

From: [Anne Monks](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Cc: [Verveer, Michael](#); [Mayor](#)
Subject: Conditional Use for 139 W. Wilson Street - Agenda #9 12.1.25
Date: Monday, December 1, 2025 3:36:48 PM

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December 1, 2025

TO: Madison Plan Commission

SUBJECT: Conditional Use for 139 W. Wilson Street – Agenda #9

The management plan submitted by the developer for 139 W. Wilson simply does not address the project's irreversible impacts on the safety and function of the only transportation corridor on the south side of the Capitol serving bicycles and westbound traffic.

Under any management plan, the owners of this building will legally be unable to stop vehicles from using the cycle track or the street, as the developer has recently said. Common sense would say it will be close to impossible to manage what happens within the project's narrow driveway and small loading areas much of the time. Limited gated access might be the only way to have reliable parking and loading even for essential services like trash and maintenance.

It's hard to do the math for the number and size of vehicles that will be needed for 320 units of housing with 16 stories on a 66-foot lot at this location. At least 8 garbage and recycling vehicles will have to back in the narrow drive every week. Many people may require rides from vans or buses. Some may require or choose to have daily food delivery. How often will plumbing, HVAC, cleaning, and other services be needed for the building itself?

Most important for the conditional use decision: When vehicles cannot or do not use the building's driveway, such as for move in, they will most often use the right of way, blocking the cycle track and/or the roadway or use nearby private property. And it won't be possible to sign or regulate that behavior away because the City will not be able to provide anything better.

Along Wilson Street from Broom to Blair, the opportunities for solutions are disappearing. This project all by itself makes the problem much worse at a high public cost. This is the new reality of Wilson's two-way cycle track and a narrower street serving many important purposes.

Any conditional use decision should not only consider off site impacts as described above. It is also important to consider who the project benefits. Is the project providing future benefits to the community in addition to profits for the developer and the owners? That is real estate theory as taught by Professor James Graaskamp, founder of the UW-Madison real estate program. Not socialism or NIMBYism.

Why support a project with such a high cost for the public right of way and transportation? Why support 320 units of housing on a 66-foot lot at this location several hundred feet from single family houses and two-unit duplexes? Is it because it has no parking? Is it because it is affordable? The reality is, it will not be affordable to build or for what a tenant is getting. High rise construction is very expensive. The units are very small and will have high rent per square foot. The \$1600/ per month quoted by the developer is similar to the lower rents in other buildings with high vacancies.

Everything about the building is squeezed into available space including:

- A small space for garbage and recycling including compactors for recycling that will probably make recyclables unusable.
- Two modest size elevators.
- Stacked bicycle parking. Bicycle parking outside.
- The drive and loading areas are very small compared to the need.

Why build and support a project like this? Is it the international buyers working off spreadsheets in distant locations? Is it City officials unable to say no?

Please do not make a decision that will place new limits on this area for the foreseeable future, making the downtown less accessible for people and any future projects along the lakeshore.

Sincerely,

Anne Monks

343 W. Wilson St.

November 30, 2025

To Madison Plan Commissioners:

Condition for Approval—139 E. Wilson St. Project

If the project proposed for 139 E. Wilson Street is advanced, I suggest attaching a condition for approval by the Plan Commission.

- Require 20-percent of the 320 units be designated as affordable.

The trend in recently approved housing projects near campus is for agreements between the developer and the city to include a percentage of units dedicated to affordable housing. This project is presented as targeted toward the non-luxury and middle-market segment without offering any guarantees that an expansion of workforce housing will be the final result. The set-aside requirement is a legally-enforceable provision and protects against changes that depart from the original vision presented to the neighborhood and city government—such as pricing all the apartments at market rate when project is completed.

I suggest using the template created for the Oliv project on State Street which provides a substantial rent reduction for students (tenants) who meet very specific income criteria. Eligible students pay 40-percent less than the market rate for their units under a Land Usage Restriction Agreement (LURA) between the developer and the city to ensure the set-aside units are available for the long-term.

Without the requested condition the developer will have successfully lowered the cost of construction and secured a bonus toward the overall profitability of their investment in the project while simply transferring the burden of providing tenant parking to the neighborhood. This provision will ensure that the project will provide the social benefit of reduced cost housing to the community as an offset to the increased congestion that will result from adding many more cars to limited parking spots on residential streets.

It is important for the developer to build trust and formally align his aspirational goals for pricing the micro apartments at lower-than-market rates with the overarching civic goal of bringing cheaper, more affordable living to lower- and middle-income Downtown Madison residents in formal contract prior final approval by the Common Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Smith

From: [Nicholas Reichert](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Support for 139 W Wilson
Date: Saturday, November 29, 2025 3:06:52 PM

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Hello,

Please attach this note to item 89236 for the Dec. 1 Plan Commission meeting:

I urge the Plan Commission to approve the conditional use permit for 139 W Wilson.

Madison is quickly moving towards a housing crisis. Our city is lucky enough to have a fast-growing economy with many new residents arriving. If we don't build enough housing for them (at all income levels), rents and the price of home ownership will continue becoming more and more unaffordable for everyone. Approving projects like this urgent. Every restriction and delay to developments like this make them less feasible.

As a cyclist who uses the Wilson St bike lanes, I am concerned about deliveries blocking the bike lane. This revised loading zone and turnaround area look sufficient to avoid significant issues for people on bikes.

I am lucky enough to own a condo near downtown where I live without a car. Personal car ownership is not necessary in Madison. We are one of the most walkable, bike-able, transit-friendly communities in the Midwest. The Capitol Square is our crown jewel. We should encourage as much car-free development there as possible. Car-free living is essential for meeting our climate goals and managing traffic. Allowing developments without parking (like this one) helps to make housing more affordable for everyone, as parking garages are incredibly expensive to build.

If we can't build car-free housing right in downtown, then I don't expect it to be built anywhere. Denying this permit would be giving up in the fight for lower housing costs, reduced pollution from cars, and reductions in traffic.

Please approve this development.

—
Nicholas Reichert
617 E Dayton St Apt B

From: [Nicholas Davies](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Yes to 139 W Wilson (89236)
Date: Sunday, November 30, 2025 3:33:23 PM

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Dear Plan Commission,

This project has already gone through a very, very long process to get to this point. I've heard the skepticism about this project, but I do not find it compelling.

Regarding concerns about traffic, and maybe traffic crossing the Wilson St bikeway: yes, this project would add another high-rise on Wilson St, where there are already several high-rises. But allegedly this one will be the one that ruins the bike route, where none of the others did?

I recorded video of biking Wilson St in August (midday on a weekday), and just uploaded it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veOPXqzgTrU>

As you can see for yourself, I encountered a lot of pedestrians crossing the bike lane (which is not a problem), but no vehicle traffic at all. No near misses, no stop-and-go on the path.

Opponents of this project seem to think that because the building doesn't include a parking garage, somehow that will *increase* the vehicles entering/exiting the property?

I've lived downtown a couple times, and the frequency that I ordered food delivery went way down when I had so many options in walking distance. Groceries, pharmacies, shopping were all a short walk away as well. Whatever few deliveries there are will presumably be quite brief.

It also isn't novel for an apartment building downtown to not include parking. Several McBride buildings have operated that way for a long time. There are off-site lots that you can rent a space in, if needed. It is a point against the extra expense of car ownership, and decreases usage for short-range trips, which is very good for reducing downtown congestion.

Moreover, people who choose these smaller units for their lower cost and their downtown location are less likely to spend extra money on car ownership/maintenance, and also less likely to have a lot of goods and services chauffeured to their doorstep.

I understand that for Trump donor Terrence Wall, he'd rather not have another Wilson Street high-rise next to *his* planned Wilson Street high-rise, but he can go play golf at Bishops Bay.

Thank you,

Nick Davies
3717 Richard St