

From: [John E](#)
To: [Mayor](#); [Plan Commission Comments](#); [Planning](#); [Mayor](#); [Guequierre, John](#); [Guequierre, John](#); [Mayor](#); [Guequierre, John](#); [Mayor](#); [Mayor](#); [Mayor](#); [Mayor](#)
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Dear Mayor, Alders and Planning Commission:

Please accept this e-mail in opposition to the proposed 100+ unit development (rounded to 100 and deemed "proposal") on Acadia Court. (I note there is some information the number may be as high as 144.)

I attended the meeting at John Muir School. It was evident that the entire neighborhood was against the proposal. Nonetheless, it seemed as though this opposition was not persuasive. I would like to add some commentary on the proposal should it, in fact, not be dead.

At the meeting, there were numerous specific objections. Most notable, the ingress/egress of the proposal on to Acadia Court. Alderperson John Guequierre ("Alder") assured the neighborhood that he would not support such. I will assume that this can be taken as a final conclusion of this issue and it will not creep in at a later date, typically at the last minute, when there is no available recourse. Regardless on the supposed finality of the ingress/egress issue, it is obvious that Acadia Court and Acadia Drive will be substantially affected in a negative way by the proposal. Proposal residents will use the street for parking of their own vehicles as well as visitors leading to a continually parked-up street. This will lead to the same type of situation that exists in the Vilas neighborhood as well as Mifflin and Jenifer areas. The new developments are built with minimal parking leaving residents to occupy the streets. (I lived in in the Vilas area. Over 35 years ago, conversion of a single-family home at 718 S. Orchard St and conversion of two (2) single-family homes across the street from my home at 706 S. Orchard St to "multi-family" housing all but eliminated the ability to park on the street. S. Orchard and Erin Street were parked up all the time. There was gridlock on the weekends with the zoo traffic. It destroyed the family fabric of the that block. There were no more families.) Apartments, even with one space for each unit, generated far more cars to be parked. Often a two-bedroom unit would have four (4) cars associated with it. A 100-unit project will likely have up to 200 cars according to the literature. Assuming 100 spaces are in the proposal, Acadia Drive will be the de facto parking lot for another 100 vehicles if the proposal proceeds. Again, there is information that there may be many more units in the proposal.

The street, itself, provides another issue. It was engineered for single family light traffic. The proposal raises two issues. First, the size of the street. The street is too narrow for a large

apartment. The aforementioned parking increase will restrict traffic to one-lane, making the road impassible at times. Vilas illustrates this. Any restrictions on parking will penalize the neighborhood as parking will be hogged by the proposal's excess cars. Second, the increased usage and weight with more vehicles and heavier vehicles servicing the proposal will age the street prematurely. This can be seen in the Vilas area also, as well as in other densified areas such as Jenifer Street area and West Lawn. Streets are heaved and freeze cracked.

The Gammon Road ingress/egress will cause issues on an already overcrowded roadway. The top of the hill already makes Gammon "blind" from both directions for area residents and for traffic from Farmington Way. The proposal will exacerbate that danger exponentially. Entry on the top of the hill will necessarily require another stoplight further adding complications to traffic flow and access to other Gammon Road single family home residents and Farmington Way single family residents.

Water is another concern that did not get much discussion at the meeting but is of concern as the intersection of Acadia Drive and Colony Drive has flooded numerous times. The water issue is twofold. First, the drainage of the water now absorbed into the ground will shed down to Acadia exacerbating the already flood prone streets. The footprint of the proposal is likely about 35000 square feet. This is almost an acre of the site, leaving that water to be disposed of elsewhere - more flooding on the streets. The City's own Water Department has been warning about the state of drainage on the west side. (I have received numerous postcard notices on the high concern of this issue.) Second, there is the issue of subsurface support. The soil is already sliding down the rock wall on the south side of the hill above the day care center. (In my yard, the driveway slabs are moving, the rock wall is sliding and the soil in the yard is sliding.) A hole of that size in the Acadia hill will have a substantial impact on the movement of that soil. It will disrupt the soil. The construction will cause erosion in and of itself. Further, it will destabilize the hill. There will be less lateral support. The soil will start moving into the downslope family home yards due to destabilization as well as to the inevitable surface erosion. The property may support a family home but not a massive hole for an apartment building.

Aesthetics raise an issue. Any height above the tree line will be a dominating intrusion into the landscape of the neighborhood. It is hard to imagine any design that will not be an eyesore given its dominance over the adjacent neighborhood. It brings to mind Henry Gilman Apartments, the concrete structure that overpowered the Gilman Street neighborhood. It was known as "Soviet" and "big ugly" until a new term was coined, "Brutalism", to try to legitimize the offensive, out of character building. Even if the proposal is limited to the hill tree line, it will still dominate over Acadia due to the substantial height of the lot over the Drive and the proximity of the proposal to the Acadia homes. It will literally be immediately above those back yards. It may have a "Brutalism" impact even if the architecture is reasonably benign. Second, there are aesthetic concerns do to the "lot line to lot line" coverage of the proposal.

Lot 213 is about 37200 square feet less the 1290 square foot drive to Gammon Road leaving 35910 square feet. A 100-unit proposal will require a footprint of at least 35000 square feet give other recent 4-story developments consuming the lot and providing an uncomfortable, if not unhealthy closeness, to the Gammon homes to the north and the Acadia homes below. A third issue is the overshadowing or "loss of light" suffered by the single-family homes on Acadia. The loss will put homes in the dark year around depending on the height of the proposal. The shadows will not be pleasing on Acadia, causing an "in and out" shadow on the street. This has safety implications, also. There are further comments in the commentary on aesthetics, below.

Flowing from the aesthetics issue is the privacy issue. Not addressing any legal issues, suffice to say that it is unfair for the City to approve such a proposal that inappropriately invites the new proposal "occupants" into the backyards, barbeques and windows of the Acadia single family residents.

I would also raise the issue of "need" for such a proposal. Without debating the City's position on "need", I refer to the recent Wisconsin State Journal , March 3, 2026, front page article entitled "Developers challenge need". Not attempting to paraphrase, suffice to say that there is disagreement as to housing needs, who lives where, who wants to live where, what the university enrollment will do, how much people want to pay, regardless of what they can afford, who should build what and what is the "growth" - students. A substantial part of the new housing is for singles and couples. It is not really "multi-family" but "multi- singles and couples". Please see: Wisconsin State Journal, March 22, 2026, front page, "Housing for hundreds" identifying primarily singles and couples housing. The true "multi-family" units seem to be an afterthought. A lot of the growth is student enrollment. Will that continue with a 50,000-student campus already at hand? It puts that "need" in question. Assuming there is a "multi-family" need", does the City of Madison have to provide that "need" when surrounding communities are fulfilling that "need". It is incumbent to look at "need" as competing constituencies have different definitions and different agendas. Further, if there is a "need" in the City of Madison, it is the City's failure to plan and plan with vision that has contributed to such alleged "need". While the downtown is replete with high rises creating density and responding to "need", the University Avenue corridor is beset with low, "lot line to lot line" structures that are hardly distinguishable from the aged commercial strips they replaced. The City failed to use these spaces to create high rise, high density, public transportation housing. The City missed the opportunity to double or triple the available housing by failing to create high-rise apartments along with an elegant wide and stunning boulevard. This issue continues as the new construction on University Avenue is "lot line to lot line" shoehorned in construction. The aesthetics is lacking, at best. Even the aforementioned article pictures low rise housing on a lot that could accommodate elegant high-rise towers with stunning lake views that would encourage long term family residency. Like University Avenue, the structures are space wasting, low rise "single and couples" "people warehousing", a term used to

describe the lot line to lot line low rise replacement of single family homes in the Capitol and Mifflin neighborhoods in the 1960's and 70's and continuing to date. "Vision" would have created the housing for this "need" and created a stunning, visually appealing corridor. What has been created is the same strip mall topped off with "7 bean salad" looking singles housing. As a result of this lack of vision, the City is now supporting neighborhood destruction rather than for more high rise elegant units on University Avenue, in Westgate Mall, and at Market Square on Odana Road. If such a need is real, these developments should all have been 20 stories high. Such lack of foresight does not justify ruining our neighborhood.

Crime is a substantial concern. This is apparent with the development across from West Towne. While I noted how happy John and you were that "gunfire" was down, I am appalled that there is "gunfire" at all. There was the wounded body at the daycare center corner as well as the stray bullet entering a home from the church parking lot at the top of the hill - across from the proposal. Given the already acknowledged crime in the adjacent areas, I maintain that it is wholly inappropriate to introduce any type of multi-unit proposal into the neighborhood. (I do not even count the incidences of "gunfire" anymore, they are so frequent.) This does not even address the increased frequency car and house break-in attempts.

Finally, I feel it is appropriate to address the "slippery slope" of zoning. Zoning is for a legitimate purpose. While "planned unit development" ("PUD") has been lauded as satisfying a "need", the cost is the eventual conversion of single-family home ownership to rental. It is one thing to have the PUDs in a neighborhood that has already been migrated to rental by an aggressive real estate industry. It is another wherein the implementation of PUD-type zoning actually starts the migration to a rental-type community to the exclusion and destruction of single family homes. The "slippery slope" is the problem here. With the large lots on Gammon Road, the proposed large undesirable 100-unit structure could easily lead to others to sell out to beat the turning of the neighborhood into a rental zone and, hence, accelerate the disappearance of single-family homes.

I would respectfully request that you encourage the perpetuation of this traditional single-family neighborhood and advance your multi-unit housing agenda in the other available and appropriate areas.

Sincerely,

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