

From: [Diana Lutz](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Old Sauk Road and non-representation of district 19
Date: Thursday, August 22, 2024 11:17:29 PM

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I am writing to strenuously object to the manner in which the city has pushed through approval of the high-density apartment project on Old Sauk Road despite the strong and vocal opposition of hundreds of residents in the surrounding neighborhood. (More than 200 by my count.)

Nothing epitomizes the lack of respect for the residents so much as the behavior of our appointed (not elected) alder, Alder Guequierre, who has consistently voted against the clearly expressed wishes of his constituents.

In blog posts he has also insinuated that the residents who oppose this development are racists and fear "the other" and are not "economically contributing" because they are retired. In the most egregious of these posts he refers to the opinions of the residents as the manure that he must muck out of the barn. That blog post has been edited to remove some of the more offensive language in its original version but the manure metaphor still stands and you can read it here:
<https://us17.campaign-archive.com/?e=a1724dcf8f&u=dcc6f50df19aeec2fd56eb1fa&id=0a581fd9a6>

I do not feel represented by this man, nor do any of my neighbors. I find his insinuations and tone despicable.

I also want to object to city's use of "environmental" reasons (urban sprawl) to justify this development. It is nearly impossible to take this rationale seriously given that the proposed project has few or none of the features of advanced buildings that either eliminate fossil fuel use or try to minimize it. Why isn't the city doing more to ensure buildings like this actually have fuel pumps instead of furnaces and install solar arrays on rooftops? Why isn't more effort made to preserve the trees that studies are showing significantly lower the temperature of urban areas? Why is supposedly progressive Madison so behind the times on climate change?

I've lived on Old Sauk for 20 years and written about climate change for 40. I had planned to upgrade my house with fuel pumps and solar panels but after the city's approval of this project I feel it is a waste of time given my lack of control over our future living conditions.

Please do a better job of listening. When every project is approved unanimously residents begin to suspect it doesn't matter a damn how they are affected by these decisions.

Diana Lutz
6405 Old Sauk Road

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To: Chair Ledell Zellers and Plan Commission Members

We are writing to oppose the West Area Plan's steep increases in the land use density of parcels along Old Sauk Road. We ask that the Plan be amended to return those parcels to their current land use designations.

We support the development of housing with density ranging from that present level (7.9 du/ac) to that sufficient for what is generally referred to as Missing Middle type housing. A reasonable increase in density would benefit the city and the neighborhood. LMR and LR property can support small apartments, quads, duplexes, single family homes and condos. In select conditions, the LR maximum allows up to 2 story and 30 du/ac. Even in the absence of select conditions, the LMR maximum allows up to 3 story and 30 du/ac. It is not necessary to increase density beyond the current level to provide for all of the above types of housing. Nonetheless, as the **attached maps show, the West Area Plan increases density on the circled parcels either from LR to LMR or from LR to MR, and others from LMR to MR.** Those increases invite a single type of housing: high density apartments. High density apartments cannot be readily integrated into the surrounding neighborhoods. We're already stuck with one such apartment; three more would completely destroy the neighborhood.

While we believe that there is an added benefit to the city and to neighborhoods by the addition of owner-occupied housing that comes from homeowners having a long term investment in and commitment to the well-being of their neighborhood, we acknowledge having many good neighbors who are tenants. It's not about development versus no development; it's about reasonable development. Similarly it's not about homeownership versus tenancy; it's about how many people and how many units.

We ask the city to amend the West Area Plan to return the designated parcels to their existing land use categories.

BACKGROUND

APPROVAL OF THE STONE HOUSE DEVELOPMENT/NON-REPRESENTATION FOR HUNDREDS OF DISTRICT 19 RESIDENTS. As lawyers we realize there are two sides to every story and there is often some merit on each side. We also believe that a full examination of both sides to a conflict is critical to a wise resolution. When District 19 Alder, John Guequierre, was appointed he made the following promise to District 19 residents: *“I’m dedicated to making your voices heard. Even when my priorities and values lead me in a different direction, **your positions and opinions deserve to be in front of department staff, committees and the full Common Council.**”* We and hundreds of District 19 residents who opposed the Stone House high density development were reassured by this commitment. However, with one last-minute exception, Alder Guequierre did not keep his promise to bring us, and our positions and opinions, in front of this committee and the full Common Council. Instead, he spent all of his time in front of this committee and the Common Council rooting for, justifying and advocating for Stone House owners and their design and engineering team and undermining our positions and opinions. We and the other hundreds of District 19 opponents of the project felt shut out and betrayed.

While the city is generally open to high density housing, our alder's vociferous support of the Stone House project sealed the deal. The City approved the Stone House development, with multiple conditions, but unchanged as to size and density. The City also rezoned the Pierstorff parcels to urban high density (TR-U2).

LAWSUITS. As a result of the flood threat they face if the massive-footprint Stone House development is built, two District 19 families, the Umbecks and the Westerns, have filed lawsuits challenging the City's rezoning and the conditional use decisions. Sadly, a lawsuit is the only recourse these families have to protect their homes.

OLD SAUK ROAD AND THE WEST AREA PLAN

Our previous alder, Kristen Slack, who unfortunately had to resign due to family illness, forcefully addressed development along Old Sauk Road, saying [1] *"I personally don't want to see this street turned, over time, into a long row of tall apartment buildings."* That is exactly what will happen if the West Area Plan is adopted.

WEST AREA PLAN. The final West Area Plan (WAP; cf. www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/west-area-plan/3896/) draft invites more high density apartment buildings along Old Sauk Road. Below, we are embedding and attaching a copy of the WAP Map on which we have circled neighborhood locations where the city has increased parcel density. In addition to the city-approved Stone House development, two other neighborhood parcels on Old Sauk Road have steep density increases: the St. Thomas Aquinas Church parcel has been increased to MR or Medium Residential (up to 5 stories and 90 du/ac) and a new LMR parcel between Sauk Ridge and Cooper's Lane (up to 4 stories and 70 du/ac due to select conditions) has been drawn over LR property. If these properties are developed to the density allowed, there will be at least 3 urban high density apartment buildings within about a half mile of each other on Old Sauk Road.

In addition, the city planners have escalated the future land use density to MR for other churches in this area including a second one on Old Sauk Road, a third on Gammon Road, a fourth on Colony Drive and a 5th on Rosa Road.

The West Area Plan purports to be a plan that prioritizes Missing Middle housing, affordable housing while preserving neighborhood character and a “sense of place”. If that were the case, we would wholeheartedly endorse it. However, in light of the totality of the final draft, that language is nothing more than window dressing. None of these goals are served by the West Area Plan. The proposed increases in density along Old Sauk Road are not necessary to enable Missing Middle housing, which is possible on LMR and LR designated parcels. The truth is that the increased land use density in the West Area plan is intended to, and does, invite apartment building over other types of housing. No developer will build the smaller "Missing Middle" housing developments or work through the challenges presented by condo development when they can increase profits with high density apartments. Developers, and their "deep pocket" investors, with high-density intentions can and will outbid any other interested parties. Thus, the density increases along Old Sauk Road work against Missing Middle (and condo and single family) development.

The West Area Plan will not bring Missing Middle housing, affordable housing, condo housing or single family housing to the West Area. It will add one kind of housing: high density apartments. If the planned uses come to fruition, the neighborhoods on both sides of Old Sauk will be forever changed by the creation of a new high density apartment corridor and other high density neighborhood housing. The property sellers will be happy with their windfall high sales prices. The developers will be happy with their high profits. The city will be happy with high property taxes. The new apartment dwellers will be happy with their convenient location. The only group who loses are the nearby residents, those who chose to live in this area for its slower pace, open space, healthy tree canopy, good schools and the friendly faces of long-time neighbors.

One of the best features of life in the neighborhoods surrounding Old Sauk Road is, well, it's neighborly. We know each other. We watch out for each other. We like each other. We welcome new neighbors. **We particularly love it when younger folks move here. But we can't integrate a large number of people into the neighborhood at once. The Stone House apartments alone will add between 189 to 353 new residents. Two more high**

density apartments would add many more hundreds of people to the neighborhoods. That's too many people to connect with. Moreover, because this neighborhood has no amenities within a walkable distance, people won't hang out in communal spaces in the neighborhood - they will drive, or bus or pedal away. Indeed, that's exactly what the City intends: develop housing along transit lines so people can zoom away. All of these characteristics, the large number of people, the lack of amenities and the access to transit, work against the formation of a neighborhood community. An apartment corridor is just that - a corridor, not a neighborhood. We want to remain a neighborhood.

For all of the reasons stated above, we oppose the West Area's plan to increase land use density in the areas circled below.

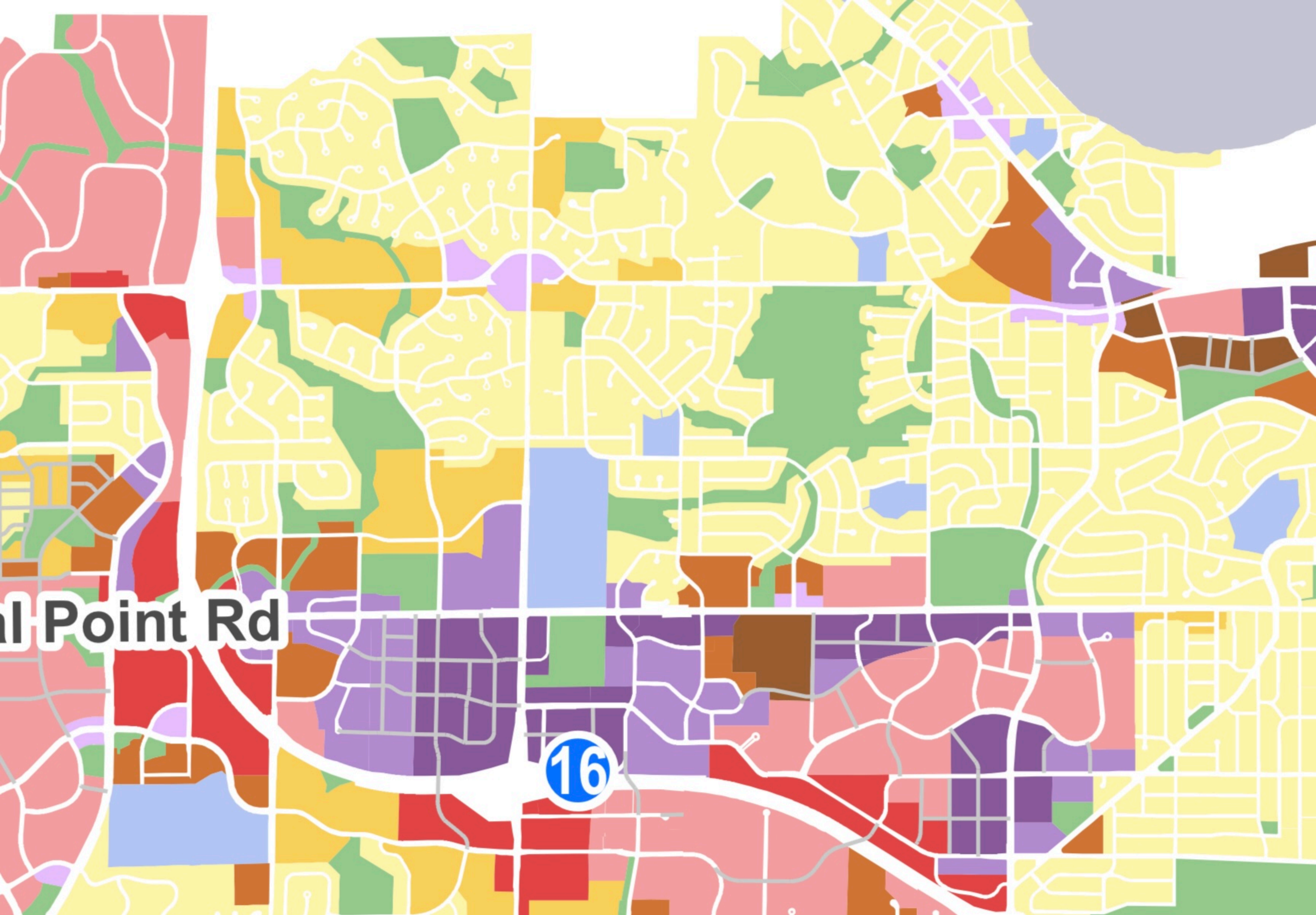
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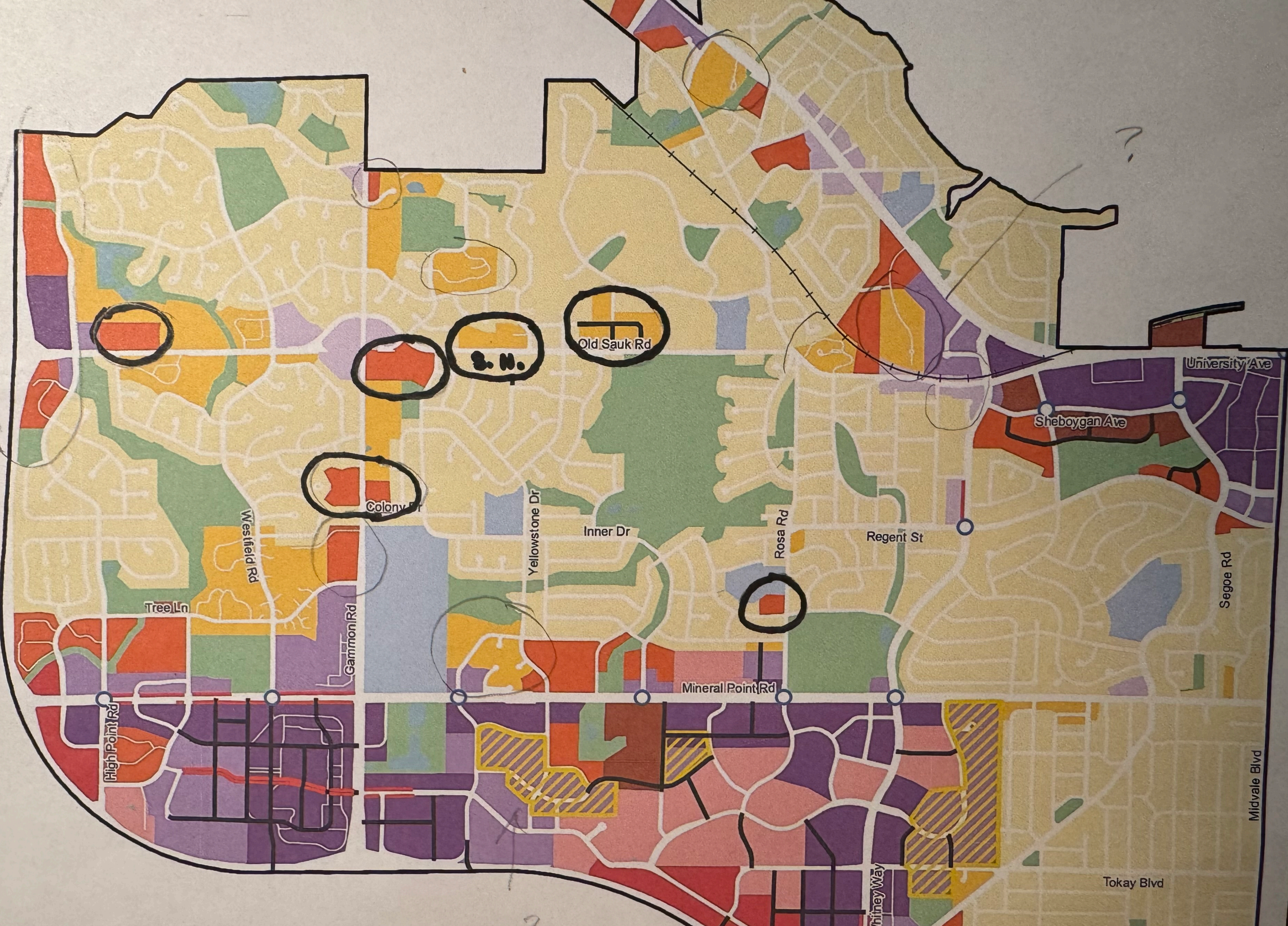
Diane Sorensen & Dan Stier
606 San Juan Trail
Madison, WI 53705

Ref [1] *A blog post on housing and a proposed development in District 19*, Kristen Slack, 5 November 2023.

Point Rd

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**West Area Plan
Generalized Future Land Use**

From: [Kathleen stark](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: West Area Plan
Date: Thursday, August 22, 2024 5:11:17 PM

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Absolutely reckless this West Area Development Plan. Why even go through the charade of Planning Commission meeting? Just rubber stamp your OK and drive this development crap down our collective throats.

You better start listening to the West Area Property owners who fund much of this city via our property tax.

Tom Stark
809 Sauk Ridge Trail
Madison WI 53717