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Subject: 216-222 North Midvale Blvd., Application for Demolition, Rezoning, CUP and CSM by Flad Development & Investment Corp.
Date: Monday, November 22, 2021 12:21:14 PM

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From: Michael Lawton, Chair, Hill Farms Association Planning Committee
To: Chair and Members of the City of Madison Plan Commission
cc: Ald. Arvina Martin, Heather Stouder, Kevin Firchow, Tim Parks
Subject: 216-222 North Midvale Blvd., Application for Demolition, Rezoning, CUP and CSM by Flad Development & Investment Corp.

The staff report on this application by Tim Parks has summarized very well the issue that the Hill Farms neighborhood faces in trying to preserve the original plan for the neighborhood as designed by the University, and as embodied in the National Register designation for the overall Hill Farms neighborhood, which contemplated a low density business and commercial district in the area bounded by Regent Street on the south, Segoe Road on the west, Midvale Blvd. on the east and the Hilldale Shopping Center on the north, and bisected east-west by Vernon Boulevard (hereafter, "Vernon Boulevard Sub-Area").

Recently, in light of the City comprehensive plan and the Hill Farms neighborhood plan which opened the Vernon Boulevard Sub-Area to some level of multi-family development, and recognizing the need for more multi-family housing in the City, we supported the 100% multi-family project now completed by the applicant at the intersection of North Segoe Road and Regent Street ("The Hamptons").

The same applicant has now filed this application for a 100% multi-family residential project, and we again appreciate the applicant consulting with us early on in this process and receiving our input, and also developing a quality design which is significantly different from and a more modern design than The Hamptons project. We are not objecting to the design or site plan of the proposed building, and we acknowledge that the application does comply with the Comprehensive Plan and neighborhood plan documents. However, as a neighborhood Planning Committee we want to go on record with the significant concerns that we have for the future of the Vernon Boulevard Sub-Area of the City as a part of the Hill Farms National Register District, given the obvious trend that is taking place here and which could continue in the future.

The loss of more of the original commercial buildings in the Vernon Boulevard

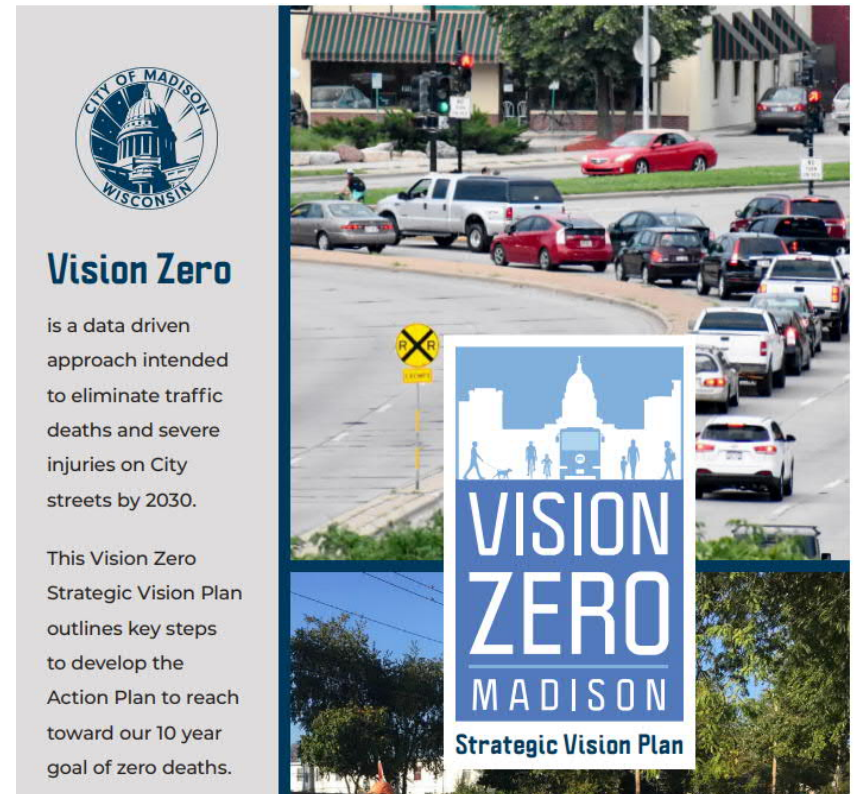
Sub-Area of the National Register District, and their replacement with projects which are 100% residential starkly raise the question as to whether in the future the City should limit to some degree the issuance of demolition permits and the approval of rezonings in the Vernon Boulevard Sub-Area if they will result in a loss of commercial/business buildings in the area which were part of the original fabric and design of the Hill Farms neighborhood, as these buildings do currently house small offices and businesses which frequently find it difficult to locate new rental space in the area. The next buildings which could be under the wrecking ball in the Vernon Boulevard Sub-Area if this trend continues could include the Anchor Bank (now Old National) building (302 North Midvale), the original Hilldale State Bank building on North Segoe Road, the Lafayette Building (313 North Price Place), the office building at 310 North Midvale, and the several small personal service/office buildings at 202 North Midvale, and 4414 and 4506 Regent Street.

Our specific request is that any demolition permits and rezonings in the future in the Vernon Boulevard Sub-Area that affect the above-identified commercial/office buildings be required to go through a much more rigorous review than that required for this application or for The Hamptons as to whether (a) they can be continued in service as commercial/business office structures (keeping in mind that tax credits are available for this purpose), or (b) they can be replaced with buildings that contain commercial/business office components that can replace the lost office/commercial space in either exclusively commercial buildings or in mixed-use buildings along with residential components.


Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

City Planning and Vision Zero Should Align

- Many new developments are being approved with reduced vision triangles.
- Lack of vision triangles is creating a less forgiving infrastructure which is counter productive to the Vision Zero City Initiative.
- I'm requesting that developments maintain the 25' vision triangle per MGO unless a truly needed exception is required (not just because developer wants it).



The graphic features the City of Madison seal at the top left. Below it, the text reads: "Vision Zero is a data driven approach intended to eliminate traffic deaths and severe injuries on City streets by 2030. This Vision Zero Strategic Vision Plan outlines key steps to develop the Action Plan to reach toward our 10 year goal of zero deaths." The background is a photograph of a city street with cars and a yellow 'X' sign. A blue and white sign in the foreground reads "VISION ZERO MADISON Strategic Vision Plan" with a silhouette of the city skyline.


CITY OF MADISON
WISCONSIN

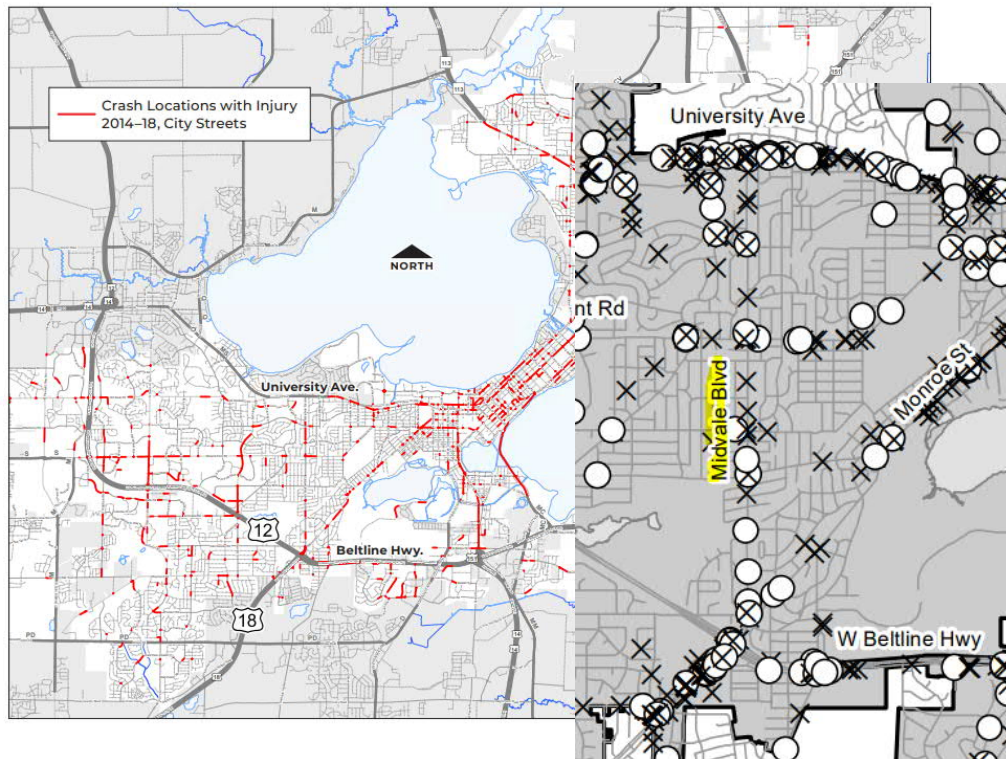
Vision Zero

is a data driven approach intended to eliminate traffic deaths and severe injuries on City streets by 2030.

This Vision Zero Strategic Vision Plan outlines key steps to develop the Action Plan to reach toward our 10 year goal of zero deaths.

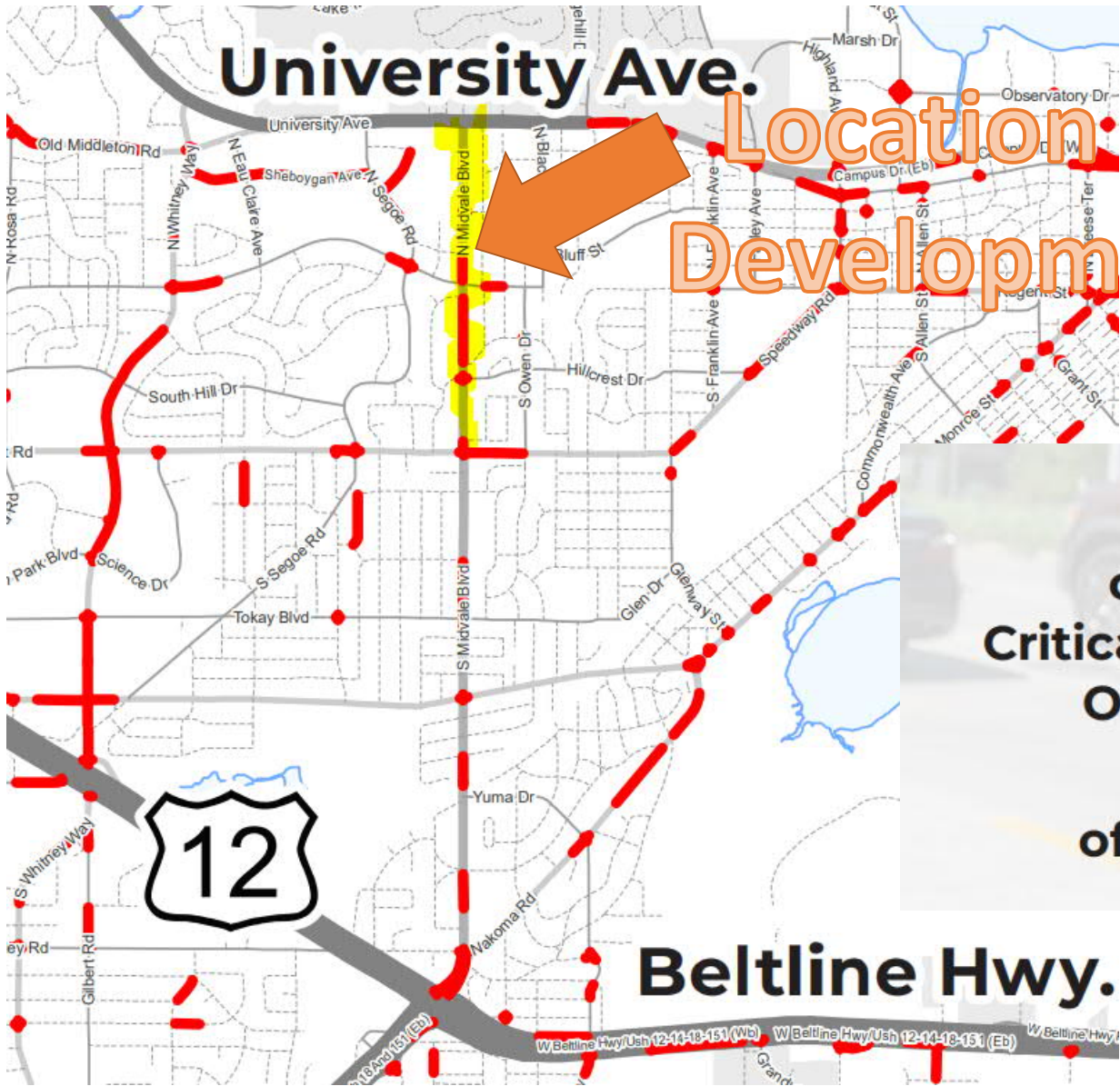
VISION ZERO
MADISON
Strategic Vision Plan

Most of Madison's Fatal and Injury Crashes Occur on a Small Network of Streets



The 216-222 Midvale Development is located on a street with a high number of crashes and injuries (Source 2019 City Wide Crashes)

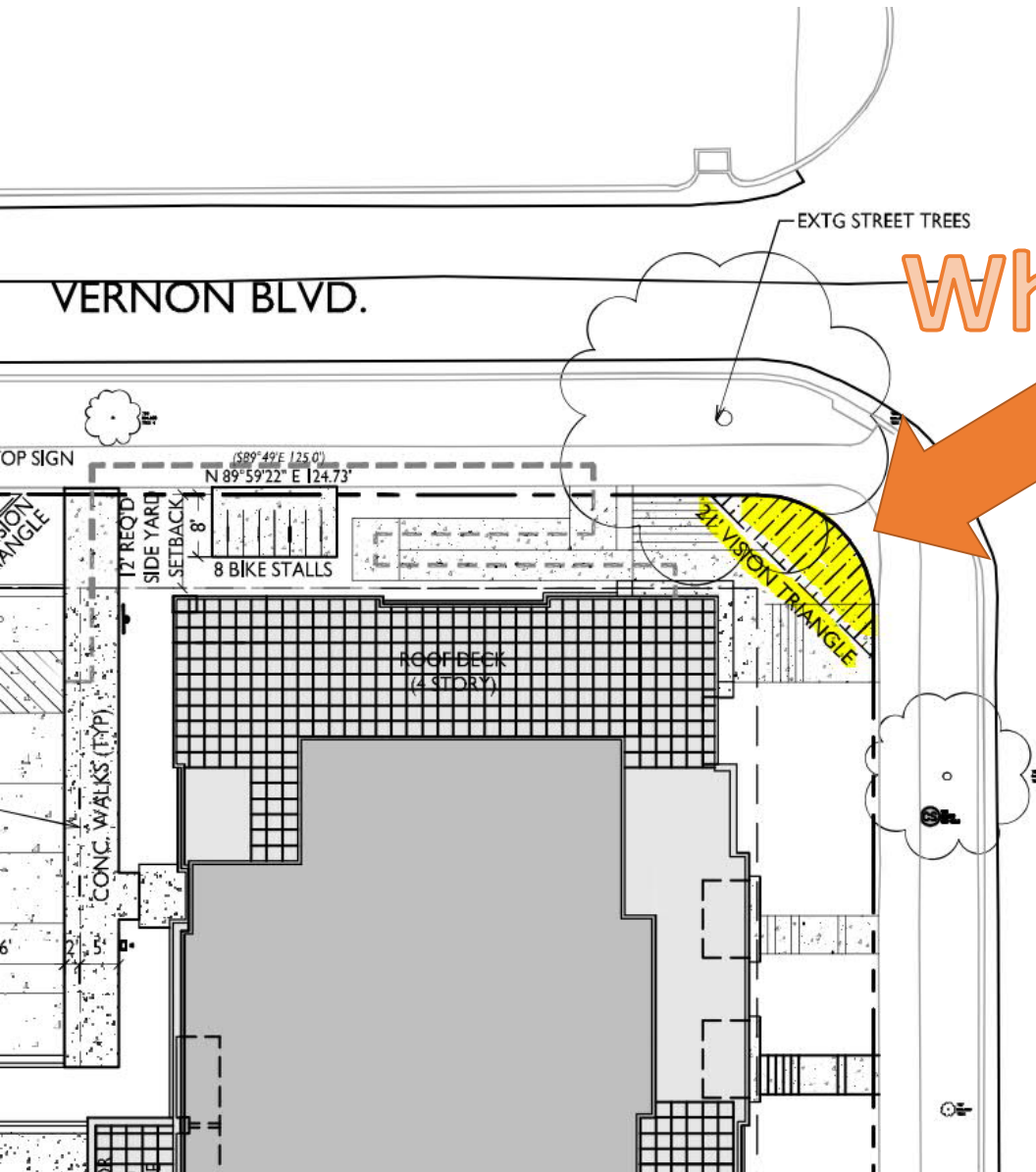
<https://www.cityofmadison.com/trafficEngineering/documents/2019CrashFacts.pdf>



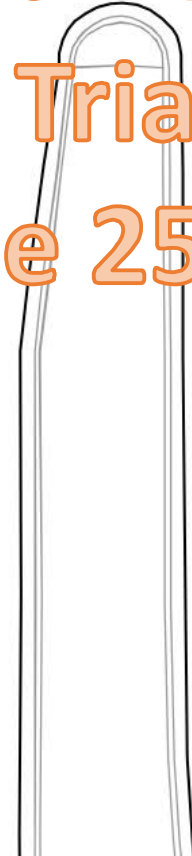
Location of
Development



50%
of Fatal and
Critical Injury Crashes
Occur on Just
4%
of City Streets



Why Can't the Vision Triangle Be 25 feet?



Madison General Ordinance 27.05

- The applicant shall adhere to all vision triangle requirements as set in MGO Section 27.05 (No visual obstructions between the heights of 30 inches and 10 feet at a distance of 25 feet behind the property line at streets and 10 feet at driveways.).
- Alterations necessary to achieve compliance may include but are not limited to; substitution to transparent materials, removing sections of the structure and modifying or removing landscaping elements. If applicant believes public safety can be maintained they shall apply for a reduction of MGO Section 27.05(2)(bb) - Vision Clearance Triangles at Intersections Corners. Approval or denial of the reduction shall be the determination of the City Traffic Engineer.

All Recent Vision Triangle Waivers are Approved



TRAFFIC ENGINEERING AND PARKING DIVISIONS

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REQUEST FOR REDUCTION OF THE VISION CLEARANCE TRIANGLES

- | | |
|---|---|
| X | Application Approved (see attached diagram for reduced Vision Clearance Triangle) |
| | Application Denied |

- Traffic Engineering does not have any recent projects where a waiver has been outright denied. (Source e-mail from City Engineering)

Reasons for reduction are to the developers benefit and not to public safety. Example:

Reason for Reduction:

The south-east corner of the development interferes with the 25' vision triangle by two feet to create a 23' vision triangle at the corner of Heritage Circle and Hammersley Rd. The intersection is within a low traffic and low speed area. **This reduction will allow for a more desirable sized first floor commercial space.**

Reasons for reduction are unclear. How does reducing the vision triangle engage the street and corner in a more significant way?

Reason for Reduction:

We understand the volume of traffic on Curtis Court is not significant. The Neighborhood Association and Alder wished to preserve the 3 trees at the SW corner of North Few and Curtis Court. These already block the 25' vision triangle. Allowing the building to conform to a reduced vision triangle of 12' allows the building to engage the street and corner in a more significant way.

Why is this?

- Why is the 25' MGO requirement the exception instead of the rule?
- Why is the City sacrificing safety over building size?
- Why can't the Architects design a building that meets the 25' vision triangle?

Require the Developers to Provide the FULL 25-foot vision triangle!

- Safety starts with all of us.
- We can't control human error, but we can help create more forgiving infrastructure and change systems to prevent crashes from being serious and fatal.



Why should the Vision Triangle Reduction be denied at Midvale Boulevard

- The data shows North Midvale is a high-risk street for crashes and injuries
- Very close proximity to Fire Station No. 9 and emergency vehicles traffic
- High volume of traffic on North Midvale
- Traffic tends to travel at a much faster speed than the posted speed limit
- There are no external factors preventing the building from having the 25' vision triangle other than the design itself.