

January 24, 2020

To the City of Madison Alders and Planning Council:

I have looked through the Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan dated 01/23/20 and have significant concerns and reservations about several aspects of it. Overall, I approve of the plan and the goals of the project and would welcome the development goals as stated. My two primary concerns are the planned signalized four way intersection of Coolidge Street and Packers Avenue as well as the reduction in size of the wetlands in the Hartmeyer Natural Area.

Opening a direct connection from Packers Avenue to the existing Coolidge Street eastbound is a horrible idea. It would increase hazards to children playing in Eken Park (the city park) as it would direct more traffic around two sides of the city park. It directs traffic into a residential area and is of no benefit to that neighborhood. There is nowhere to go other than back onto Commercial Avenue which is designed to handle higher traffic amounts and is already an existing intersection. The area residents have made it clear at neighborhood meetings that they have no desire to have a new exit out of the area, or to have more traffic driving through.

One of the stated goals of the OMSAP is to create a street connection from Sherman to Packers (via a yet-to-be-created section of Coolidge Street). Nowhere does it say to connect Sherman to North Street, as that would serve no useful purpose, so why do it?

This planned connection goes against the City of Madison's Neighborhood Traffic Management Program, version 10 dated November 28, 2016, which states: (Page 1 of Introduction)"There are several forms of "unwanted traffic" recognized on residential streets: Traffic using the street as a shortcut, detour or overflow from a congested arterial. Traffic travelling at excessive speeds." Also, from page 2, item number one of Policies:" Neighborhood cut-through traffic should be routed to arterial streets as designated in the Highway and Street Functional Classification Map, published by the Madison Traffic Engineering Division."

This is also in direct opposition to the Regional Transportation Plan 2035 adopted March 7, 2012 by the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board. On page 81 under Streets/Roadways Policy Objectives it states: #6 Draw traffic *away from local neighborhood streets* and environmentally sensitive areas (traffic redirection), where possible. (Emphasis added.)

Further, in the Regional Transportation Plan 2030 Summary under key concepts, it directs that "The plan seeks to draw local auto through-traffic to local arterial major travel corridors as a way to **reduce the amount of through-traffic penetrating central Madison neighborhoods and other neighborhoods** in the region... Traffic calming and other transportation system management **techniques are encouraged to reduce and/or redirect traffic from local neighborhood streets** and other sensitive areas."

On page 37 of the updated 01/23/20 OMSAP, it states "transportation recommendations: 2. Connect Roth and Coolidge Streets across the Oscar Mayer site and create a signalized intersection at Packers Avenue. **Explore design alternatives to minimize impacts from non-local traffic.**" (Emphasis added.)

The District 12 Alder and residents of the affected area have requested that the city planners consider a design alternative making the proposed Coolidge/Packers intersection one that would allow traffic to turn into the Oscar Mayer area from north and southbound traffic on Packers but to allow only pedestrian/bicycle type traffic to go eastbound on Coolidge Street. This would satisfy the city's stated desire of slowing traffic on Packers with signals while also preserving the residential atmosphere of the Coolidge Street area. Coolidge Street was NOT

designed to handle the amount of traffic that could be directed onto it. When talking to my neighbors, no one has expressed concern about increased bicycle and pedestrian traffic, only about motor vehicle traffic.

If the city of Madison wants to have human scale, walkable and livable neighborhoods then Eken Park is a shining example of this. It has affordable, smaller working class homes averaging 1,100 square feet, where neighbors know each other and can freely cross the street to socialize without fear of being run over, where most people know their close neighbors, and where people feel safe walking to area businesses. Sending unnecessary traffic through this residential area would negatively impact a neighborhood that is an example of what the city of Madison is trying to promote.

Additionally, please consider this statement from the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan: "CULTURE & CHARACTER 1. Create vibrant and inviting places through creative architecture and urban design. **2. Preserve historic and special places that tell the story of Madison** and reflect racially and ethnically diverse cultures and histories." This is what the city states as an objective, so I request you consider this April 14, 2016 District 12 blog: "The City of Madison is pleased to announce that the Wisconsin Historical Society has awarded Certified Local Government Historic Preservation Fund Subgrant funds to conduct an architectural survey in the area of Eken Park on **Myrtle Street and the northside of Coolidge Street**. The City believes the Eken Park neighborhood is an **intact example of the mass produced housing developments** of the World War II-era that were located near employment centers. **In conjunction with the recently adopted neighborhood plan that recommends the preservation of the quality and character of the houses at Eken Park**, the architectural survey will provide information that can be used toward the protection and preservation of Madison's unique built environment." Deliberately allowing traffic to enter would harm the historic character and feel of the area.

The OMSAP in its latest iteration acknowledges that there will or may be traffic problems by allowing eastbound vehicle traffic onto Coolidge from Packers. From page 37: "transportation recommendations: 2. Connect Roth and Coolidge Streets across the Oscar Mayer site and create a signalized intersection at Packers Avenue. **Explore design alternatives to minimize impacts from non-local traffic.**" Also, from page 38: "*In the event future traffic volumes on Coolidge Street exceed those appropriate for a local neighbored street*, implement traffic calming and/or reduction strategies such as reducing turning movements into Eken Park, installation of diverters or other steps." Sending traffic onto Coolidge eastbound already goes against the city's policies as stated above. There already are speed bumps on Myrtle and North streets, so traffic is already a problem without sending more into the area!

Please reconsider how this proposed intersection of Coolidge/Packers will be designed.

My second area of concern is the wetland in the Hartmeyer Natural area. I am certain you have heard numerous reasons from numerous people as to why this area should be maintained at its current size including the surrounding uplands. I also feel the 30 acres should be left as is, not chopped into pieces by roadways, or diminished in size. This is an ecosystem consisting of many different parts that cannot be replaced. Dane County continues purchasing wetland areas such as along the Sugar River because of their value; certainly the City of Madison has the foresight to protect one of the very few established wetlands we have left. Please take this into account in the planning process.

Sincerely,

Maggie Freespirit, 2302 Coolidge Street