UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PARK
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

January 31, 2023

Ben Zellers
City of Madison Planning Division
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Ben,

I am writing to express my concern about the proposed alignment of the east-west extension of Charmany Drive from Rosa Road to the anticipated future Genomic Drive, and to propose an alternative path which we believe better achieves the City's goals.

I understand that planning staff desire an east-west connection within University Research Park that would enable people to travel from University Research Park to Grand Canyon Drive without using Mineral Point or Odana Road. We strongly support this goal. In fact, University Research Park has invested considerable amounts of our own resources to construct new public streets (e.g., Endeavor Lane, Catalyst Way, Element Way) to increase the porousness, carve up suburban-style super blocks, make the Research Park more walkable and bikeable, and enhance the sense of place.

However, I don't believe the proposed alignment reflects the best long-term location (and I don't see any reason the proposed alignment would get built in the short-term unless the City intends to use eminent domain, which cannot be used to condemn state-owned property).

The University of Wisconsin – Madison has made 5707 Mineral Point Road available to us for redevelopment. In addition, 442 S. Rosa Road, the property directly to the south, may also be redeveloped in the foreseeable future if certain UW-Madison programmatic needs can be accommodated.

In 2017, University Research Park spent considerable time and money with a planning firm studying various alignments of an east-west through these parcels. I regret that the Odana Area Plan did not benefit from these studies. Via this work, we landed on a redevelopment plan for the sites that relies on extending Charmany to the west with an alignment along the northern border of the site as shown below in exhibit 1. (We also studied extending Endeavor Lane through the current parking lot of the MGE Innovation Center and then along the southern boundary of 442 S. Rosa Road which we view as a viable alternative strategy. This alternative would offer a direct connection between Genomic and Whitney Way.)

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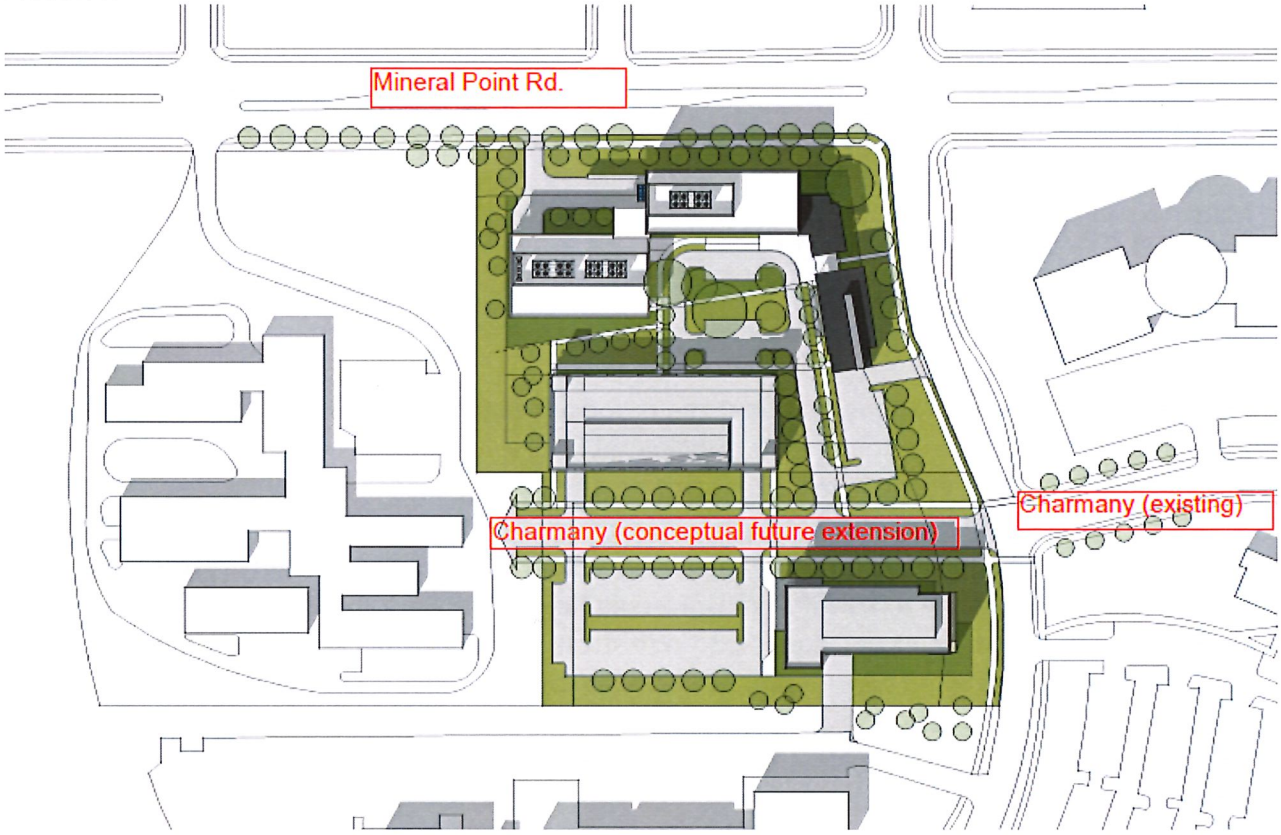
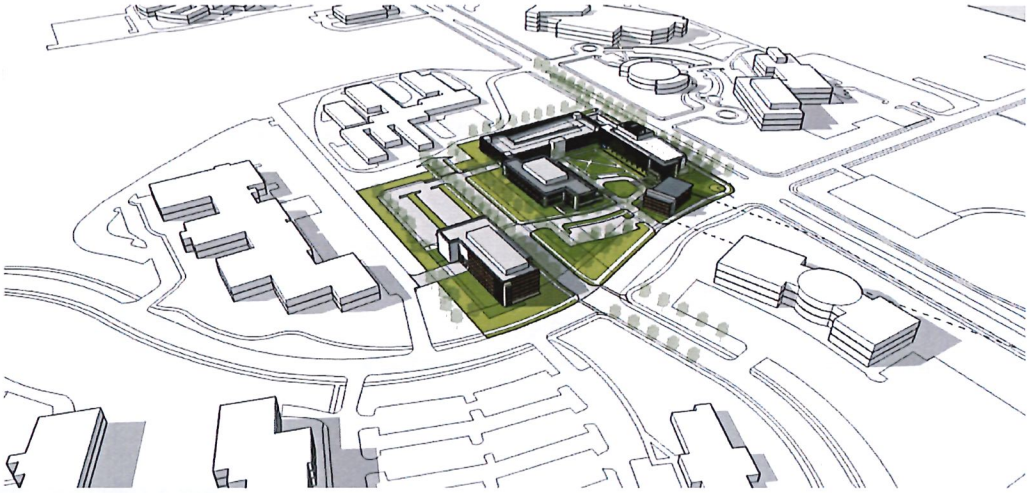
Exhibit 1




Our alignment preserves the developability of 442 S. Rosa by keeping it rectangular. (In contrast, the Odana Area Road plan bisects it an angle creating two triangular lots with far less development potential.) Our plan creates a parcel that can accommodate a building that holds the corner of Charmany and Rosa while also creating an attractive view terminus from Mineral Point Road and Rosa Road.

Exhibit 2



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My understanding is that the City prefers a more curvilinear connection to enable the hypothetical link to Grand Canyon without having to wait until UW-Madison is ready to demolish and redevelop the site at 5800 Mineral Point Road. However, I have a difficult time envisioning why the proposed alignment would be built by anyone other than the City until that facility is demolished anyway.

Further, University Research Park sees no benefit to its nonprofit mission or the broader built environment by connecting the platted but unbuilt Woodford Drive with Charmany on the proposed alignment of the Odana Area Plan. That alignment would reduce available parking at our facility located at 500-504 S. Rosa Road and would not unlock any meaningful development opportunities at 442 S. Rosa Road. If the City were to build this stretch, the University would likely respond by shifting their uses at 442 S. Road to 5707 Mineral Point Road which would then preclude or reduce redevelopment options there. In short, University Research Park is highly unlikely to willingly construct the Charmany extension proposed in the Odana Area Plan. (And it goes almost without saying that UW-Madison will not be constructing roads in University Research Park.)

By contrast, University Research Park is keenly interested in redeveloping 5707 Mineral Point Road and 442 S. Rosa Road and would likely construct the first leg of a Charmany (or Endeavor) extension if it resulted in developable parcels at 442 S. Rosa. When UW-Madison's facility at 5800 Mineral Point Road becomes available for redevelopment, we will then be well-positioned and motivated to extend this toward Genomic Drive.

I understand and agree with the City's ultimate goals but hope you will consider taking a long-term view that results in a more urban grid-like road structure over time while unlocking more development opportunities in the short-term. I think you will find you will generate more tax base, more density to support BRT, and a better eventual road network. I also believe that, at the end of the day, it will get done just as fast.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best wishes,

Aaron Olver
Managing Director
University Research Park

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