

To: Plan Commission

From: Marsha Rummel  
Marquette Neighborhood Association

August 22, 2005

RE: TID 36 and oversight committee

At the April 2005 Board meeting, MNA endorsed the concept of TID 36, contingent on three conditions being met. First, we support the TID if funding is consistent with the adopted goals of the East Rail Corridor Plan, particularly the focus on an employment district. The proposed plan for TID 36 allocates \$8 million for economic assistance activities in part to help underwrite affordable commercial space for business incubators, creation and expansion of neighborhood and east isthmus area-based businesses, other startups and non-profit agencies. We need to make sure that the flow of funds for this purpose continues to be available throughout the life of the TID.

Second, our support is predicated on the establishment of a conservation district to protect the older, small scale and more affordable single family housing along the 1200-1300 block of E Wilson, Baldwin, Dewey Court and Schley Pass. Planning Dept. staff has indicated that an intern has been given the task of reviewing conservation district ordinance language from other communities and will draft an ordinance to create an overlay district in the fall. We are concerned that this housing is vulnerable to assembly and demolition without the protection of a conservation district and we have advocated keeping the bulk of adjacent existing housing out of the TID boundary.

Finally, we want to create an advisory TID oversight committee composed of stakeholders to review and prioritize annual expenditures, help implement the goals of the TID and existing plans for the various areas in the district (ERCPC plan, Capital Gateway BUILD, Williamson St BUILD II, Yahara River Master Plan, TLNA and EENA neighborhood plans, etc.) and involve the neighborhood, district property owners and business owners and other interested parties in ongoing examination the goals and status of the TID.

At MNA's Board meeting of August 3, we affirmed our support for TID 36 and the recommendation to create a stakeholders oversight committee. We have participated in the year long stakeholders planning process for the TID and think it has been an important factor in insuring that everyone's concerns were discussed and most have been included in the final concept for the TID. It is extremely important for MNA that our goals and vision for the Gateway Corridor, along with those of Tenney-Lapham, Emerson, and other surrounding neighborhoods, continue to be integrated into the implementation process for these areas throughout the life of the TID.

Broadly speaking, our goal is to foster economic and environmental sustainability in the Gateway corridor. The rail corridor currently is the home of over 3000 jobs that reflect a variety of uses from the industrial character of MGE, light manufacturing of Research Products, and entrepreneurial startups and artist studios in the two incubator spaces run by Commonwealth Development and the Warren building. We want to encourage economic development that creates living wage jobs and other benefits. We also want to create a place that is vital night and day. We

like the mix of low rise and higher density uses and don't want to create an office park where 'no one is home at night'.

We would like the Gateway Corridor to grow as much as possible from the inside out and build on the unique character of the area. It should create the kinds of jobs and businesses that will attract residents of the surrounding neighborhoods, enhance our ability to use pedestrian, bike and public transit options for work and play, and preserve the many historic commercial buildings for adaptive re-use. We want to create synergies with the adjacent neighborhood business districts. And we want neighborhood businesses to have the opportunity to expand or locate in the Gateway corridor.

We want to increase the capacity for business incubators and to retain some graduates of the incubator programs in the corridor. We believe this is a viable strategy to promote job growth and will benefit the east isthmus and the city as a whole. Yet we are mindful that escalating real estate values threatens not only the availability of affordable housing in east isthmus neighborhoods but it also threatens to displace or limit the opportunity for new business startups and the retention of existing businesses. Therefore providing affordable commercial space is a key goal for us, as well as insuring that affordability will be maintained over the long term.

Another of our key goals is to insure that development in the entire TID is environmentally sustainable. The district faces many challenges that TIF funding can help ameliorate. The industrial character of the rail corridor has left us with an environmental legacy that includes contaminated soil, underground storage tanks, and a water table close to the surface that carries contaminants to the watershed and the lakes. As surface parking lots are targeted for more intense development, we may find some unpleasant surprises underneath the asphalt. We would like to see a funding priority for environmental remediation. But also with all the recent attention on escalating energy costs, we feel it is imperative to look at the energy footprint of all new developments and insure that it is sustainable, and we would like to see green building standards established for all future projects.

Again we want to emphasize that we think it is crucial that an oversight committee is created to facilitate implementation of the TID planning that has already been undertaken both individually and collectively by the various stakeholder groups. This committee will provide an important mechanism to focus attention on the problems and opportunities faced by the TID and will be key to the successful implementation of the guidelines established by the various plans developed for the area. While the exact structure being reviewed and tweaked, a preliminary canvas of stakeholders has shown general agreement on the importance of such a committee. We urge your support for its formation.

Thank you.

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- **Affordable Housing Program** (Rental and Lease Purchase)
- **Common Wealth Gallery**
- **Madison Enterprise Center**
- **Main Street Industries**
- **The Williamson Marquette-Gazette**
- **Youth-Business Mentoring Program**



Statement of John Schlaefer before the City of Madison Plan Commission, on behalf of the Board of Directors of Common Wealth Development, Incorporated.

Monday, August 22, 2005

Common Wealth Development, Inc., of which I am the board president, was established as a community development corporation over twenty-six years ago to promote the economic development of the Williamson-Marquette area. The Board of Directors of Common Wealth voted last February to support the creation of an area wide tax-incremental finance district (TIF) in the Central Isthmus area, as a tool for implementing the recommendations of the East Rail Corridor Plan that was adopted by the Common Council last year.

We believe that, without a TIF, market forces alone will dictate the type of development that occurs in the East Rail Corridor, resulting predominantly in new housing construction, because it is the easiest and cheapest to build. Instead, we favor the development of the Corridor with a wider range of uses, particularly commercial, office, and light industrial. We support a diversity of types and sizes of businesses, which will provide jobs within walking or biking distance of the surrounding neighborhoods. We support the creation of TIF District #36, because we feel it is the best tool available to promote a balance of development types. We feel, also, that it is absolutely necessary for the successful implementation of the East Rail Corridor Plan that some form of citizen oversight process be put in place to monitor the use of TIF funds in the district.

The East Rail Corridor Plan also calls for the creation of conservation districts to preserve the residential character of the parts of the neighborhood on the east end of the Corridor that abut the current open space. These conservation districts should be created before, or simultaneously with, the creation of the TIF, to ensure that the existing residences are protected.

In summation, the Common Wealth board supports a recommendation to the Common Council that TIF #36 be created, including a citizen oversight committee.