

April 11, 2014

To: Kevin Firchow
Planning Department
City of Madison

From the start of public meetings on the 617 N. Segoe Rd. project, I have felt that recommending the appropriate size and unit density of the proposed building would be a difficult challenge for the city planning staff. At a density of nearly 200 units per acre, the developer's proposal of 115 apartment units on 11 floors plus penthouse seemed excessive.

My feelings have been strongly reinforced by new data I have compiled and present to you below. My recommendation is that **the planning staff ask of the developer -- or recommend to the Plan Commission -- that the size of the development be significantly smaller.**

The basis for this request is that I agree with the prevailing opinion among city leaders that the Hilldale area will continue to grow into a more dense, more vibrant, multi-use neighborhood. That means 617 is likely just the first of potentially 3 or 4 multi-family developments going south from 617 N. Segoe Rd. **PERMITTING A 200-UNITS-PER-ACRE PROJECT ON THIS SMALL (0.58-ACRE) LOT AT A VERY CHALLENGING INTERSECTION (SEGOE AT SHEBOYGAN) WILL SET A VERY HIGH BENCHMARK WHICH FUTURE DEVELOPERS WILL USE TO JUSTIFY SIMILARLY OR EVEN INCREASINGLY DENSE DEVELOPMENTS ALONG SEGOE.**

Here's the data, lot by lot, going south along Segoe from 617:

***601 N. Segoe – 1.14 acres.** Occupied by Coventry Condominiums, this lot would qualify for **228 apartments** (based on the 200-units-per-acre standard) if redeveloped.

***601 Sawyer Terrace (corner of Segoe) – 0.81 acres.** This lot, leased by the Hilldale Mall owners to the U.S. Postal Service, is PRIME for redevelopment and would qualify for **162 apartments** under the 200-units-per-acre standard.

***517 N. Segoe – 0.44 acres.** The all-rental community services building on this lot could be replaced with an **88-apartment development** under the 200-units-per-acre standard. If combined with the Post Office lot, 250 units could be built in one project.

***401 N. Segoe – 2.81 acres.** This exceptionally underdeveloped property owned by BMO Harris would qualify for a stunning **562 apartments** under the 200- units-per-acre standard.

THE KEY QUESTION: Would projects of such extreme density on those properties promote the higher quality of life that is a fundamental objective of the city?

In addition, developers will make the case that if 200 units per acre is appropriate for the challenging Sheboygan at Segoe intersection, then even higher densities are warranted for their less-crowded, less-challenging locations further south on Segoe.

Moreover, the 5 to 8 story limitation on building heights in the current draft of the new neighborhood plan will not survive as developers cite the 617 Segoe precedent of 11 stories plus penthouse.

I come at this not as a planning and zoning professional, but with 25 years of substantial civic involvement in Battle Creek, Michigan and with a master’s degree in public administration (Western Michigan University, 1983).

I would argue strongly that the above data is based not on speculation, but rather on expectations for the Hilldale area that are shared widely among city leaders.

CONCLUSION: Lowering the units-per-acre density permitted at 617 N. Segoe will yield important “breathing room,” not just for the immediate area of the development, but for the Plan Commission and other city entities as they weigh the merits of future projects along North Segoe Road.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard E. Lovell

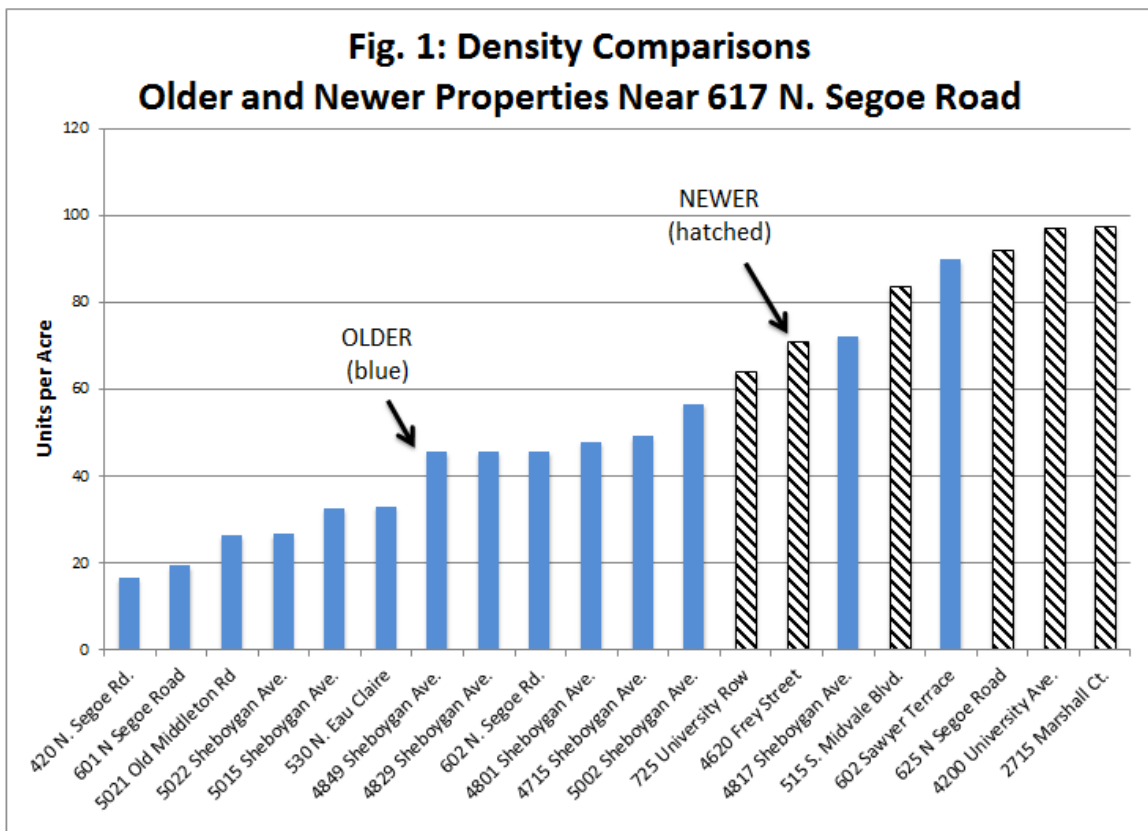
Dear Kevin,

April 11, 2014

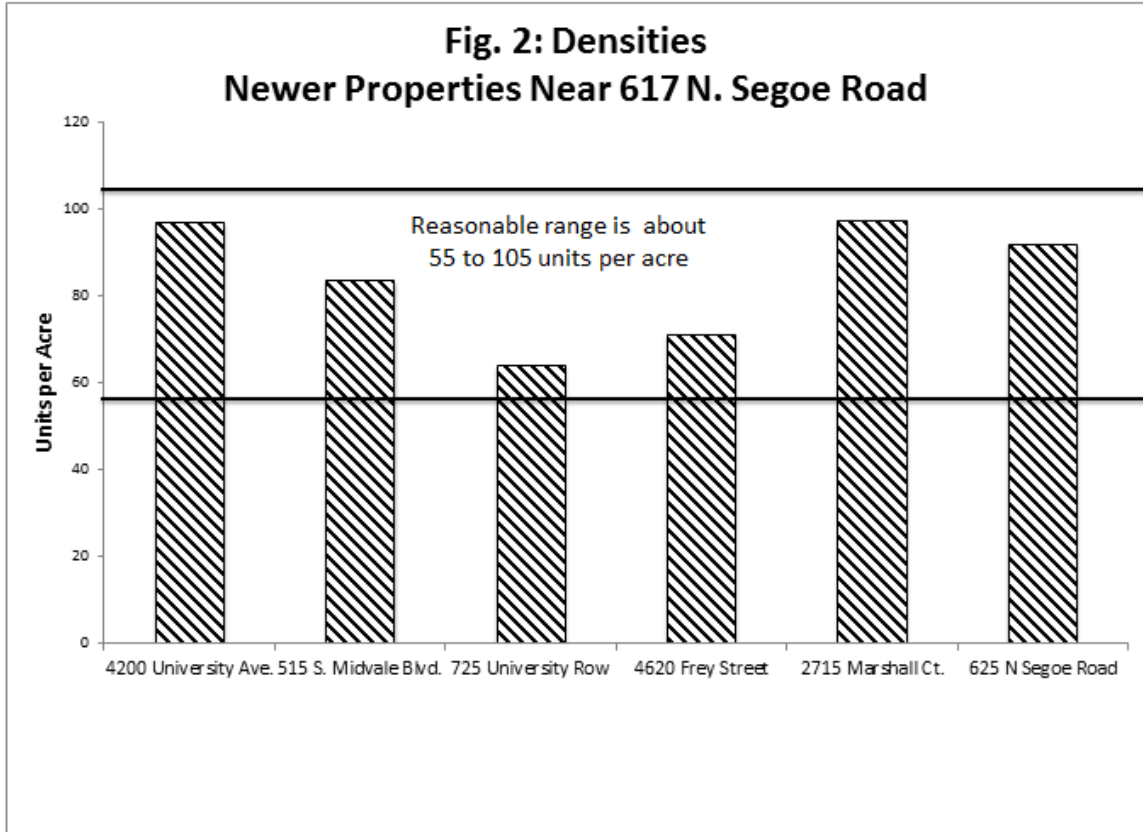
I am continuing to follow up on our discussions regarding the proposed development at 617 N. Segoe Road. As you know, while residents of Weston Place generally support development of this property, we are concerned about the proposed density of this project and how it would affect our neighborhood.

At our earlier meeting, your colleague Matt Tucker responded to our initial density concerns, noting that many of the buildings in our analysis were older, with vintages of 25 to 50 years. He suggested that newer development will be more dense than that of the older buildings, and that those buildings represent the appropriate reference point.

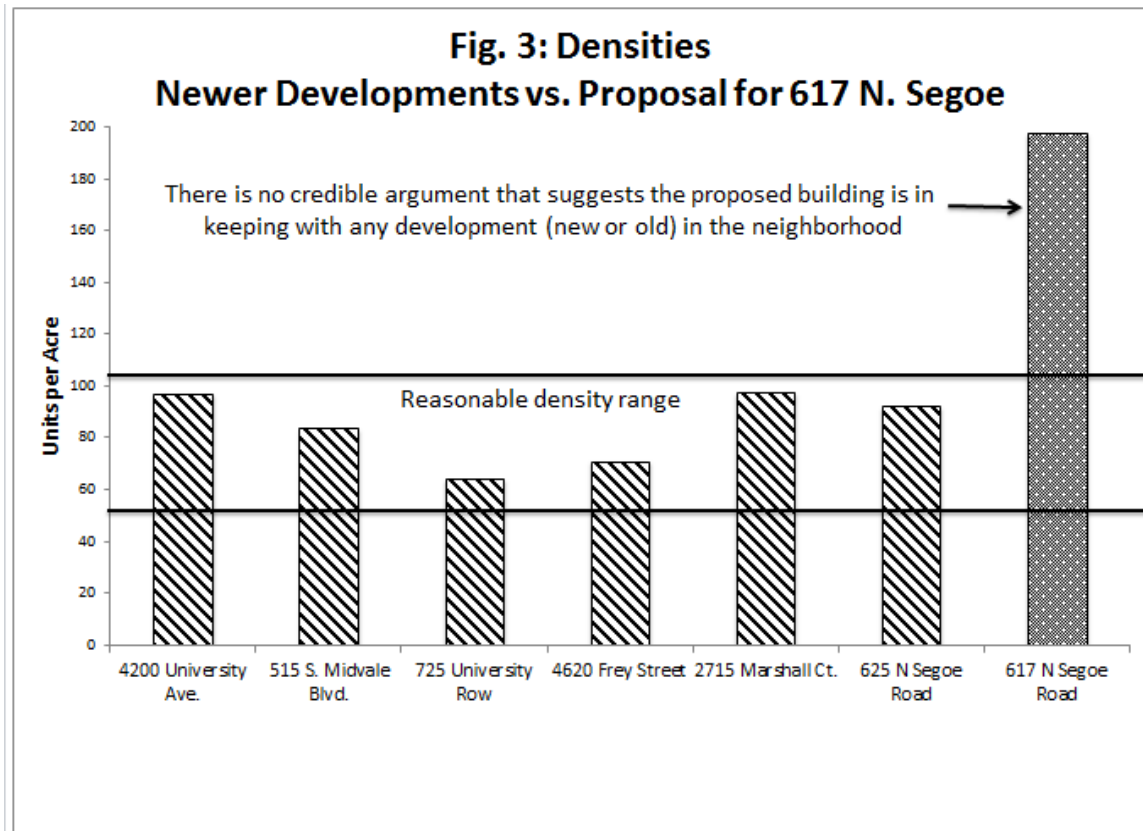
In response to Matt's proposed approach, we analyzed our data and concur with Matt as to the relationship of the densities between older and newer buildings. See Figure 1.



We accept Matt's notion that these newer buildings should form the comparison group for the 617 N. Segoe proposal. Adopting this standard leads us to Figure 2 as our reasonableness guide in terms of density for buildings in our area.



With Matt's reference point as the standard, the proposed building at 617 N. Segoe fails the reasonableness test in terms of density. See Figure 3.



The data speak loudly and unequivocally here. Using the Zoning staff's proposed standard—densities of newer developments—leads one to reject, not support the proposal for 617 N. Segoe.

The only way that the Planning Staff can support this sort of density is to suggest a new standard, i.e., that none of the densities in the neighborhood are relevant. If that is the case, then the standard becomes a moving target and is really no standard at all. It seems patently unfair to suggest to us a standard for review and then change the standard if the results do not match preconceived notions as to the result.

The proposal at 617 N. Segoe calls for an unprecedented, ultra-dense development, one that does not fit into the Hilldale area. This proposal should be revised to bring the density closer to the neighborhood standard.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Mary
Mary Gillham
N. Segoe Road

April 13, 2014

Mr. Kevin Firchow
Planning Department
City of Madison

Dear Kevin,

I am writing as a follow-up to our recent meeting regarding the proposed building at 617 N. Segoe Road. As residents of Weston Place, many of us understand and support the development of this property. However, the proposed apartment building is too dense for the neighborhood.

Jim Stopple has worked with residents from Weston Place and Coventry and has made some adjustments that have improved the design of the building and its relationship to ours. However, none of the changes address our main concern which is density.

The density of 617 N. Segoe is 198 dwelling units per acre, more than twice that of any building within three miles.

We understand that the State will develop the Department of Transportation (DOT) space across from our building. Plans for this space have been in development for quite some time and we expect that some type of tall office building will be built there. Our understanding, however, is that the office structure will be at the west end of this area with less dense buildings at the east end nearest our homes. When discussing the 617 N Segoe project, the Urban Design Commission noted that huge changes were coming to the Sheboygan Avenue area. We understand that the area is in flux. However, the DOT property is across a four-lane street from us, not within 48 feet of our building as is this new proposed apartment building.

We are not represented by the Hill Farms Neighborhood Association (or any other neighborhood association), but we are included in the Hill Farms Neighborhood Plan currently under development. According to meetings we have attended and the proposed plans posted on the web site, the recommended height for redevelopment and new apartment buildings is 3-8 stories with medium densities. We realize that this plan has yet to be approved; however, the fact remains that the recommended height for new residential buildings today is still 3-8 stories – obviously with much lower densities.

I have included two graphs with Weston Place and the 617 development included:

1. Graph 1. Older buildings that have been around for 20+ years
2. Graph 2. Buildings developed in or near our neighborhood within the last few years (showing a continuing density trend)

As you can see, the newer buildings continue to have the density appropriate for this type of neighborhood. We are not “campus” and we are not “downtown,” and the buildings continue to reflect this. Although the Hilldale area will continue to be developed, many of our owners moved here because it was NOT downtown. We expect the area to continue to change, but this proposed development is not Urban Mixed Use, Downtown Core or Campus.

The density of Weston Place is 92 du/ac, but when it was built, it really was not much more dense than our neighbors, Segoe Terrace (602 Sawyer Terrace) at 89 du/acre or Hilldale Towers (4817 Sheboygan Ave.) at 72. See Graph 1 (with Weston Place and 617 N. Segoe at the far right). While these buildings have some height, the land surrounding them gives enough space between buildings – unlike what is proposed at 617 N. Segoe.

When we purchased our condo homes, many of us realized that the situation at 617 might change some day; however, no one dreamed that NMX (with a 5 story height maximum) could be changed to PD on such a small lot! No matter how you slice it, dwelling units/acre, bedrooms/acre, or floor area ratio, the results are the same. There are too many people on the small 617 N. Segoe lot.

When the 617 N. Segoe proposal was submitted to City Planning, the accompanying narrative described the project as “student housing.” Our concern with this is not the “student” part of the description, but rather the “housing” part. Our neighborhood is diverse with many students living here in harmony so that’s not the issue. Rather, it is the fact that the 617 N. Segoe proposal more accurately represents the density common to student housing projects. For example, Jim Stopple’s previous building (Vantage Point at 1323 W. Dayton) with its 155 du/ac was reviewed by you in May 2012. In your report you stated, “While the density exceeds that in the recommended plans, staff note **it is not inconsistent with other campus area projects.**” (emphasis added). As shown on Graph 2, current projects within the Hilldale area and nearby are in the range of 64 to 98 du/ac. The Hilldale area is not the campus area so why would a building with 198 du/ac be seen as consistent with other projects in this area or future projects as depicted in the draft Hill Farms Plan?

The developer will charge his tenants \$100/month for one parking space. While most tenants will pay to park inside the garage, a number will not. Just as we see street parking from our Overlook neighbors, we expect to see this from the tenants at 617. This, plus the street parking from the DOT, will continue to push street parking further into the Hill Farms neighborhood – a chief complaint noted in the neighborhood plan survey.

The new 617 project will allow tenants to have dogs, but has provided no dog run. The developer’s plan for dealing with this was that dog owners would walk their

dogs in the neighborhood as other families do, discounting the fact that houses in the neighborhood have yards for their pets. Other developments in the area allow dogs, but have designated dog areas with waste bags available. No such area exists for 617 N. Segoe.

As stated before, our objection to this project is one of high density with all the inherent problems high density brings: increased traffic, (both vehicular and pedestrian), increased noise level, loss of personal space, safety issues for neighbors (617, Weston Place and Coventry all share a common drive-way), etc.

The neighbors around 617 N. Segoe Rd. are supportive of the project, but not in its current density which is not in concert with the rest of the neighborhood.

I appreciate your considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Bev

Beverly Balakhovsky

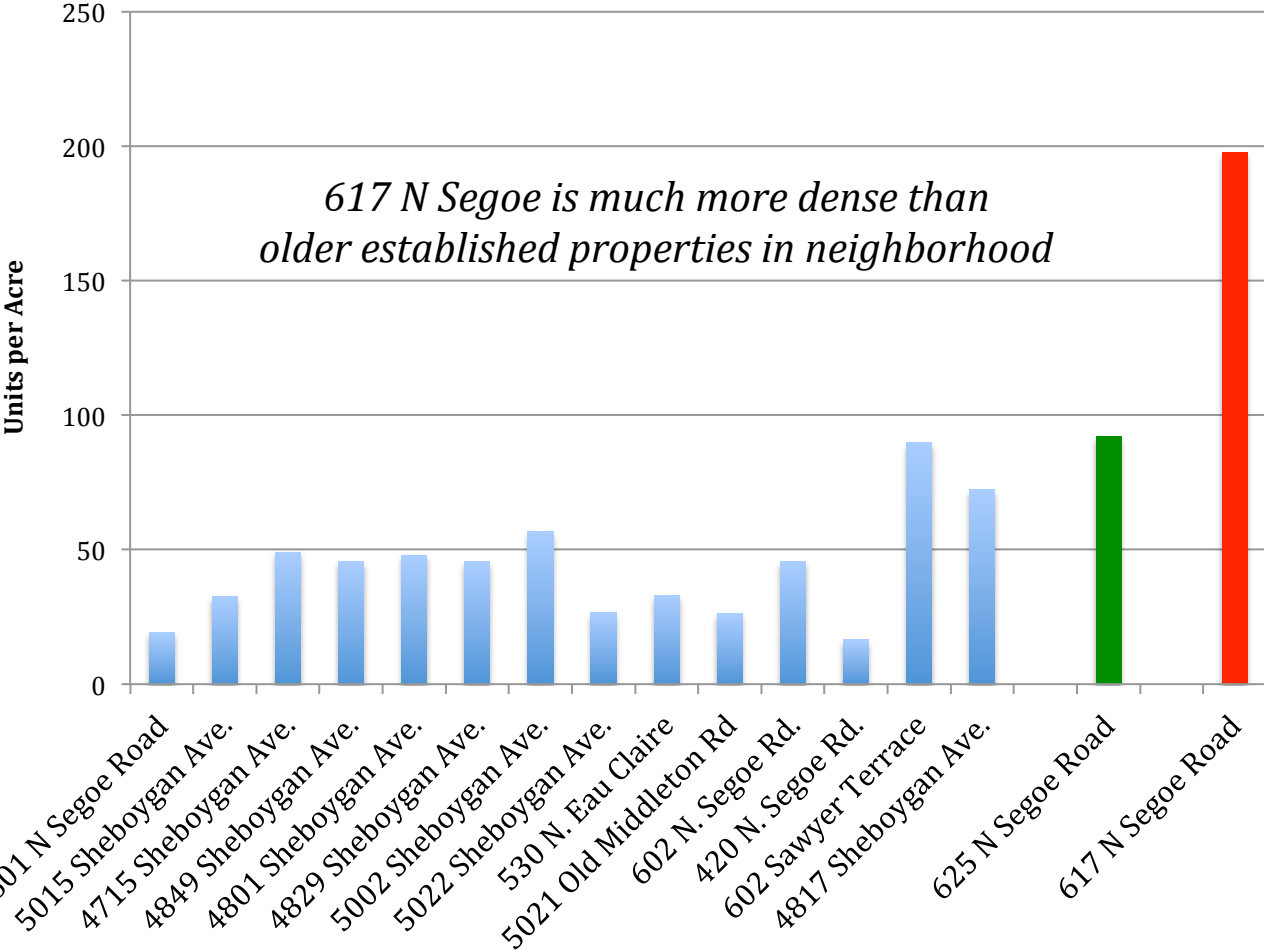
■■■■ N. Segoe Road, ■■■■

(on North side of Weston Place facing University Avenue)

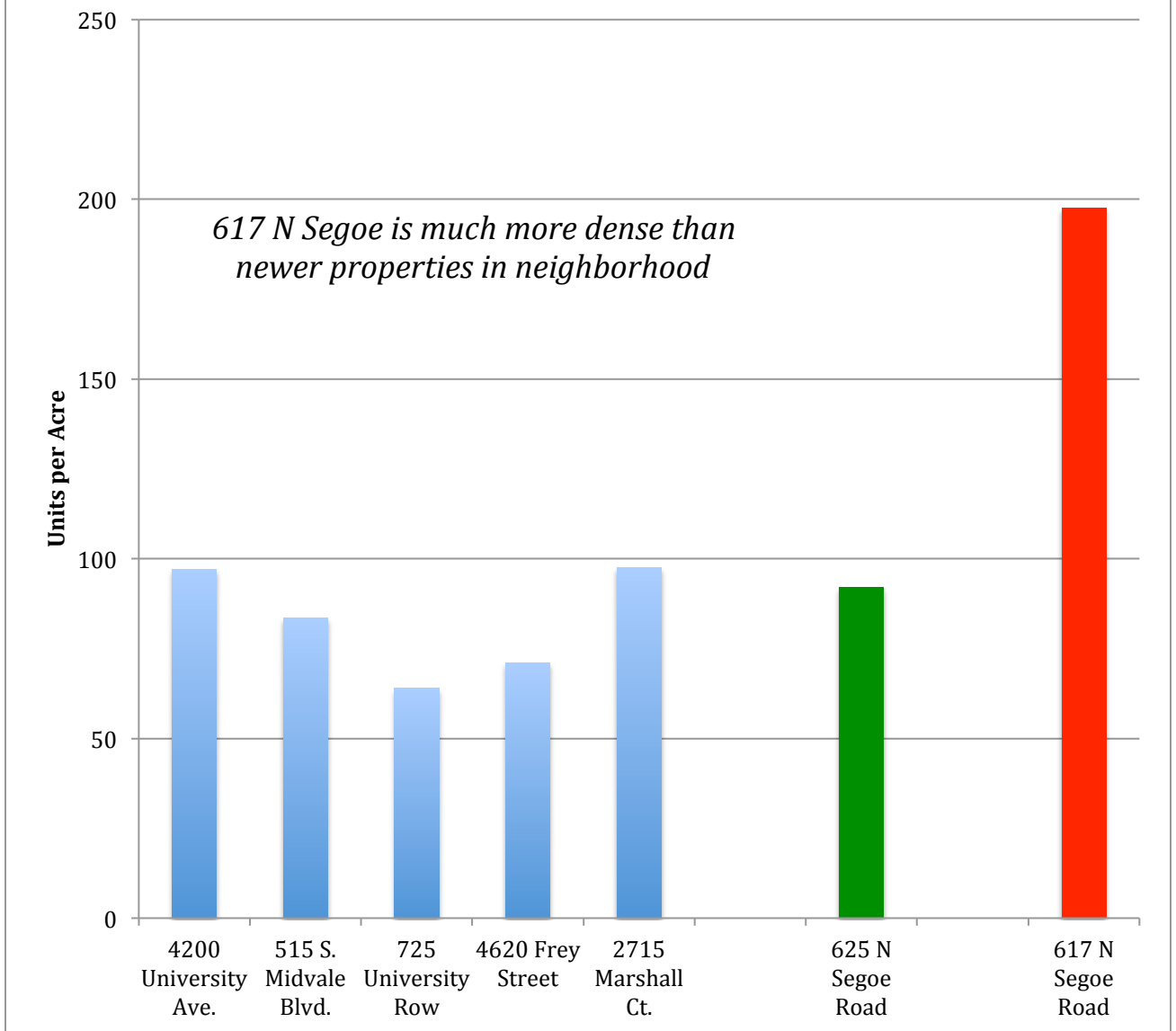
Graph 1

Density Comparisons

Established Properties



Graph 2 Density Comparisons New Properties Near Neighborhood



April 14, 2014
Kevin Firchow
Planning Department
City of Madison

Good day Mr. Firchow,

I am a very new resident of 625 N Segoe Rd. The proposed development next door did not come as a surprise to me. I assumed, when we purchased, that there would be something going up there soon. However, I did not expect the incredible number of apartments, the high population density, and the close proximity to our building that the 617 N Segoe development proposes.

Unfortunately, the builder has not provided a number of necessary components within the building or its surrounding space that will surely be needed by the large number of people who will make it their home. Because of this lack of foresight, the building will, in an aggressive way, encroach upon all the surrounding dwelling places. This will ultimately promote unpleasant behavior in its tenants, and its neighbors. Mr. Stoppa says he wants to be a good neighbor but this building does not promote that as a concept for his future tenants.

- There is very little to no green space for breathability around the building.
- Inexplicably, dogs will be permitted, but there is no support for helping people manage their dogs outside the building.
- There is not enough surface parking or affordable underground parking.
- The driveway will be highly compromised and congested.
- There is not adequate provision for tenants to move in or out, and the density is too high for the suggested plans.
- The actual space needed to support the inevitable service staff required for a building of this size has not been met or planned for - postal workers, FedEx, UPS, painters, construction, plumbers etc.
- Tenants will certainly have guests, and there is not any guest parking to adequately handle that load.

Since these are all necessities, people will get try to get their needs met somehow and this is where the bullying nature of this proposed development is revealed. This proposed development assumes (actually it insists), that every home owner and every building around 617 share personal resources so the proposed development can meet its own legitimate, but unplanned for, needs. Every building, and all the

people around this proposed development, will have to protect precious resources that their own developers had the good sense to provide for its tenants. If this building goes up, that means that that this aggressive and bullying new kid on the block will be given license by the city to steal and poach other homeowners precious space and pleasures. It will be granted the appalling "right" to not have to share the burdens, pay for, or meet, its own needs. We were told that we'll "just have to put up a gate" which is a very expensive project, requires that we become a gated community, makes it more difficult for us to get in and out of our home with any degree of ease and promotes a defensive attitude that is hardly what I would imagine the city would want to see happen. This scenario hardly promotes the idea of urban community development. Why would anyone risk living within an urban development if this sort of situation is the norm. It is unconscionable of the city to not be dealing with these issues.

-Tenants and guests will have to park in our lot and on the surrounding, already highly pressured, streets.

-They will have to let their dogs poop/pee in and upon our green areas and on the sidewalks.

-The UPS, FedEx, postal workers, etc are going to park in our parking area and on the overly parked surrounding streets, in order to service this proposed building.

-There will be even more traffic, vehicular as well as pedestrian, going through the back side of the already stressed entry/exit at Weston - people want to take a "shortcut" or avoid the light. This is private property.

-All the things that people need and want such as green space, gardens, places to sit, the ability to enjoy the pleasures of sunlight and nature are not provided for, on a ground level, in an amount that this proposed development demands. Tenants will probably use the garden space of the surrounding buildings, which is private property.

-There is inadequate buffering for sound, light and privacy needs. People actually really do need beauty and a sense of breathable spaciousness to be content. People behave badly and are not responsible citizens when these normal human needs are not met or provided for.

The proposed density of 617 will have unpleasant consequences for Weston Place, Coventry and the other surrounding dwellings in the neighborhood. It is cavalier/rude and irresponsible to suggest (as has happened at various city development meetings open to the public) to the existing homeowners in the area that, in essence, "it is too bad that you are going to lose the light, spaciousness, green space, and other amenities because you had the foolishness to purchase here". I understand that people have been essentially told that when "you purchased in

these areas and you should have somehow divined that the city was going to be irresponsible enough to permit a building that is going to be uncomfortably close to your home, block all light, compromise your privacy, allow aggressive noise and parking issues and profoundly disturb your quality of life". One official stated about the closeness..."well, now the two buildings will be able to talk to each other." Really? These kinds of comments and beliefs reveal a lack of respect, a patronizing attitude and the inability to actually hear the concerns of the tax paying citizenry. The tremendous developmental pressure in this area is not desirable if it is not carefully, thoughtfully, and considerately managed. It will only create a great number of unpleasant problems that the city will have to pay attention to and pay for, after the fact.

The near west side development opportunities offer the city the chance to orchestrate and create a comprehensive, attractive, desirable outcome for this region. If the city wants this area to be a place that successful people want to move to and live within, then these issues need to be addressed in a global and visionary entire neighborhood way before permitting this proposed development to proceed.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Nancy Jane Peirce
North Segoe
Madison, Wisconsin 53705

Mr. Kevin Firchow
Planning Department
City of Madison

Re: 617 N. Segoe Road Project

Dear Kevin,

During our recent meeting I asked about "Bulk Density" as a measure. You mentioned the terminology was "Floor Area Ratio (FAR)" but that FAR hadn't supplanted dwelling units per acre as the current measurement.

The FAR for 617 N. Segoe is approximately 5.3. The FAR for 625 N. Segoe is approximately 4.3. Thus the FAR for 617 N. Segoe is 23% more than the FAR for 625 N. Segoe.

During my career as a CPA, a difference of less than 5 % was not considered significant. There was a gray area from 5% to 10% and above 10% was considered significant. This is more than double 10% and I would say this is very significant.

The developer continues to struggle making arguments or comparisons to say 617 N. Segoe is not significantly more dense than anything in our neighborhood but he continues to fail.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments,
David

David Cloninger
■ N. Segoe Road