

From: [Erkin Otles](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: 91512: Opposition to development plan
Date: Thursday, March 12, 2026 2:47:09 PM

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Dear Members of the Plan Commission,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed development adjacent to Madison Children's House.

Madison Children's House is not simply another neighboring property. It is a wonderful community preschool that has served Madison's children for more than 60 years. It provides a calm, protected environment where young children can learn, play, and develop into the future of our city and state. That setting is not incidental to its mission, it is part of what makes the school so valuable to families and to the broader community.

The proposed development threatens the safety, privacy, and healthy development of the children in its care.

As currently planned, this project would surround the school on two sides. A six-story, 78-foot building would sit directly behind the playground, while another multi-story building would face the school from the other side. This would create a situation in which hundreds of residential windows, and potentially balconies, look directly into the space where very young children play every day. Given that the playground sits significantly below the grade of the proposed development, even mature landscaping would not adequately protect the children's privacy. This is not a minor design issue. It is a direct intrusion into a sensitive educational environment serving preschool-aged children.

I am also deeply concerned about the effect this development would have on sunlight and the daily environment of the school. A building of this height located so close to the playground will cast substantial shadows over the outdoor space, especially during fall, winter, and spring when the sun is lower in the sky. Building B also threatens to reduce natural light to classrooms that face it. Natural light is important for children's wellbeing, learning, and daily experience, and its loss would be a real harm.

Madison's own plans appear to recognize the importance of protecting institutions like this. The Comprehensive Plan gives explicit direction to ensure that existing schools remain strong and viable. The West Area Plan recognizes that community institutions, including early childhood centers, are part of the social fabric of the area. Madison Children's House is exactly the kind of longstanding community institution these plans are meant to protect. New development should be compatible with and considerate of what already exists, not undermine it.

If this development is to move forward, I urge the Plan Commission to require meaningful protections for the school and its children, including increased setback for Building A from the rear lot line, privacy protections such as opaque or frosted windows on floors facing the school, elimination of balconies facing the outdoor play space, and a thorough shade study that

specifically shows shadow impacts on the school property during school hours across the full year.

I would have preferred to speak directly at the meeting, but unfortunately I will be on shift caring for patients and cannot attend in person. Young children deserve special consideration in land use decisions, especially when their daily environment, privacy, and safety are at stake. I respectfully urge the Plan Commission to reject this proposal as currently designed, or at minimum require substantial modifications to protect Madison Children's House and the children it serves.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Erkin

Erkin Otles, MD, PhD

<https://eotles.com>

From: [Diana W](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: File #91512: Formal Opposition to Demolition (5534 Medical Cir) & Proposed Massing (5555 Odana Rd)
Date: Thursday, March 12, 2026 2:03:04 PM

You don't often get email from weng.diana@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Plan Commissioners,

My name is Diana Weng. I am a parent of one, soon to be a second, child attending Montessori Children's House (MCH). We chose this school not just for its curriculum, but for its physical soul: the wood paneling, the indoor plants, and the wall of windows in every classroom that lets our children feel connected to the world. Currently, the playground feels like an isolated pocket of quiet where my daughter watches birds and butterflies across a vast, open sky.

I am writing to **formally oppose** the demolition of 5534 Medical Circle and the current massing of 5555 Odana Road. For most residents, a two-year construction window is an inconvenience. For a preschooler, it is their **entire educational window**. The proposed timeline (July 2026 – Sept 2028) matches the exact years my second child will be at MCH. I refuse to accept a childhood defined by construction dust, 90 dB noise spikes, and a "wall of balconies" looming over their play. I am asking the Commission to protect the cognitive and physical health of these children by requiring the following modifications to the proposal.

1. Failure to Meet CPTED Standards (MGO 28.172)

Under Madison's **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)** principles, a residential "wall of balconies" looming directly over a playground for toddlers (ages 2–6) is a fundamental design failure. This effect will be further amplified because the elevation is higher north of the school which no amount of landscaping or wall will fully cover.

- **The Impact:** Constant surveillance from private balconies onto a sensitive educational site creates a "goldfish bowl" effect. Research in the *Journal of Environmental Psychology* shows this forces teachers to restrict independent play—the very core of the Montessori mission.
- **Actionable Step: Condition the approval on the removal of all balconies on the North and West elevations facing the MCH playground.**

2. Violation of Height Transition & Acoustic Health (MGO 28.141)

While MCH is institutional, it serves a vulnerable population. The current 6-story design offers no stepback, creating an "**Acoustic Mirror**."

- **The Impact:** This "urban canyon" will bounce Beltline traffic noise back onto the playground. A 2022 *PLoS Medicine* study found that a mere 5 dB increase in construction/traffic noise is associated with an **11.4% slower progression in working memory** for preschoolers.

- **Actionable Step: Require a mandatory building setback at the 3rd story** on all facades adjacent to MCH to break the acoustic wall and recover sky-view.

3. Solar Access & Environmental Stagnation (MGO 16.23)

The developer's sun study is insufficient. Showing a shadow at 5:00 PM in winter—after sunset—does not provide a true impact analysis.

- **The Impact:** The 6-story massing to the North and West will block critical midday sun (10 AM – 2 PM), leaving the playground damp, cold, and dark during the only hours children are active. Furthermore, this "pocket" massing traps particulate matter (PM2.5) from the Beltline, creating an air quality hazard for developing lungs.
- **Actionable Step: Require a Diurnal Solar Access study** (10 AM, 12 PM, 2 PM) and a **localized airflow/CFD model** to prove the playground will not become a stagnant "pollution pocket."

4. Construction Traffic & Safety Plan

Medical Circle is a narrow street with limited parking.

- **The Impact:** During the 2026–2028 build, the influx of contractor vehicles and heavy equipment will make drop-off and pick-up for all families dangerous.
- **Actionable Step: Require a formal Construction Parking Management Plan** that explicitly prohibits contractor parking on Medical Circle and mandates a dedicated traffic safety officer during MCH peak hours (8:00–9:00 AM and 3:00–4:30 PM).

Formal Demands for Mitigation

To protect the longevity of this non-profit school, I ask the Commission to condition any approval on the following:

- **Hourly Shadow Analysis:** Proof of solar access at 11 AM, 1 PM, and 3 PM on the winter solstice.
- **Building Stepbacks:** A mandatory setback at the 3rd story for all North and West facades facing the MCH playground to recover sky-view and sunlight.
- **Acoustic & CFD Modeling:** An impact report ensuring noise stays below WHO-recommended 55 dB and a fluid dynamics model showing air will not stagnate on the playground.
- **Construction Parking Plan:** A formal ban on contractor parking on Medical Circle to ensure children can safely cross the street during the 2-year build.

The feeling of MCH as a warm, inviting, and quiet "isolated pocket" will be lost if this development proceeds as proposed. The Urban Design Commission has already held this project in committee (File #89886) due to massing concerns. I ask the Plan Commission to **refer this item** until the developer provides a footprint that matches the density of the existing apartment building at 5577 Odana Rd for the North build and halts the demolition of the building at 5534 Medical Circle.

Madison needs housing, but not at the expense of the cognitive development and safety of its youngest citizens.

Thank you for your consideration,

Diana Weng *Parent, Board, & Community Member*

Summary of Demands (The Commissioner "Cheat Sheet")

- **Request 1 (Solar):** Require an **Hourly Shadow Study** (10am–3pm) to verify Diurnal Solar Access.
- **Request 2 (Massing):** Mandate a **Stepback** at the 3rd floor (referencing the spirit of **MGO 28.141**) to mitigate the "looming" and "acoustic mirror" effect.
- **Request 3 (Environment):** Require a **CFD (Airflow) Model** and **Acoustic Impact Report** to ensure air quality and noise (target <55 dB) remain safe for developing lungs and ears.
- **Request 4 (Privacy):** Remove balconies on North/West elevations to comply with **CPTED** privacy standards for educational uses.
- **Request 5 (Infrastructure):** A formal **Construction Parking Management Plan** to prevent congestion on Medical Circle and prohibit all construction-related parking on Medical Circle to ensure safe student drop-off and pick-up.

From: [Nathaniel Liedl](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Item #91512
Date: Thursday, March 12, 2026 1:39:35 PM

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Hello,

I would like to register my opposition to item #91512 on the March 16 agenda. My two kids had the privilege of attending Montessori Children's House (MCH) for several years. Any family that attends or has attended MCH understands it is a special place and any development diminishes Montessori Children's House is a detriment to the community, and its investment in children and therefore should not be considered.

To begin, sightlines represent a design problem that requires mitigation. The Odana Rd building is a six story building built on an 18 foot tall slope above the playground. It is being built too close to MCH's playground. The proximity combined with height creates fundamental safety and privacy problems that cannot be solved by simply moving balconies or planting trees. I urge the Commission to require an increased setback for the Odana Rd building to match the existing apartment complex standard in setback, and remove balconies facing the playground to ensure adequate distance and privacy protection for children.

In addition to the setback issue, the current design includes multiple residential balconies with direct visual access into MCH's playground—an additional layer of privacy invasion beyond the window concerns. I urge the Commission to require that all balconies be relocated away from areas overlooking the preschool playground. This is for the safety and privacy of children ages 18 months to 6 years and should be a high priority.

Finally, the proposed demolition of the Marshall Erdman building on Medical Circle and its replacement with a much taller, out-of-scale building threatens MCH's ability to use their building as architecturally intended and impacts the short and long term success of MCH as a local small business. In addition, the demolition of this building – which is a member of 4 buildings designed in connection on Medical Circle - will impact the heritage and the character of the Medical Circle Commercial Park, as it creates negative impacts on the others and opens the door for development of that entire area. I urge the Commission to reconsider the demolition of the Medical Circle site entirely, OR if new construction proceeds, require that any replacement building fits within the scale, height, and character of the existing commercial park so it doesn't negatively impact the surrounding Marshall Erdman buildings and the local businesses within them.

Thank you and best regards,
Nathaniel Liedl

From: [Todd Dale](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Public Comment: March 16, 2026 Plan Commission Meeting – Agenda Item 11 - File 91512 (5555 Odana Road & 5534 Medical Circle)
Date: Thursday, March 12, 2026 1:18:27 PM

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Dear Members of the Plan Commission,

My name is Todd Dale, and I am a parent at Montessori Children's House (MCH), located at 5530 Medical Circle. I am writing to formally express my concerns regarding **File 91512**, the proposed mixed-use development at 5555 Odana Road and 5534 Medical Circle, which is currently scheduled for discussion at the March 16th meeting.

While I support Madison's need for housing, the current proposal creates a fundamental land-use conflict that threatens the viability of a 60-year Madison institution.

The Emotional Stake: A Foundation at Risk

One of the most important decisions we make as parents is where our children spend their first five years—a window during which a child's brain reaches 90% of its adult size. Our daughter has flourished at MCH over the last three years. However, my son starts at the school this fall. Because his entire three-year preschool journey will coincide with this construction, I am deeply concerned that his foundational years will be defined by unsafe conditions, noise, and school disruptions rather than the peaceful, joyful experience his sister had.

Technical and Regulatory Concerns (MGO 28.183)

Under **MGO 28.183**, the Plan Commission must ensure that a Conditional Use is not "detrimental to the public health, safety, or general welfare." I believe the current design fails this standard in three critical areas:

1. **Air Quality and the "Urban Canyon" Effect:** Placing a 6-story vertical wall directly adjacent to a 1-story playground creates an air pocket that can trap traffic-related pollutants and construction dust ($\$PM_{2.5}\$$). Children have higher respiratory rates than adults, making them uniquely vulnerable to these stagnant air pockets. I request a formal air-quality impact study to ensure the "safety and health" of these toddlers is preserved.
2. **Solar Access and Thermal Comfort:** A 6-story building to the south/east of the school will cast permanent shadows across the playground during winter months. This is not a matter of aesthetics; it is a matter of child health. Winter sunlight is critical for thermal comfort and Vitamin D. A project that "deletes" the sun from a preschool playground for half the year is detrimental to the general welfare of those students.

3. **The Zoning Loophole and Land-Use Incompatibility:** This project appears to be utilizing the Suburban Mixed-Use (SMU) designation to shoehorn a high-density residential building into a commercial zone where it simply doesn't fit. By bypassing the standard rezoning process, the developer avoids the "Good Neighbor" scrutiny intended for projects of this scale. A 6-story residential wall with overlooking balconies is fundamentally incompatible with a 1-story preschool playground.

The Necessary Path Forward

For a nonprofit school like MCH, viability is tied to its environment. If families feel the playground is no longer private, sunny, or safe, enrollment will plummet.

If this Commission moves toward approval (which I hope we do not), I ask that you require the following as conditions:

- **Significant building step-backs** or increased setbacks to mitigate the scale conflict.
- **Removal of school-facing balconies** to protect the privacy of the students.
- **A concrete contingency plan** that includes supported relocation if the school cannot maintain safe, day-to-day operations during construction.

We should not let a zoning technicality be the "death knell" for a 60-year community asset. I just want my son to get the same wonderful, valuable experience his big sister had.

Sincerely,

Todd Dale

Parent, Montessori Children's House

From: [Michael Anderson](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Medical circle development 91512
Date: Thursday, March 12, 2026 11:35:52 AM

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Hello Plan Commission,

I have some concerns about the development at Medical Circle (reference item #91512)

First, I have 2 kids attending Montessori Children's House, and I don't think it's good for them to be exposed to the construction. Our family just moved here from California. So our kids got through that transition, now we are faced more potential disruption due to this. I think if we had gotten more notice about this, it would have given us time to adjust our plans.

Secondly, it seems like you are proposing to destroy some of Madison's character and history. Apparently my Mom and Grandma went to the Unitarian church built by the architect of this medical park. That's one of many nice little surprise connections that makes us feel more at home here. The medical circle buildings seem well thought out as a cluster. Not sure why we would tear this down, of all things.

Thank you,

Mike Anderson

From: [Kara W](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: opposition to the plan
Date: Thursday, March 12, 2026 10:21:02 AM

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To whom it may concern,

I want to express my opposition to the plan commission which would interfere with the important early childhood education that the Montessori Children's House has provided for more than sixty years at their location in a historical building, at 5530 Medical Circle. Both of my children (now 11 and 7 years old) benefitted from attending the school since 2016. They were a lifeline for us when it is more challenging than ever to find safe, high quality educational and affordable programming for children. My 7 year old continues to benefit from their summer school aged program.

Sincerely,
Kara B. Westmas
4402 Somerset Ln, Madison, WI 53711
608-630-6290

From: [Jim Lottridge](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Cc: [Montessori Childrens House](#)
Subject: #91512
Date: Thursday, March 12, 2026 10:09:29 AM

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Dear Plan Commission,

Please see the attached photo from Montessori Children's House playground at 5530 Medical Circle. You'll notice the light pole - the proposed development would bring building A to that light pole, 100 feet closer than the current Supreme Health building. You'll also notice the apartment building to the west - which is even with the Supreme Health building. The proposed building A would be taller than the apartment building to its west.

We moved to Medical Circle in 1991 and maybe if the apartment buildings were there we might not have worried about it. **But in this age we live in, this age of cell phone cameras, misuse of AI and gun violence, the proximity and height of proposed building A are of great concern to us and our families.**

We would encourage everyone who reads this letter to think about whether they'd be comfortable enrolling their child/grandchild at our school with balconies and windows looking down over our playground. Would you feel your child/grandchild is safe and secure?

If you take your child/grandchild to a playground and you don't feel comfortable - it's easy, you can just leave! That's not the same for us. Our playground isn't optional, state licensed childcare centers are required to have outdoor play daily unless the weather is inclement.

If this proposed development goes through as planned it will affect enrollment at our school. **But, there's a simple fix - require building A to be built on the current Supreme Health footprint and require the south side of the building to be re-designed - remove balconies and windows and replace with stairwells, corridors and high windows. This can be done, it's just a drawing - construction hasn't started yet!**

Thank you for your consideration!
Jim Lottridge & Laura Kvalheim

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