

From: [Andrew Bent](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#); [Slack, Kristen](#)
Subject: Comment: Highlands resource does merit a specific zoning district
Date: Thursday, December 7, 2023 7:31:44 PM

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This comment regards Plan Commission West Area Plan Discussion Point 8A for Dec. 7, 2023, about possibly eliminating the TR-R zoning district. As the current President of the Highlands Community Association, my comments will be a bit longer, to capture key points brought to me by neighbors who are not testifying or filing public comments. The city's most favorable option is to advise against including proactive rezoning to eliminate TR-R in the West Area Plan. Proactive rezoning of the TR-R Highlands would not successfully serve the larger planning goals of the city, and would in fact work against many of those goals. The Highlands is a unique Madison resource requiring unique zoning, and whose beneficial attributes will be lost if the zoning is converted to smaller minimum lots sizes and setbacks.

Summary of Key Points:

- a) TR-R zoning was put in place by previous city leaders specifically to preserve the Highlands
- b) The Highlands is a definable locale with historic merit
- c) The Highlands is factually different from most neighborhoods - it serves essentially as a large city park and is a focal point for recreational walking in Madison –that park-like nature and use will be irreversibly harmed by zoning that increases density.
- d) Zoning for larger lot size and setbacks is also noted by many experts as an appropriate tool for achieving historic preservation in this type of case, because a larger landscape is the preservation target.

The historic and recreational positives for Madison will be lost if TR-R zoning protections of the Highlands are removed.

As current President of the Highlands Community Association I do in this case speak for the entire neighborhood. After we heard on Monday that this zoning change idea had been floated, and we shared that information with our neighborhood email list, the HCA Board has received messages from 42 of the 112 households in the Highlands. That is a tremendous show of interest, and it has generated many well-reasoned, pragmatic responses. All 42 households oppose removal of the large minimum lot size and setback requirements of TR-R zoning, because those requirements are the primary mechanism that conserves as a Madison landmark the historic character and park-like nature of this small neighborhood. The positives that TR-R zoning generates for the entire City of Madison readily outweigh any negatives, as detailed below. Our comments are shared to equip city planners and commissioners with specific information about why the Highlands is a unique landmark and an actively used public resource for the city.

The Statement of Purpose that is provided within TR-R zoning code text is clear:

“The TR-R District is established to stabilize and protect the natural beauty, historic character and park-like setting of certain heavily wooded low-density residential neighborhoods. The district is also intended to promote the preservation of the neighborhood's historic buildings, tree cover and landscape plan. This district is not intended for use in new development.”

TR-R was established by the City to protect the Highlands neighborhood, because of two attributes: it's unique historic features, and the park-like role it plays for Madison residents throughout the city and especially for west side residents living in or within a few miles of the Highlands.

Regarding the park-like role: Many are not aware that the Highlands gets substantial recreational foot-traffic year around, dozens of people every weekday and dozens of people per hour on weekend days. A key point is that a high percentage of these users come from outside of the Highlands neighborhood. That is far more recreational walking traffic than any of our surrounding West Madison city parks or conservation areas until you get maybe to Walnut Grove Park. The Highlands is a popular locale because of it's unique layout, plantings and beauty – it is just a very popular place to go for a walk.

That popularity is not an accident. The neighborhood was designed in 1911-1912 by Ossian Cole Simonds, who along with Fredrick Law Olmsted is one of the most prominent American landscape architects of the early 20th century. Simonds not only designed Morton Arboretum and large parts of Lincoln Park in Chicago; he also designed Tenney Park in Madison, Vilas Park in Madison, and, the Highlands in Madison. **One of our take-home messages** is that we suggest that city planners, commissioners and other leaders encourage high levels of restraint, consideration and process, before moving to change zoning in a way that will essentially eliminate one of the notable surviving works of one of America's preeminent landscape architects.

A second take-home message is to recommend that planning staff, commissioners and other leaders carefully consider that it is striking difference from most of Madison that attracts all of the families walking with strollers, little kids on little bikes, the dog walkers and the old friends walking side by side. These people are attracted to walk the scenic, gently meandering 1.2 mile circle in the Highlands specifically because of it is unique in the city. The attraction derives from the large spacing between homes, the numerous mature trees, the low car traffic or cross-streets, and the notable architecture (historic and recent), placed here and there between large areas of naturalistic landscaping. This park-like city resource will gradually but most definitely be lost without zoning that sustains large lots sizes and setbacks.

Consistency with Madison's Sustainability Plan:

One of the Sustainability Goals in Madison's Sustainability Plan is to sustain open spaces and natural areas; **see Goal 17.1 in particular**. The Highlands is a park-like setting that is used by

Madisonians and should not be degraded as a park-like setting for their use.

Conserving current or similar Highlands zoning will also help city achieve Goals 3, 6.4, 14, 17 and 19.

Goal 19 – the city’s tree canopy goal - will be harmed if adding density to Highlands which will cause loss of numerous trees. Goal 14 on rainwater absorption will also be harmed.

Regarding Goals 1 and 5 (increase housing supply and transit use): the Highlands is not in, and not within an extended walk to, an Affordable Housing Target Areas or any Eligible Core Transit Area or a Transit-Oriented Development zone. The Highlands is an inefficient target for achieving progress on Sustainability Goals 1 and 5.

Goal 3: As a park-like area that attracts multiple walkers who do not reside in the neighborhood, the Highlands in fact and practice furnishes parkland and nature-based recreation.

Goal 17.3, 17.4 (linkages between green sites, environmental corridors, habitats) – Highlands at low density achieves this currently; at higher density this role will fail.

Smaller lots and infill will also reduce the capacity of the Highlands as a large water infiltration and groundwater recharge area serving Well 14.

Some Ideas for future efforts by Highlands Community Association:

- Pursue possible Historic designation – working with Heather Bailey, Landmarks Commission and others
- Design and implement formal tree plans
- Work to identify designed/harmonious approaches to increasing housing density within Highlands landscape, rather than using the blunt free-market instrument of removing minimum lot size restrictions.
- Add plaques or attractive signs at entries to Highlands, explaining the history of the site.

Summary: The Highlands Community Association suggests that proactive rezoning of the TR-R Highlands would not successfully serve the larger planning goals of the city and would in fact work against many of those goals. The Highlands is a unique Madison resource. We look forward to working with city staff if there is interest in implementing tree plans, historic designations, signage, or other more focused ideas that refine how we achieve what TR-R zoning was put in place to achieve.

From: [Dan Stier](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Escalator Clause "Special Conditions" Factors Analysis, West Area Plan, and the Pierstorff Parcels on Old Sauk Road
Date: Thursday, December 7, 2023 5:43:19 PM

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I registered to speak at this meeting, and would have been happy to appear personally. Unfortunately, I believed that my appearance was to be virtual as it has been for prior Commission and Council meetings. Please accept in written form what would have been my presentation :

On the Council floor on Tuesday night, our District 19 Alder Kristin Slack made a positive statement concerning the merits of a convincing neighborhood analysis of the escalator clause “select conditions” factors. With reference to the project we oppose on Old Sauk Road due to its height and density, our analysis would provide fair consideration of the neighborhood’s concerns relating to height and density. A letter covering the analysis and the analysis itself has been filed with the Commission prior to this meeting.

If the escalator clause is retained, we ask as Madison citizens and taxpayers for meaningful input consistent with our analysis of the “select conditions” factors. If the escalator clause is abolished, we submit that the Pierstorff parcels on Old Sauk Road should be designated LMR in the coming West Area Plan.

The relevant facts strongly support keeping these parcels in the LMR category. In addition, the West Area Plan-Community Feedback Summary also supports a decision that the City should not increase development density on the Old Sauk parcels: comments in favor of lower density/low-rise buildings were more than twice the comments in favor of higher density buildings. Moreover, even those favoring higher density buildings wanted them along “major roads, near BRT and activity centers.” Old Sauk Road has none of these characteristics.

Dan Stier and Diane Sorensen

From: [Diane Sorensen](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Item 3. 81028
Date: Thursday, December 7, 2023 12:14:20 PM
Attachments: [Select Conditions Factors Analysis.pages](#)

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Dear Plan Commission Chair Zellers and Commissioners,

We, District 19 residents, are asking the Plan Commission to give us a chance to participate in deciding whether or not certain District 19 property should be designated for increased residential development on the Generalized Future Land Use (GFLU) Map.

The properties that bring us to the Plan Commission are 2 adjoining parcels on Old Sauk Road. Via the GFLU Map, the City of Madison has increased density on these parcels many times over their current use. The parcels are presently SR-C1 (single family) and SR-C3 (single or two unit dwellings). This zoning is consistent with the GFLU LR category which allows up to 15 DU/ac and 2 stories. However, we have learned that current zoning has no effect on how these parcels can be developed in the future. The City has decided that in the future these parcels should be developed with much greater density: either 30 DU/ac and 3 stories (LMR) or 70 DU/ac and 4 stories (escalated LMR). It's also quite possible that the Planning Department will propose increasing the density of these parcels yet again, if permitted to do so in the West Side Plan, by moving them up to the MR category.

Development with such increased density will change the neighboring infrastructure demands, our environment and our home life forever. Yet, there is no meaningful way for us to challenge these GFLU density changes. Yes, we can file written comments and make 3 minute statements, but these input portals are woefully insufficient. While allowing the City to check off the Citizen Input box before going on to makes its decisions together with the Planning Department and, perhaps, interested developers, they do not allow an honest examination of all of the facts relevant to the question of whether or not residential development on a parcel should be increased from 2 to 3 or even 4 stories and from single family, to 15 DU/ac to 30 DU/ac to 70 DU/ac. They do not foster any genuine dialogue.

We are submitting a memorandum (Analysis of Select Conditions Factors, hereafter Analysis) that provides a road map for an adequate discussion of whether or not a parcel's density should be increased. While this Analysis was developed in the context of the LMR escalator question, it is also suited to the more general question of whether a property should be moved to a higher density category, such as a move from LMR to MR. This Analysis was prepared by a team from the recently organized group we have named Friends of Old Sauk. Our District 19 Alder, Kristen Slack, was sufficiently impressed by this analysis that, at the December 5th Common Council, she called for a case-by-case, parcel by parcel, examination with an opportunity for meaningful resident involvement before a parcel's density is increased in the GFLU Map. This cannot be done in 3 minutes.

We are asking the Plan Commission to give us a place at the table. We are asking for an opportunity to present the Plan Commission, or a subcommittee of the Plan Commission, or other City body, with all the facts relevant to a decision to permit escalated or otherwise increased density on these parcels. Of course, such inquiry is not necessary if the Plan Commission decides that the escalator clause is abolished and that the Old Sauk parcels should

remain in the LMR category in the West Side Plan. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Friends of Old Sauk,
Diane Sorensen and Dan Stier

SELECT CONDITIONS PROPOSAL

INTRODUCTION.

“SELECT CONDITIONS” IN LMR ESCALATOR CLAUSE.

At the outset, it must be noted that escalating an LMR property causes a huge change in the type of development permitted on a property. If an LMR parcel is escalated, that escalation more than doubles the units per acre, going from 30 to 70 units per acre, and adds a story, going from 3 to 4 stories in height. It should not surprise the Council that homeowners are deeply concerned about the question of whether there are select conditions permitting escalated development.

The 8 Factors.

**** Appropriate in select conditions at up to 70 DU/ac and four stories, except for parts of the city with an Area Plan adopted after the 2023 Comprehensive Plan Interim Update. Factors to be considered include relationships between proposed buildings and their surroundings, natural features, lot and block characteristics, and access to urban services, transit, arterial streets, parks, and amenities.**

Homeowner analysis. These factors are vague, but in any reasonable interpretation, they would require that the Common Council consider the many facts that weight against escalating development on Old Sauk Road. For example, the 4 story, 175 unit in the Stone House proposal would be grossly incompatible with the 1 and 2 story residences surrounding it; therefore, “the proposed buildings and their surroundings” factor would weigh heavily against a finding of "select conditions." Similarly, the 4 story 175 unit mega-complex, when imagined in place with the surrounding property, ie., low profile residences on lots with trees, large yards and shady terraces, would not be in harmony with the characteristics of the surrounding property. Therefore, the "lot and block characteristics" factor too would weigh against a finding of "select conditions." Old Sauk Road has no amenities; therefore, this factor, too, weighs against a finding of "select conditions". Storm drainage and storage problems near the parcel would be aggravated by a development that is many times denser than the present development, therefore, the "natural features" factor weighs against a finding of "select conditions." As for transit, though it has bus stops, Old Sauk Road is not on the BRT and there is no nearby transit station. Finally, Old Sauk Road is not a major or primary arterial road; Old Sauk Road does not have 4 lanes, turn lanes, stop lights when intersected by collector streets, etc.; it has no mixed use properties with coffee shops, shopping malls, music venues, restaurants, and commercial properties, hospital and clinics as do the major arterial roads; it does have major congestion issues, particularly, around Crestwood elementary school and the Old Middleton Road intersection. After a fair consideration of these factors, there could be no finding of “select conditions” on Old Sauk Road.

If a fair considerations of the all of the facts relevant to the 8 factors would likely result in the Council finding that Old Sauk does not meet this select conditions criteria, why propose modifying the 8 factor criteria? The answer is simple: because, as shown below, the Planning Department's interpretation of the 8 factors does not call for consideration of all relevant facts. Indeed, if the Planning Department's interpretation is applied, it would appear that all LMR properties on arterial streets with a bus or bike lane should be escalated.

PROPOSED "SELECT CONDITIONS" FACTORS.

We are asking the Council to consider all relevant facts before deciding whether LMR property development should be escalated. Our proposal sets forth the relevant factual inquiry beneath each Planning Department factor. Next, the factual inquiry proposed by the Planning Department, provided by Ben Zellers, is set forth in green. Our comments follow in Italics. We respectfully submit that escalation should not be permitted unless the Council finds that the facts weigh heavily in support of such a change.

1. Relationship Between Proposed Buildings and Their Surroundings

Does escalating density and height development on this LMR parcel positively or negatively impact the City's goal of filling the gap in Missing Middle housing types: small-lot single family, two-unit buildings, three-unit buildings, row houses and small multifamily buildings as defined in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, page 21?

Does escalating density and height on this LMR parcel positively or negatively effect the City's policy of seamlessly integrating new development with the surrounding development as defined in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, page 21?

Does escalating density and height on this LMR parcel positively or negatively affect the City policy of utilizing a Prime Zoning District as on page 5, Item 10 of the Comprehensive Plan 2023 Interim Update, FAQ dated 6/15/23?

Does escalating density and height on this LMR parcel positively or negatively impact the uses, values and enjoyment of the other property in the neighborhood as described in Zoning Code 28.183.6.3?

Does escalating density and height on this LMR parcel positively or negatively affect the City's policy of creating an environment of sustained aesthetic desirability compatible with the existing or intended characteristics of the area per Zoning Code 28.183.6.9?

Does escalating the density and height of this LMR parcel positively or negatively change the physical setting of surrounding properties as a result of its height, mass, orientation, shadows, views and architectural quality per Zoning Code 28.183.6.12?

Does escalating the density and height of development on the LMR parcel positively or negatively impact noise, night time lighting pollution and safety with regard to residents living in the surrounding areas per Zoning Code 28.183.1?

Zellers: This clause is not necessarily about blending in, but more about how building(s) are placed on a site and how that relates to buildings on adjoining sites. For example, a newer multifamily building may need to “step down” to adjoining single-family development. There is some guidance on this on Page 38 of the [Comprehensive Plan](#) (PDF page attached for reference). When the use being requested is a fairly large multifamily building it is likely to be a conditional use. When that is the case the Plan Commission must judge the project against approval standards (sec. (6) [here](#)), which means they can require certain conditions be met to mitigate impacts.

Mr. Zeller’s comments and our proposed inquiries raise considerations that are also set forth in Chapter 28.183, Conditional Use. They are also appropriate questions to ask before any parcel category is escalated: does escalating the density and height of a parcel create a series of clashes with City housing standards, ie., incompatibility with neighboring land use, interference with the use and enjoyment of adjacent land, etc., such that escalation should not be permitted? Put another way, rather than increasing the height and density of development on a parcel and thereby creating a whole host of problems, and then trying to fix the problems through the conditional use process,, shouldn’t the City just decline to permit escalated development?

2. Natural Features

Does escalating density and height on this LMR parcel positively or negatively impact the the amount of vegetation and green space on the parcel? Is there a history of problems with stormwater management?

Does escalating density and height on this LMR parcel positively or negative affect stormwater runoff and storage issues?

This would mean natural features that can be considered as part of a project review, which would include things like site grades, landscaping plan, and stormwater management. There are certain things that our ordinances do not cover, such as tree preservation or wildlife (ie, the City could not deny a project because it would cut down a tree or because there is a certain type of wildlife that frequents the site).

Again, the question is when the City should consider the fact that increasing the density and height of a development will aggravate an existing problem caused by the site’s natural features: before or after it approves of such development?

3. Lot and Block Characteristics

Does escalating the property make the property more or less like the surrounding properties?

Does the parcel lie on a Regional Corridor and Growth Priority Area as defined in 2018 Comprehensive Plan, pages 15-16?

Does the parcel have sidewalks on both sides of the street as mapped in 2018 Comprehensive Plan page 42?

Does escalating the property raise serious questions about the adequacy of sanitary and storm sewers, public infrastructure and environmental concerns?

Is the proposed development in the 2022 West Area Plan Preferred Housing Fund Targeted Areas identified as the Preferred Transit Oriented Development Area?

This factor is most likely to come in to play on more local streets when smaller lots are being considered for consolidation into a large lot that may be inconsistent with surrounding development patterns. In the Old Sauk Road example there are some large preexisting lots that are on a major street.

The meaning of Mr. Zellers' comment is not clear. He seems to be saying that the Old Sauk parcels are not really local.

4. Access to Urban Services

Is the City water supply, sanitation, electricity, waste management and fire protection fully capable of handling an escalated development?

This would not just be access to services in the immediate area – access to services by a reasonable transit or bike ride would also be considered.

Here we are getting into the bus and bike theme: it's irrelevant if the desirable feature is not present anywhere along Old Sauk road. Buses and bikes make everything present.

5. Transit

Is the proposed development within a 1/2 mile of the BRT corridor, 2018 Comprehensive Plan, pages 32-33?

Transit = public transportation (Metro Transit). Property access is always reviewed by Traffic Engineering for multifamily development. An expected increase to traffic due to a project proposal would not on its own be a reason to deny a project. However, sometimes a project can be required to make improvements to address projected impacts – for example, the developer working on the Westgate project had to do some median work in Whitney Way to enhance property access safety (you can see before and after on Google Maps by switching from satellite to globe view).

The Westgate project is a fine example of the "select conditions" that support an escalated apartment complex development. It does not sit in the middle of one and two story homes; it is surrounded by commercial and mixed use property; it replaces commercial property; it is on a major arterial street; the street has four lanes and traffic is managed with stop lights; there are turn lanes to promote safety and handle heavy traffic; there are also multiple ingress and egress points; it is adjacent to the BRT and a transit stations; it is adjacent to a major grocery store, coffee shops, restaurants and other shops. The Westgate setting is a perfect example of a property with conditions that support dense apartment development. The Westgate setting is to the Old Sauk parcel much like New York City is to the city of New Holstein.

6. Arterial Streets

Would the escalated development benefit from the BRI?

Would escalating the development positive or negatively impact traffic congestion, traffic patterns and parking infrastructure?

Is the street on which the proposed development is to be located free of ambulance, firetruck, school bus and semi-trailer truck traffic?

Is the proposed development on a street with a Principal Arterial Road Classification per the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, page 158?

Is the proposed escalated development on a four lane street or larger?

Could there be street improvement, added lanes, turn lanes, medians, if called for as a result of escalated development?

Is the proposed development on a street with less than 7,500 vehicles per day?

Has the proposed development been reviewed for parking impact on adjacent residential neighborhoods per Zoning Code 28.183.6.10?

Location on an arterial road is a yes/no kind of factor, and Old Sauk Road is designated as an arterial.

This view ignores the real life differences between major and minor arterial roads. See the above paragraph on the Westgate development. Also, just look at the characteristics of Whitney Way, East Washington Avenue, University Avenue, and other major arterial streets with major escalated development, and then look at Old Sauk Road. They are fundamentally different. At times even Planner Zellers recognizes the difference. When asked for an example of an escalated development on LMR property, Zellers identified The Avenue Apartments, noting: “Obviously a very different street than Old Sauk, but the first project that comes to mind is the Avenue Apartments at Second Street and East Washington.”

7. Parks

Is the proposed development within 1/4 mile of a City park?

8. Amenities

Is this proposed development close to shops and markets, banks, post offices, hospitals, health clinics, medical facilities and libraries that can be reached within 10 minutes using the Metro Bus, bicycling or walking? Does this refer to grocery shopping, medical care, pharmacy, athletic clubs, clothing shopping, restaurants? Or something else?.

Things like that, yes. But it’s not just whether they’re in the immediate area, but whether they’re easily accessible, especially without having to drive. In the case of Old Sauk Road, there is transit service every 30 minutes that is a straight shot to Hilldale.

Here we return to the bus and bike theme: if it can be reached by bus or bike, it is on Old Sauk Road. I recently met with one of Madison's deeply-involved good citizens: someone who's worked with many others to address affordable housing and homeless issues. He spoke highly of Stone House development and its leaders. He said he drove up Old Sauk Road before we met and he couldn't help but notice that it was purely residential; there are no coffee shops, restaurants, pharmacies, shopping malls, etc. I said that according to the Planning Department, the fact that you could bus to Hilldale meant that Old Sauk Road had all of those amenities. He laughed.

ADDITIONAL FACTORS

9. Parking issues

Does escalating the LMR parcel positively or negatively affect parking on streets surrounding the parcel?

Escalated development allows more than double the number of units than permitted with just LMR development. Logically, that means more than double the number of residents and more than double the amount of cars. Can the City of Madison or any landlord limit the number of vehicles that a resident has? Can the City of Madison or any landlord mandate that a tenant take the bus instead of driving? Can the City mandate free parking on the escalated development parcel? Can the City of Madison or any landlord prevent residents of the new development from parking on the streets adjacent to the property?

10. Neighborhood Stakeholders' Approval or Opposition.

Is escalating the property supported or opposed, or neither, by adjacent property owners and stakeholders?

This element that should not dictate the result, but it is relevant and it should be weighed with all of the other elements..

CLOSING

We want to thank the planners we have talked to in our struggle to understand the City's plans and ordinances as they relate to the Old Sauk Road parcels. Tim Parks, Kirstie Laatsch, and Ben Zellers, has been courteous, professional and generous with their time.

Thank your for considering our proposal. We hope you will give it your backing.

Plan Commission
Special meeting of December 7, 2023
Agenda #3, Legistar 81028

The title of this Legistar item is misleading: "West and Northeast Area Plans - Progress update and Plan Commission input on key issues." A reader of this would think that the key issues are related to these two Area Plans. Yet a major focus is policy decisions on how to move forward with all Area Plans. Separating the key issues into a separate Legistar item with an appropriate title could have given the Plan Commission the benefit of a wide range of resident views, views that, at least theoretically, could help to create a better product.

Plan Commission is being asked to provide input on Common Area Plan Discussion Points.

Question #1: Does the Commission feel it is appropriate to consider archiving (retirement) most or possibly all of underlying plans, given the review and reasoning described above or would you propose a different approach?

This issue is tied to question #4. Retirement of existing plans could be appropriate if the scope of the Area Plans is broadened. However, please do not say all underlying plans should be retired. As this process continues, there may be underlying plans with unique and detailed recommendations that would set the underlying plan apart from the general Area Plan recommendations/requirements. For example, Willy Street Build II addresses standards for a street in a City historic district.

Question #2: Does the Commission feel the currently designated E and GC areas are appropriate solely for employment and commercial development, or should any further E and GC areas be designated as mixed-use?

This is a hard question to answer in the abstract. Staff believes some areas are not appropriate for residential development, such as along certain highway frontages/interchanges and/or in areas with large, pedestrian-unfriendly block networks without adequate access to park space. (I would also add the areas within the airport's 65 dB map.) Perhaps staff could prepare a list of E (and GC, if any) areas where mixed-use might be appropriate.

In the discussion part of this question, the staff memo says: "However, if the Commission feels residential development is appropriate in some remaining E and GC areas those areas should be designated as mixed-use to make the City's intent clear, rather than adding residential to E and GC areas in the future on an ad hoc, project-by-project basis." This ad-hoc decision making is not going to disappear since much of the E areas have zoning which allows for residential as a conditional use.

Question #3: Does the Commission agree with the approach to mapping maximum building heights?

The staff memo says: "The current area plan approach to maximum building height is to map heights for land uses that do not have firm building height guidance in the Comprehensive Plan. E, GC, Regional Mixed-Use (RMU), and High Residential (HR) land uses do not have height guidance

in the Comprehensive Plan (in the case of RMU and HR, the Comprehensive Plan references area plans for building heights).”

Height guidance is different than a firm maximum building height. HR allows for 4-12 stories, with greater height if allowed under the sub-area plan. Essentially, this proposed approach is one where approval is being implicitly given for the tallest building possible under the Comp Plan. Although a property in HR might have TR-U2 zoning, which only allows for 4 stories by-right, with 6 or more stories allowed as a conditional use, if greater height is proposed the Comp Plan will be used as support for that greater height. Only an Area Plan with mapped heights can counteract that argument.

This would also apply to other zoning classifications not mentioned in the staff memo. For example, NMU and CMU have 4 and 6 stories, respectively, in the Comp Plan. However, much of the zoning associated with these areas is NMX, TSS and CC-T. All of these zonings classifications allow greater height as a conditional use. If these areas are not mapped for height, then Plan Commission will lack any guidance as to appropriate height.

Question #4: Does the Commission agree with the approach to integrating non-physical development and non-City actions into the area plans?

The staff memo says that actions “where the City has little influence over implementation, that are already implemented, that conflict with current City policy, or that are adequately covered by existing City policies, programs, or ordinances would not be included in the area plans.”

Existing plans are not only about actions the City can take. Rather, they reflect a more global view of what the residents see as community. At a minimum, please consider the following actions.

1. Provide a general direction, but do not make it absolute.
2. Allow a mechanism for residents to plead their case to Plan Commission for why a particular item should be included in the Area Plan.
3. Recognize that City policies change, so even if a current City policy addresses an issue, the Area Plan can provide support for continuing that policy.

Some examples may help illustrate why some neighborhood plan actions which are currently excluded from the Area Plan might have a place in the Area Plan.

The “Northeast Area Plan: Underlying Plan Review” determined the following recommendations should not be addressed in the Area Plan.

- Work with the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) to locate a school(s) as needed in an appropriate location to serve the influx of new residents over the next 10 to 20 years. Recommended status: Not a City action; outside City control
 - Though this is not under City control, this recommendation informs MMSD that a local school is desired. It also reminds the City of the desire for a school when a potential site becomes available, or former farmland is subdivided.
- Proactively enforce property maintenance ordinances for vacant properties. Recommended status: Existing Citywide policy/practice.
 - This puts the City on notice that Building Inspection may need a greater focus in this area.
- Improve access to the school building during off-hours for neighborhood residents of all ages. Explore offering MATC evening classes and MSCR recreational activities during the

evenings and weekends at Hawthorne Elementary School. Recommended status: Not a city action.

- Though the City does not have control, the City could help facilitate this use. It also informs MATC and MSCR that there is desire for classes.
- Enhance recreational activities for Carpenter-Hawthorne-Ridgeway Sycamore-Truax residents by improving Brigham and Mayfair Parks and providing other outdoor recreational opportunities. Recommended status: Addressed by Parks Development Plan
 - This puts Parks on notice that more recreational activities are needed. It could become part of Parks Development Plan, or it could bump the issue up on the priority list. It also tells the City that it could better activate these parks, perhaps through the use of food carts in parks.
- Develop strategies to reduce vehicular speed on East Washington Avenue, Wright Street (from East Washington Avenue to Anderson Street), North Fair Oaks Avenue, Lexington Avenue, MacArthur Road, and Mendota Street. Recommended action: Speed management under Vision Zero program; street design guided by Complete Greet Streets.
 - This tells the City that what is being done is not working or needs further action/focus. It can also help influence where the City spends limited dollars.
- Encourage a variety of ownership and occupancy structures in addition to apartments, including cohousing, condominiums, housing cooperatives, and community land trusts. Recommended action: Not a City action; outside City control.
 - This informs developers what the community would like to see and could encourage developers to look at these housing forms.

The South Madison Plan states: "The plan focuses on curbing displacement of residents and local businesses, curbing the forces of gentrification, and preserving the culture of South Madison. The Plan also focuses on building equity, housing, and employment." Putting issues such as displacement and gentrification into a "Community Action" or "Community Spotlight sidebars" minimizes the goals underlying the whole South Madison Plan.

Question #5: Is the Commission comfortable with GFLU map edits to change institutions of worship from SI and LR to LMR, MR, NMU, or CMU?

As a general rule, this could be fine. But the application of this general rule is what matters. For example, the staff memo proposes proactive rezoning for a block at the corner of Regent and Whitney (pdf pages 9 and 10). This block has two churches and about 6 homes, and has a LR land use, proposed to change to NMU. The proactive rezoning is recommended as NMX. Is NMU and NMX appropriate at this location where there is a sea of residential? Or would a LMR, or perhaps even a MR, with rezoning to TR-U1 be a better fit?

Question #6: What is the Commission's guidance on how to best address the uncertainty for staff, developers/landowners, and residents as to what may be considered appropriate in LMR areas?

LMR allows density up to 30 units/acre, in general. Keep the maximum 3 story height and increase the density to 50 or 60 units/acre. Set a maximum building size in terms of floor area with conditional use approval required for larger buildings (like there once was in NMX and TSS).

Respectfully Submitted,
Linda Lehnertz

From: [Ellyn Mohs](#)
To: [Slack, Kristen](#); [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Discussion on re zoning the Highlands neighborhood/Public input Item 8
Date: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 8:52:03 PM

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

Dear Alder Slack & Plan Commission,

I am writing to voice our opposition of the proposed TR-R zoning change to the Highlands neighborhood on Madison's west side. Anyone who bikes, walks or drives into the neighborhood can attest, its much like an Arboretum setting just minutes from downtown. Areas (both public and private) are maintained by its residents who clearly take pride in being stewards of the land. Public woodland paths meander throughout the entire neighborhood and the city street provides 1 1/2 miles of tree canopy. It is an amazing little paradise that is not such a secret to those in surrounding neighborhoods and communities. We have many diverse people enjoying the ultimate in urban forestry. It doesn't matter the weather, it is truly a destination neighborhood. Joggers, bikers, bird and nature lovers all enjoy the streets, paths and parks. I see people with walking sticks, binoculars, strollers, and dogs. High school sports teams train here to enjoy the shade canopy over the street on hot days and Girls on the Run can be seen running our hills.

My husband and I have been residents of the neighborhood almost 20 years and were originally charmed by the pastoral beauty and the diversity of our neighbors. Native Oaks, Spruce, native berry bushes and trees run throughout, all giving home to an amazing array of birds and other wildlife. As such, several species of owls and hawks and even eagles can be found soaring overhead or nested in the trees. Songbirds not typically found in city settings call The Highlands home as well. I have registered the bluebird population in my yard annually with BRAW (Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin) and I am so proud these beautiful birds choose to make their nests and raise their young in my nest boxes year after year. Habitat destruction and climate change has wreaked havoc on their populations and it is the open areas in this unique neighborhood that help them thrive here. Wrens, Tufted Titmice, Indigo Buntings and Pileated Woodpeckers love the wooded areas and tall trees. I have personally recorded over 75 species of birds in The Highlands throughout the seasons.

I respectfully ask you to re consider your proposal to change The Highlands R1-R zoning designation. The Highlands neighborhood is such a special and diverse green space and it should be kept as such for future generations of the greater Madison community. Accessibility to our natural world in our cities should be preserved, not destroyed.

Thank you for you consideration,

Ellyn Mohs
Ellynmohs@gmail.com

From: [Jesse Lassiter](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#); [Conklin, Nikki](#); [Mayor](#); [Lynch, Thomas](#); [Tao, Yang](#); [Wachter, Matthew](#); [Stouder, Heather](#); [All Alders](#)
Subject: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path
Date: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 7:08:31 PM

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

RE: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path

Dear Plan Commission:

I am writing regarding the above matter to be discussed at the Dec. 7 Plan Commission meeting and urge the commission to **remove the Sauk Creek Greenway bikepath from the West Area Plan**. I am against a bike path in the 26-acre heavily wooded (5000+ trees) and narrow Sauk Creek Greenway because:

A. The City and our Alder have ignored significant feedback against a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway; therefore **we have not had a true engagement process**. A bike path was not mentioned, discussed, or shown in any slides at the first four West Area public meetings.

Numerous petitions were obtained and submitted at the Common Council meeting on Nov. 15, 2022-Legistar file 73264-agenda number 1, and **new ones** will be attached to this agenda item; **27 + objections** were written to the Transportation Commission for its meeting on Aug. 8, 2023, after the neighborhoods first found out a path was shown in the Complete Street Guide while the engagement process was underway Legistar file 79282 agenda item three. The neighborhoods were **never informed of the inclusion of a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway** when it was first introduced on Nov. 2, 2022 Legistar file 74436 agenda number and passed on January 3, 2023 Legistar file 74926 BEFORE the engagement process started in February 2023.

Per the first phase planning survey, **69 other residents had/have concerns about a path** in the Sauk Creek greenway; in addition, **27 residents in the second phase two survey were against a path** compared to 6 who were for a path. Staff said in its memo that they continue to support this feedback. This does **not coincide** with the above numbers or other noted feedback.

B. The City planners claim that the path goes back 30+ years. THIS IS INCORRECT because the Park and Open Space plans do not apply to the Sauk Creek greenway, and the 2000 MPO Bike Plan said a Sauk Creek path was listed as **a third priority** given “suitable on-road routes exist”. The 2015 MPO bike report said there is **not a bike gap** in the neighborhood and refers to the following roads that are within 1000+ feet of the greenway: Westfield Road, as primary bike road and High Point Road, a secondary bike road. **Most importantly, this is the root document** that the City then used for other reports (2018 Comprehensive Plan, etc.) and the neighborhood was not notified about it to have its voice heard. The neighborhood first heard about it at the March 2018 City Engineering meeting on the greenway.

C. City staff mentioned in its memo to you for your Dec. 7 meeting that residents' concerns

include that the path will cause safety concerns (dangerous), increase crime, lead to losing too many trees, does not connect to anything, negatively impacts wildlife, increase runoff, costs too much to build and maintain, and increases noise and litter. This is all true and these concerns were **summarily dismissed by City staff without substantitive evidence to the contrary**. In addition, the staff **ignores strong environmental concerns** from residents, some of whom are scholars and researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The other paths that staff mentions are not comparable for several reasons. Those paths did not require cutting down massive numbers of trees to build the paths; the other bike paths were platted before the homeowners acquired their lots; the paths are near commercial uses and not the 90% frontage of homes that abut the Sauk Creek greenway eliminating a buffer to the homes; the other paths are longer than .8 miles etc. The other paths did not cause significant animal displacement such as the coyotes, foxes, owls, deer, and birds that live in the Sauk Creek Greenway.

D. The City is incorporating in the streets “safe” bike paths per its Complete Green Street Guide, and it can avoid a bike path in the Sauk Creek area by using the **nearby High Point Road or Westfield Road**, both of which directly connect to the new BRT stations, Westfield Road, West Town Mall and the future connection across the beltline to Watts Road per WAP street rendering in the Dec. 7 memo. Also, city officials show that a bike path should connect in the Bike Network rendering to connect to High Point Road, just north of the future bike path across the beltline. It makes more sense to use a shared bike path on High Point Road rather than build an expensive bike path on the narrow Sauk Creek Greenway. High Point Road is also shown to connect to the south to a new bike path that will parallel the beltline.

In summary, I am asking that you inform the City West Area planning team to remove a bike path from the West Area Plan, which goes against the **City’s Civic Engagement, Equity and Stewardship Values**.

Thank you,
Jesse Lassiter

From: [Ibelisse Lassiter](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#); [Conklin, Nikki](#); [Mayor](#); [Lynch, Thomas](#); [Tao, Yang](#); [Stouder, Heather](#); [All Alders](#); [Wachter, Matthew](#)
Subject: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path
Date: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 7:10:11 PM

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

RE: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path

Dear Plan Commission:

I am writing regarding the above matter to be discussed at the Dec. 7 Plan Commission meeting and urge the commission to **remove the Sauk Creek Greenway bikepath from the West Area Plan**. I am against a bike path in the 26-acre heavily wooded (5000+ trees) and narrow Sauk Creek Greenway because:

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In summary, I am asking that you inform the City West Area planning team to remove a bike path from the West Area Plan, which goes against the **City's Civic Engagement, Equity and Stewardship Values**.

Thank you,
Ibelisse Lassiter

From: [Elizabeth Mijaria](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#); [Conklin, Nikki](#); [Mayor](#); [Lynch, Thomas](#); [Tao, Yang](#); [Stouder, Heather](#); [Wachter, Matthew](#); [All Alders](#)
Subject: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path
Date: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 7:12:49 PM

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

RE: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path

Dear Plan Commission:

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In summary, I am asking that you inform the City West Area planning team to remove a bike path from the West Area Plan, which goes against the **City's Civic Engagement, Equity and Stewardship Values**.

Thank you,
Elizabeth Mijaria de Lafuente

From: [Erick Lafuente](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#); [Conklin, Nikki](#); [Mayor](#); [Lynch, Thomas](#); [Tao, Yang](#); [Stouder, Heather](#); [All Alders](#); [Wachter, Matthew](#)
Subject: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path
Date: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 7:15:17 PM

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

RE: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path

Dear Plan Commission:

I am writing regarding the above matter to be discussed at the Dec. 7 Plan Commission meeting and urge the commission to **remove the Sauk Creek Greenway bikepath from the West Area Plan**. I am against a bike path in the 26-acre heavily wooded (5000+ trees) and narrow Sauk Creek Greenway because:

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In summary, I am asking that you inform the City West Area planning team to remove a bike path from the West Area Plan, which goes against the **City's Civic Engagement, Equity and Stewardship Values**.

Thank you,
Jose Lafuente

From: [Paul Herr](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#); [Conklin, Nikki](#); [Mayor](#); [Lynch, Thomas](#); [Tao, Yang](#); [Wachter, Matthew](#); [Stouder, Heather](#); [All Alders](#)
Subject: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path
Date: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 8:41:13 PM

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

Please Protect the Sauk Creek Oasis

Dear Planning Commission:

I've spent the past 30 years walking with my dog, family, and neighbors in the Sauk Creek Greenway. I am a geologist, hydrogeologist, and former owner of a 250-acre oak forest in Southern Indiana.

The Greenway is currently crisscrossed by 2 miles of informal walking trails that I have helped to maintain. My family and I have participated in annual Earth Day cleanups, garlic-mustard pulls, and educational activities to learn more about this mature hardwood woodland and the native and invasive species within it. We also walk the creek bed regularly in search of Native American artifacts like arrowheads and hide scrapers. The serenity of the greenway is often interspersed with the tapping of woodpeckers, croaking of frogs, and the squeals of children playing in the woods.

I have also been the City's eyes and ears in the greenway. For example, when trees fall across the City's sewer-maintenance road, I alert my Alder and the City Engineering Department. I also report occasional vandalism to the Police Department.

I view the greenway as a precious urban oasis for native plants and animals and a natural classroom for learning about human-caused environmental damage. This oasis is under attack and the native riparian ecosystem is being tattered. Flash floods rage through the greenway after heavy rains, pushing tons of sediment downstream. These are unnatural floods precipitated by poor City planning and the lack of retention ponds upstream. Majestic oaks near the creek channel are being undermined and killed. The creek channel is now littered with their hulking remains. The City has recently changed its terminology from "Sauk Creek Greenway" to "Sauk Creek Corridor" which may be an omen of things to come.

The City is planning to re-grade the creek channel and then stabilize it with rip rap (large field stones). This work is necessary and welcomed but will result in the removal of many dead and dying trees along the creek bank. Once the creek channel is cleared, re-graded and stabilized, it will also require a parallel "maintenance road" to provide long-term access for heavy equipment – another regrettable injury to the woodland ecosystem.

To add insult to injury, the City is planning to simultaneously construct a bike path (multi use path) through the greenway that will require the removal of many healthy trees. At the end of all this disruption, the ecosystem will likely be unrecognizable.

The City's website states,

"Greater Madison is the bike capital of the Midwest. We have more bikes than cars! And more than 200 miles of scenic biking and hiking trails. Traversing the city on bike is both easy and beautiful."

The City's policy seems to be, "Build bike paths wherever you can, regardless how many trees, native species, serenity, or unhappy residents get in the way." I hope the planning commission will save the day and JUST SAY NO to an unnecessary and unwanted bike path through the "Sauk Creek urban oasis."

Warm Regards,

Paul Herr
14 East Geneva Circle

Madison, Wi. 53717

From: [Mi ka](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#); [Slack, Kristen](#)
Subject: Oppose Highlands Rezoning From TR-R
Date: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 10:37:10 PM

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

Dear Planning Commission members and Alder Slack,

I'd like to register my opposition to the West Area Plan proposed change to rezone the Highlands neighborhood from TR-R to SR-C1.

My main concern is the potential loss of habitat for wildlife in the area. A group of turkeys regularly roosts in the neighbors' yard. It's common to see deer and hear coyotes, which hopefully we can all agree is pretty special for being in the middle of a city the size of Madison. Looking at the neighborhood on a map shows it's basically a continuation of Owen Park. The proposed rezoning would pave the way for destruction of spaces these animals need to live. Let's not make a short-sighted decision that would take decades to reverse.

I also echo the sentiments of many of my neighbors who already commented about their opposition to this change, so will skip reiterating what's already been said.

Thanks for your consideration!

Kevin Mika
kjmika@ieee.org
608-772-8338
1010 Willow Lane
Madison, WI 53705

From: [Timothy Burns](#)
To: [Slack, Kristen](#); [Slack, Kristen](#); [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Cc: [beth Robinson](#)
Subject: PC 12/7 Meeting Comments, Item 6
Date: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 4:58:22 PM

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

My name is Timothy Burns. My wife Beth and I live at 17 E Spyglass Ct, a cul de sac just off of Old Sauk Road. We are opposed to any West Area planning that could lead to Old Sauk Rd having high density housing or having apartments up to 4 stories high. We are opposed to similar planning that could lead high density housing and apartments up to 4 stories high in neighborhoods close to our home.

Item 6. We are opposed to using the escalator clause for any current or future LMR property on Old Sauk Rd. We don't believe Old Sauk is capable of handling the traffic that such a large development would bring. Given the nature of the road, ingress and egress from such a large development would be extremely problematic. In addition, if such development is allowed, the city should require developers to provide adequate parking on the property, rather than relying on the city to provide adequate parking on the streets. We are concerned about the environmental issues inherent with such a large development, including water runoff. We are aware that there has been flooding in our yard in the past (before we purchased in 2022) and the amount of concrete ground cover from such development could only make that worse.

We believe the existing zoning allows proper development of the area near our home. We also believe that encouraging developers to create properties for family ownership is far more important than enriching developers by increasing the number of rental units available in the city.

Timothy Burns and Beth Robinson

From: [Jayne Meyer](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Cc: [All Alders](#); [Lynch, Thomas](#); [Tao, Yang](#); [Wachter, Matthew](#); [Stouder, Heather](#)
Subject: RE: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path
Date: Thursday, December 7, 2023 1:47:06 AM

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

RE: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path

Dear Plan Commission:

I am writing about the above matter to be discussed at the Dec. 7 Plan Commission meeting and would urge the commission to **remove the Sauk Creek Greenway bike path from the West Area Plan**. For many reasons, I am against a bike path in the 26-acre heavily wooded and narrow Sauk Creek Greenway.

The City planners and our Alder have ignored significant feedback and petitions against a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway. They have also been less than honest. We have been at meetings where City engineers have said there is no plan for a bike path in the greenway only to hear at the same meeting that if it's in the West area plan it will be in the greenway plan. All the city staff knew there was a plan for the path but didn't want to talk about it. The community did not support the bike path when it was first brought up in the 2018 initial public meeting. Since then a bike path was not mentioned, discussed, or shown in any slides at the first four West Area public meetings and now it's there. We have not had a true engagement process.

Where is the data to support that there is significant enough bike traffic that a developed bike path in this greenway is needed when there are bike lanes on both sides of all the streets, Westfield, Tree La., Old Sauk Rd, and Highpoint, surrounding the greenway as well as a new 10-foot-wide off-street bike road on Mineral Point Rd. The City is incorporating in the streets "safe" bike paths per its Complete Green Street Guide, and it can avoid a bike path in the Sauk Creek area by using the nearby High Point Road or Westfield Road, both of which directly connect to the new BRT stations, Westfield Road, West Town Mall and the future connection across the beltline to Watts Road per WAP street rendering in the Dec. 7 memo. Also, city officials show that a bike path should connect in the Bike Network rendering to connect to High Point Road, just north of the future bike path across the beltline. It makes more sense to use a shared bike path on High Point Road rather than build an expensive bike path on the narrow Sauk Creek Greenway. High Point Road is also shown to connect to the south to a new bike path that will parallel the beltline while the Sauk Creek Greenway path would not connect to anything.

Putting all that aside, I thought the real purpose of work in the greenway was to improve stormwater management and decrease flooding in the community. That's what the engineers said. We need to clean up the stream bed area to get obstructions out and improve the banks to lessen erosion, so water can move freely out of the area. The community understands this, and I don't believe people object to doing this

work or having a service road so that the stream channel can be maintained. I also would not object if people rode their bikes on the (hopefully) fine gravel (not paved) service road. What I do object to is what appears to be a plan for bike trails that would be wide, paved impervious surface, lit, crisscross the channel (one map even shows what looks like an entrance from private property), require bridges (a big maintenance item that will catch all sorts of debris), and wholesale environmental damage.

Environmental concerns from residents, some that are scholars, and researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, have been largely ignored. The other paths that the staff mention are not comparable. Those paths did not require cutting down massive numbers of trees to build the paths; the other bike paths were platted before the homeowners acquired their lots; the paths are near commercial uses and not the 90% frontage of homes that abut the Sauk Creek greenway eliminating a buffer to the homes; the other paths are longer than .8 miles etc. The other paths did not cause significant animal displacement such as the coyotes, foxes, owls, hawks, deer, and birds that live in the Sauk Creek Greenway.

The Commission has a staff memo outlining that residents' concerns include that the path will cause safety concerns (dangerous), increase crime, lead to losing too many trees, negatively impact wildlife, increase runoff, cost too much to build and maintain, and increase noise and litter. And if lit, light pollution. These concerns were summarily dismissed by City staff without substantive evidence to the contrary.

I am asking that the bike path be removed from the City West Area Plan.

Thank you,

Jayne Meyer
201 Randolph Dr.

From: [Keven's Email](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: TR-R Zoning
Date: Thursday, December 7, 2023 8:14:00 AM

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Dear, sirs.

As new residence of the highlands, I am shocked and upset to learn of the possibility of removing the TR – R zoning. For the last 35 years, I have been restoring and preserving many fine homes in the oldest neighborhoods of Madison including the Highlands through our company Dreamhouse by Dream Kitchens.

My wife, Cary and I purchased the EdenFred home for restoration in 2024–2025. With the thought of this being our retirement home. It is truly a wonderful home built in the 1916 era.

One of the biggest reasons we decided on the Highlands was the care that the homeowners and homeowners association had taken to preserve the Highlands as it was originally designed. One would almost need to do work in the neighborhood to appreciate the homeowners passion for their properties.

With all respects we would like to see the TR – R zoning, stay intact and preserve one of the finest neighborhoods in the Madison area.

Respectfully.
KEVEN & CARY SCHMIDT.

Keven Schmidt
Founder, Dream Companies



e. Kschmidt@drmkit.com
c. 608-334-9800

follow your dream...

From: [Suzie Eckerman](#)
To: [Slack, Kristen](#); [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Cc: [Chris Eckerman](#)
Subject: Urgent Opposition to Highlands Neighborhood Zoning Change Proposal
Date: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 8:07:58 PM

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Dear Planning Commission members and Alder Slack,

We are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed change in zoning for the Highlands neighborhood as part of the West Area Plan Update. The specific proposal to change the zoning from TR-R to SR-C1 is deeply concerning and has the potential to significantly damage the unique character and nature of this cherished neighborhood.

The current minimum lot size in TR-R is designed to preserve the natural landscape by specifically promoting lower-density development and minimizing the ratio of building square footage to lot size. Proposed revisions to the zoning would significantly alter the natural environment, posing threats to quality of life and raising infrastructure concerns. Rezoning also represents a dramatic shift in vision that undermines the historic protective measures.

The Highlands seamlessly extends 3 parks – Icke Park, Willow Park, and Skyline Park – creating a vital green space for both residents and wildlife. The larger lot sizes provide essential habitat for deer, turkeys, foxes, coyotes and other animals, allowing them to safely roam and breed. The recommended rezoning threatens to undo previous conservation efforts, leading to a detrimental environmental impact that contradicts earlier protective measures.

Our neighborhood is a popular destination for walkers, runners, cyclists, and families, attracting people from surrounding areas to enjoy its tranquil atmosphere. This unique park-like setting is only possible due to the existing TR-R zoning and would be lost forever if changed to SR-C1. This park-like setting holds strong ties to the original land design and is a key reflection of the historical landscape. The current zoning was established with the deliberate intention to "stabilize and protect the natural beauty, historic character, and park-like setting" of the Highlands. This purpose remains more relevant today than ever before.

Furthermore, the lack of transparency surrounding this proposal is highly concerning and unacceptable. The Highlands community was not adequately notified or consulted, with no mention of this change on previous public meeting agendas or summaries. We believe public input should be solicited with more advance notice and given serious consideration. The Highlands Community Association was not contacted, and residents only learned of this proposal on December 4th. The overwhelming response from residents has been one of strong opposition to this unnecessary and harmful change.

The community and residents of the Highlands are deeply committed to preserving the environmental significance and historical importance of this unique neighborhood. We appreciate your time and consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

Chris & Suzie Eckerman