proposed redevelopment does, seems entirely unnecessary and poor stewardship of a precious resource. To be specific:

1. Why so much paving? Very bad for the creek and its watershed.
2. Why so few affordable housing units and so little infrastructure to foster community? Madison has a housing crisis. Here we have an opportunity to build an affordable community that works. We know that affordable housing in the form of isolated apartments managed from afar hasn't worked well in Madison.
3. Why that huge bridge, which will take its own toll on the creek ecosystem? I say this as a dedicated commuter and recreational biker, runner, and walker. I'd rather have the destination than the bridge.

Thanks in advance for listening.

Ellen Zweibel

1511 Rutledge St

Madison 53703

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William L. Kraushaar Professor of Astronomy & Physics  
Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professor

**From:** [Joel Demeritt](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment Voit Farm - 78642  
**Date:** Thursday, August 17, 2023 3:17:48 PM

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

To our community,

The opportunity to develop the Voit farm is unique: the ecosystem, size, location, and connectivity to the community necessitate a holistic and forward looking development approach. Please know my support for the requests of the Save the Farm organization. Road access should be limited to avoid car-centricity, water pollution, dangers to pedestrians, and to limit congestion. The wetland and creek are very special eco-systems, I encourage you to spend time in them (bring waterproof boots) to find out for yourself. Migratory birds, deer, turkey, Walleye, and many other species live here and to pollute/destroy their home is unethical.

- 1: The Chicago Ave extension should not be anything other than foot and bike traffic.
- 2: The building height limits are a non-issue in my opinion, build up to allow for more green space
- 3: Ample land should be set aside for community agriculture, as the proposed amount is insufficient for to carry the ethos of the community.
- 4: The 3 additional Milwaukee Street intersections are too much

A separate issue perhaps, but consider the extension of these values by allowing rezoning in the neighborhoods adjacent to allow for higher density housing.

Regards,

Joel DeMeritt | Sustainability Engineer | Trek Bicycle | 920.478.2191

**From:** [Caddy Wampus](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Voit Farm  
**Date:** Thursday, August 17, 2023 3:01:56 PM

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

The Voit Farm development has a chance to be an outstanding vision for posterity and future developments nationwide.

Like Troy Gardens it could provide its “neighborhood” with agricultural land (but with more acreage than the latest plan). Tiny garden plots wouldn’t utilize that wonderfully rich soil as the most effective agricultural use.

Voit farms should provide a community learning center and a sustainable housing concept using as much alternative energy as possible.

There is no need for so many roadways on that acreage and what IS needed should at least be water permeable. Adding more concrete is certainly not what we need with climate change, as it heats up the environs and causes run-off instead of penetration, during large downpours, which will be more frequent.

There is no need for a car bridge over a sensitive area like the Starkweather watershed. A small bike & pedestrian bridge would be an acceptable alternative. Please revisit the original ideas we had for this lovely property, as that was still the best plan yet!

Thank you

Lynne Weborg

**From:** [Samantha Howk](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Voit farm development comments  
**Date:** Thursday, August 17, 2023 2:50:54 PM

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

Hi there,

My name is Samantha Howk and I am a resident of the Eastmorland neighborhood, so I have a personal interest in the development plan for the former Voit Farm property.

My top priorities as far as what I want to see in this development is a *meaningful* quantity and proportion of *actually affordable* and *sustainable/green* housing units, whether rentals or owner-occupied, and a combination of preserved natural areas and urban agriculture/community gardens.

To achieve this, minimizing the number of new roads and maximizing the density of the housing units are key to minimizing disruption of the natural and agricultural areas and making the development as pedestrian-friendly, bike-friendly, and truly accessible as possible.

I like that the developer is working with the city to plan for a City of Madison park to be included in the development, and I would love to see a building (with solar panels and/or a green roof) that could be used as a community space in that park.

I support the continued expansion of the network of bike paths in the area but again hope that they can be constructed with minimal disruption to the Starkweather Creek riparian zone and other delicate natural areas.

Overall, I view this project as a unique opportunity to showcase how housing development can be done differently to the status quo (i.e. huge blocky buildings with expensive units) and in a way that is truly aligned with the values and priorities of the community, which in this case are primarily real affordability, environmental sustainability, and livability.

Thank you,  
Samantha

--

**Samantha (Bechtold) Howk**

she/her

**From:** [jeanie kramer](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Plat plan for VOIT farm  
**Date:** Thursday, August 17, 2023 1:19:13 PM

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

I am writing to voice my objection to the Plat proposal for the Voit Farm development currently under review by the Council. First of all Nearly all buildable land will be paved over and built upon, preserving essentially no agricultural land to allow for meaningful community garden and farm activities. The developer does plan to put 4 tenths of one acre set aside for community gardens but this is simply not enough

The proposal calls for a traditional pavement heavy road grid with 6 roads. This will damage the creek watershed and increase the risk of flooding through loss of permeable soil filtration, and the additional runoff raises concerns for more water pollution. More expensive and traditional stormwater management structures will then need to be implemented to mitigate the run off. This poor creek has been through enough and deserves to be protected. The Chicago ave extension including a highway style overpass across the creek that would destroy more natural habitat as well as demolishing my house, naturally occurring affordable and owner occupied housing needs to be removed from the plan.

The application does not include planning for environmentally sustainable design or alternative energy sources such as geothermal infrastructure, solar microgrid, or electric car charging stations. We can not go back later and add the needed infrastructure for geothermal energy. It needs to be done now.

There does not appear to be a designated facility to support programming to support a sense of community. Programming could include: farmers' markets, tutoring, skill-sharing events, community meals, and nature education classes. While some of the proposed outlots may permit this, it would be important that the zoning for a relevant plat allow for a commissary or commercial kitchen to support community meals..

In conclusion, I would like to see preservation of a more substantial agricultural area for community gardens and farm entrepreneurs' projects, chickens/small animals, and as a gathering space for residents to connect and share, meaning that not all of the existing farmland be paved over for streets and buildings.

Building sites should be designed for energy efficiency, using geothermal, solar, green roofs, and other techniques to reduce carbon footprint and encourage a non-car-centric, walkable and friendly environment. Specific plans for improving Milwaukee street to accommodate the influx of traffic from the development need to be discussed. A footprint for a pedestrian/ bike bridge or walkway across the creek that does not destroy existing housing should be discussed.

There should be zoning for a plat that allows for Inclusion of a community ecology center, which could offer educational programming and create a focal point for neighborhood interactions and community-building such as a farmer's market, community meals, skill sharing, and possibly a festival.

The developers should consider donation of a few acre plat, to be specifically designated as owned by the community, to be developed by a non-profit coalition as a demo-site, based on public guidance and need.

I would like to see a commitment to using union contractors and minority owned companies for the work needed on this project.

In closing, I'd like to commend Starkweather LLC for listening to the community and incorporating changes to their plans. There are still many improvements that can be made, but it is a start.

Thank you  
Jeanie Kramer



Reply

Forward

**From:** [Rich Johnson](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on the Development of the Voit Farm: 8/17/23  
**Date:** Thursday, August 17, 2023 12:49:42 PM

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

Dear Members of the Common Council,

For quite some time now I have been following the grassroot efforts to create a sustainable, low rent, fun, eco-friendly development of the Voit Farm on Milwaukee St. What has always struck me is that this is a UNIQUE parcel of land, both in it's make up of land and water, and also it's location within Madison proper. To simply allow developers to create more of our exploding number of extremely similar, 6-10 story buildings with first floor retail ( as seen all throughout Madison), is to waste a golden opportunity. This is an opportunity to actually be creative, (not just platitudes), and address not only affordable housing, but also community gardens, alternative energy, and, constructing an environment that will induce people to be part of their community. So I ask you to touch into your creative thinking talents, to ponder "outside the conditioned box" part of your mind, and explore the vision proposed by the local community group, "Save the Farm."

I remind you here of the obvious concerns, and then what is being proposed by the "Save the Farm" group:

**Some of the Concerns:**

1. Nearly all buildable land will be paved over and built upon, meaning essentially **no agricultural land will be preserved to allow for meaningful community garden and farm activities**, (The developer has 4 tenths of one acre set aside for community gardens)
2. The proposal calls for a traditional pavement **heavy road grid with 6 roads, including 3 roads crossing Milwaukee St** and an extension of Chicago Ave from the west, crossing Starkweather Creek. **All this pavement will damage the creek watershed through loss of permeable soil filtration, raising concerns over flooding and water pollution. More expensive and traditional stormwater management structures will then need to be implemented to mitigate the run off.** Furthermore, **3 more intersections crossing Milwaukee St will be very disruptive**, and a road across the creek (Chicago Ave), will devastate the green corridor of the creek- any bridge should be limited to only a bike and pedestrian crossing, which will still allow folks from west access to the land.
3. **The application does not directly indicate planning for environmentally sustainable design**, such as geothermal infrastructure, solar microgrid, or electric car charging stations.
4. **There does not appear to be a designated facility where programming to support a sense of community could occur. (a "Community Center")**. Such

programming could include: farmers' markets, tutoring, skill-sharing events, community meals, and nature education classes. While some of the proposed outlots may be zoned to permit this, it would be important that the zoning for a relevant plat allow for a commissary or commercial kitchen to support community meals..

**Specific Proposals to create a "Community Neighborhood" that is enjoyed by all:**

1. There should be preservation of a more substantial agricultural area for community gardens and farm entrepreneurs' projects, chickens/small animals, and as a gathering space for residents to connect and share, meaning that not all of the existing farmland be paved over for streets and buildings.
2. Building sites should be designed for energy efficiency, using geothermal, solar, green roofs, and other techniques to reduce carbon footprint and encourage a non-car-centric, walkable and friendly environment
3. There should be zoning for a plat that allows for Inclusion of a community ecology center, which could offer educational programming and create a focal point for neighborhood interactions and community-building such as a farmer's market, community meals, skill sharing, and possibly a festival.
4. The developers should consider donation of a few acre plat, to be specifically designated as owned by the community, to be developed by a non-profit coalition as a demo-site, based on public guidance.
5. The Chicago Avenue extension should be a bike /pedestrian only bridge.
6. Fewer roads should cross Milwaukee St. [just one]
7. Design some apartments/townhouses to meet "Universal Design Standards," so that they are accessible to people living there for their whole lives. [Ideally all units would be "Universally Designed."]

As a Society, we continue to be at a major crossroads for how to build within Madison, and to "sustainably" grow Madison; between doing the familiar and rubber-stamped options; or taking a new look at what is going to change in the coming years, in terms of emphasis on energy efficient housing designs, growing one's food, and our energy resource needing to do a massive shift from fossil fuels to sustainable types of energy. You have the power to make this Voit Farm, this unique parcel of land, a truly special and **important** example for how we can shift to a more sustainable design and at the same time, be much more "people friendly" than the usual 6-10 story buildings with first floor retail. Please choose to make the Voit Farm development a truly remarkable **legacy** for Madison!

I thank you for considering my comments here. If you have any questions or comments for me, please email them to me at: [rejohnson1313@gmail.com](mailto:rejohnson1313@gmail.com).

Peace, Play, Love & Light,



*Richard Johnson*  
75 Golf Pkwy Unit B  
Madison WI, 53704

**From:** [Olivia Williams](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** In support of higher density and a bike bridge at Voit  
**Date:** Thursday, August 17, 2023 10:36:39 AM

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

Hi Plan Commission,

I wear two hats with regards to the proposed platting and rezoning at the Voit property:

First, I am the Executive Director of Madison Area Community Land Trust, and we have an Option to Purchase a lot from Starkweather Group after they have exercised their option. I am excited to have the opportunity to develop permanently affordable owner-occupied units on the parcel under contract, and I have found the Starkweather Group to be forthcoming and easy to work with as we developed the agreement.

Second, I am an area resident and I am excited to see the new development happening at the property. I just wish it had higher density as originally proposed by the development team. It's not clear to me why the number of units was reduced in the developers' proposal from 1400 (last winter) to 1100 (now). Especially given the housing crisis and need for construction of new units, this proposal for new construction on undeveloped land near major transit lines and along a growing bike network is an excellent opportunity to add more dense housing (ideally more than 1400 units). I see no need for the development to comply with the five year-old Milwaukee Street Special Area Plan so tightly, if city staff, the Mayor's office, and much of the general public agree that building more units is important (see the need for more units highlighted in the [2023 Housing Snapshot](#)). I would be in favor of adding stories to every lot currently proposed on the site, and I urge Plan Commission to consider +1 zoning for this proposal on the whole.

Additionally, I am in support of a bike/ped bridge across Starkweather Creek at Chicago Ave instead of a car bridge. There is no need for car access at that juncture, but a bike/ped crossing would make the greenspace at the east end of the development even more accessible. I see no reason to keep open the possibility of a car bridge in the future.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Olivia

**OLIVIA R. WILLIAMS (they/she/Dr.)** | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



902 ROYSTER OAKS DRIVE | SUITE 105 | MADISON, WI 53714 | (608) 285-2691  
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Office hours by appointment only



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**From:** [Mary Jones](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Voit project  
**Date:** Thursday, August 17, 2023 10:20:26 AM

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I am not fan of the pedestrian bridge across the creek, it's an unnecessary disruption of that fragile ecosystem. I am however, in favor of the bike path bridge would include " not at the expense of affordable owner occupied housing.

Thank you.

Mary Jones/ [shamusjones01@gmail.com](mailto:shamusjones01@gmail.com)

**From:** [Ruth Ellickson](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Voit Farm Comment  
**Date:** Thursday, August 17, 2023 9:16:48 AM

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The need for our leaders to pay attention to this city's last open land initially borrowed by the Ho Chunk Tribe is of great importance. I do not have words to express what neighbors are saying and feeling as cement mixers are currently growling just west of Starkweather Creek.

A friend suggested this ageless quote from George Bird Grinnell:

"The natural things we are trying to preserve are useful in two aspects. They have value measurable in money, and a recreation value not measurable....If we treat the natural things solely as commercial and turn them into dollars and cents, we expend and destroy them...If we preserve them...they reproduce themselves... "

Read " Grinnell: America's Environmental Pioneer and His Restless Desire to Save the West"  
by John Taliferro.

I hold on to hope.

Ruth Ellickson

Madison, WI

**From:** [Lance Green](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [Rummel, Marsha](#); [Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina](#); [Lance Green](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on Voit Plat Proposal  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 15, 2023 5:27:19 PM

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To : Madison Plan Commission

From: Lance Green, 186 Dixon St

I submit these comments on the proposed development of the Voit Property. I have lived in my home nearby for 42 years and have a unique perspective from serving on the Friends of Starkweather Creek board and Madison Sustainability Committee for over 12 years, but these comments are my own.

Developing this 65 acre property in the heart of Madison's East side presents a unique chance to provide our city with significant, accessible natural areas, urban agriculture, and mixed and affordable housing.

**1. Preserving extensive natural areas** here will offer our neighborhood a variety of outdoor educational and recreational opportunities like biking and walking trails with bird/wildlife viewing areas, canoe/kayak launch access, a fishing pier in the pond.

The plan envisions an estimated 35 acres of the Voit property be dedicated to natural areas, comprising about 30 acres of the northern part of the property and about 5 acres of land along the creek and planned bike path. These areas were identified for Parks and Open Space in the [Milwaukee Area Special Plan](#) adopted in 2018 by the City of Madison and Town of Blooming Grove (See Natural Features, Map 7, p13/32). Quotes from that document affirm the importance of preserving this space:

"Improving parks and open spaces was a major priority for participants of public involvement. The most visible natural feature of the plan area is Starkweather Creek, a navigable waterway which links parks and open spaces throughout the neighborhood and larger East Side of Madison, including Olbrich Park and Lake Monona. Approximately one quarter mile north of Milwaukee Street, wetlands, flood plains and future park land are planned to be contained within nearly 100 acres in public open space." (p.14/32).

"...On the Voit property, the concept identifies a new active park space north of Chicago Avenue as well as a parkway along Starkweather Creek, similar to the Yahara Parkway between East Washington and Williamson Street. (p.21/32)"

Managing these portions of the Voit property as natural areas will also support a continuous riparian "green corridor," essential habitat for life along Starkweather's East Branch, connecting southward through OB Sherry Park, Garver Property, Olbrich Park and eventually further northeast along the creek.

Adjacent to the east is the [City of Madison Starkweather Conservancy Park](#), which was acquired through the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Funds and is deed-restricted for outdoor recreation purposes only. **I suggest this conservancy be extended across the northern section, perhaps even along the creek and bike path. In 2021 Dane County set aside \$500,000 to help preserve the land with a conservation easement. These funds can only be used to purchase land on the Voit**

**property that will be deed restricted for conservation preservation.**

East of that Park is a large 40-acre wetland area managed as stormwater green space by the Madison Engineering Dept. This nearby wetland habitat abuts wetlands in the north portion of the Voit land and provides a contiguous area for restoring a large healthy wetland habitat which will help sustain clean surface and groundwaters.

**2. Designate space for an Urban Ecology Center to provide outdoor educational and shared community-building experiences for all.** The very successful [Urban Ecology Center](#) (UEC) model was developed in Milwaukee and has quite successfully improved the neighborhoods around them. Many local organizations would utilize this space to provide a wealth of environmental education and variety of programming to build community and skills and other healthy neighborhood interactions.

**3. Increase the acreage for urban agriculture.** The proposal should preserve much more than 0.4 acres of this excellent soil to provide community gardens, healthy food and learning opportunities.

**4. Reduce roads crossing Milwaukee Steet and improve the streetscape.** Traffic volume along this section has vastly increased in the past few years. The plan should include a maximum of two crossings, the current stop-lighted intersection at Walter and a non-lighted crossing on Leon St if needed. Perhaps Chicago Ave could connect to Corporate Drive to the East. The current site grid pattern should be modified to present a more creative, desirable living space with less impermeable pavement and run-off to the creek.

**5. Please do not extend Chicago Avenue across Starkweather Creek,** significantly disrupting the natural corridor and contributing more run-off to the creek. If desired, access for neighbors to the west could be provided by a pedestrian/bike bridge connecting to the bike path along the creek.

**6. Utilize green energy.** Buildings throughout the site (and the adjacent land to the East) should be designed and integrated to maximize solar and on-site geothermal energy before they are built, and should be highly efficient without dependence on fossil gas.

Many thanks for your consideration of my comments. Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,  
Lance Green  
186 Dixon St  
Madison, WI 53704  
608-249-5979

**From:** [Andy Heidt](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Cc:** [Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina](#); [district6@cityofmadsion.com](mailto:district6@cityofmadsion.com)  
**Subject:** Voit Farm  
**Date:** Monday, August 14, 2023 10:11:21 AM

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Hello,

I hope the project can maximize affordability and harmony with the natural environment. Protecting the fragile creek corridor and maintaining public access to that stretch is important and would be an excellent open space addition to our bike/pedestrian nature linkage. The street grid element with additional roads into Milwaukee Street and Fair Oaks Avenue seems very unnecessary. The Fair Oaks should be avoided besides a pedestrian/bike link. On Milwaukee, minimizing entry points is a wise and hoped for piece for the development.

I like the land trust component and am a member of their volunteer Board of Directors, but more affordability is needed especially in components of the rental housing. A significant development on this site could be an amazing addition to Madison for generations to come. Please be intentional to create the best project possible.

If this project falls through I hope the city purchases the site and directs development through a unique and harmonizing lens.

Sincerely,

Andy Heidt  
3128 St Paul Ave  
608-622-5585

**From:** [Melissa Rosenkranz](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** VOIT Farm development  
**Date:** Friday, August 11, 2023 5:49:40 PM

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To whom it may concern,

I am writing to submit a public comment about the development of the VOIT Farm property. I am concerned about the amount of green or agricultural space set aside from development and about the proposed road crossing Starkweather Creek. I have lived in this neighborhood (and paid the (ever rising) taxes) for 23 years. Development is essential, but should be smart and well-considered, especially given the changes happening to our climate and the need to anticipate future environmental pressures. As such, the development should incorporate more sustainable features such as energy efficiency (geothermal, solar, green roofs, and other infrastructure to reduce the carbon footprint) and encourage non-reliance on auto transport. creating a walkable and bikeable environment. This property is close enough to downtown that these features should be high priority. Madison should be a leader in such advancement, not scrambling to catch up.

Thank you for considering my comments,

Melissa Rosenkranz



**From:** [HERBERT G NILLES](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Voit farm plan (Starkweather plat)  
**Date:** Sunday, August 13, 2023 1:49:30 PM

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1. The Starkweather plan has too many roads which creates too much runoff.
2. The Starkweather plan doesn't have enough acreage for community agriculture.
3. The buildings could be higher and leave more green space.
4. Building sites should be designed for energy efficiency, using geothermal, solar power, and green roofs.
5. There needs to be a community center for environmental education etc.
6. The Chicago Avenue extension should be a bike/pedestrian only bridge.

Herb Nilles  
3328 Milwaukee street #8  
Madison, WI 53714  
608-442-9034

**From:** [Masaru Oka](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** Voit Farm redevelopment  
**Date:** Monday, August 14, 2023 1:33:32 AM

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I'm concerned about potential future uses of the Voit Farm site. While Madison needs more housing, a planned housing subdivision would further worsen runoff and water quality issues in impaired Starkweather Creek. Instead, I support a mixed use plan that preserves part of the property as green space and includes sustainable, community-oriented housing with community gardens.

**From:** [Connie Murphy](#)  
**To:** [Plan Commission Comments](#)  
**Subject:** VOIT farm  
**Date:** Friday, August 11, 2023 7:20:55 PM

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

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing to make my concerns known.

1st off, I think that Madison has enough "cookie cutter" developments. I think the Voit complex needs to be special. I really like the look of Troy Gardens. It's unique in that there's housing for a mix of residents, such as families, older, & disabled. There's also community gardens and an organic farm area.

I read about the unique Kenosha soil on the property and once it's bulldozed & removed it will be gone forever. I would also like to see the farmhouse remain to be converted into a community building.

I driving for a living and see the new explosion of apartment complexes so I don't want to see "just another subdivision" where every building looks the same. I've even noticed that from one city to another outside of Madison where the designs are similar.

What needs to be kept in mind is that there's the Starkweather Creek and a wetland nearby.

There's going to be water runoff from all the pavement which could contain road salt or other contamination. I know that putting in retention ponds is usually what happens.

I used to live in the area and witnessed first hand all the wildlife. These include turkeys, Sandhill Cranes, numerous songbirds, a few bald eagles, coyotes, rabbits, squirrels, opossums and raccoons...and more.

I also don't want to see row upon row of townhouses crowded together with small yards to maximize how many can be fit in. I think those complexes are rather ugly and usually all the same color. There should also be a playground for kids.

One example is on Milwaukee St east of the Interstate my Milky Way where the houses are separated by small yards and there are alleys behind for garages.

If Voit Farms is going to be a standout development then the plans need to stand out from the rest.

Sincerely,  
Connie Murphy  
61 Bel Aire Dr  
Madison, WI 53713