Letter of Intent

January 6, 2025

City of Madison
Planning and Zoning Division
210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Madison, WI 53703

RE: "Serenity Lofts" multi-family affordable housing development
77 Sirloin Strip, Madison, WI 53713

City Development Staff and Planning Commission members:

On behalf of developer Eminent Development Corporation (owner Julian Walters), we are submitting these documents requesting a zoning map amendment and a conditional use permit for a proposed new housing development.

Team:

Developer: Eminent Development Corporation; Julian Walters
Architect: Sketchworks Architecture; Steve Shulfer
Civil Engineer: Burse Surveying and Engineering; Michelle Burse

A similar project had been proposed in 2022 for this property, and while this submittal is similar in concept - it is a superior proposal which would create more affordable housing for the City of Madison (vs. the prior market-rate proposal originally presented).

The current use of the property is a restaurant (formerly "The Hookah Lounge", currently leased to El Pollo Rumbero). The proposed redevelopment would raze the existing building and construct 74 affordable residential units on a 4-story structure. The design of the development is enclosed, and a statement from the owners follows this Letter.

Enclosed:

- Existing conditions site survey
- Proposed development designs
- site plans, schematic floor plans and exterior imagery.

We strongly believe that the affordable housing proposal that Eminent Development is suggesting is exactly what the City needs:

- Creates additional housing, at an affordable rental rate
- Does not sacrifice any naturally occurring affordable housing, and instead would replace an old structure nearing the end of it's useful life
- Located within a network of public transportation, pedestrian and biking options.
- In an area that hasn't been improved in decades, inviting modernization
- Along a major transportation thoroughfare

We hope that your review of this application will result in a shared understanding.

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Project Overview/ Introduction:

Located at 77 Sirloin Strip in Madison, WI, this affordable development will feature 74 thoughtfully designed residential units, with the majority reserved for individuals aged 55 and older. The project aims to create an inclusive and vibrant community, blending affordability and quality with a focus on accessibility and comfort.

The unit mix will include studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom apartments to meet diverse household needs at rent levels from 30-80% of Area Median Income. Units will be designated for seniors, incorporating age-friendly features such as step-free entryways, grab-bar-ready bathrooms, and wide doorways for easy movement.

Amenities will include a central community room, fitness center, and shared spaces to encourage social interaction and foster a sense of belonging. Outdoor spaces, such as walking paths and a garden area, will provide opportunities for recreation and relaxation.

The development's income approach ensures economic diversity by offering a combination of affordable units for low- to moderate-income households. By prioritizing affordability, accessibility, and community, this project will serve as a welcoming and sustainable housing solution for senior residents.

Serenity Lofts is located in a qualified census tract, tract 14.01. The site falls within the South Madison Comprehensive Plan, which contains an entire chapter dedicated to the neighborhood housing goals. The top priority of the South Madison plan in terms of housing is having a range of high-quality housing affordable to households in varying financial situations, including an adequate supply of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households. We believe this proposed project fits perfectly into the goals of the City, specifically the South Madison neighborhood.

History of Proposal

This project had initially been proposed in 2021 as a larger, six story building with 116 total dwelling units, then later reduced to four stories and 71 units. While the previous jurisdiction, (Town of Madison) and the neighborhood approved the initial proposal, Dane County chose to take no action due to the pending annexation in October, 2022. The project was later proposed to the City and ultimately not supported due to concerns with pending zoning regulations and consistency with the South Madison Plan. The proposal of market rate units was concerning to planners, presumably due to gentrification – though this development would not displace any existing housing.

Past conversations with key stakeholders have guided the planning to date. They include:

- City of Madison Planning and Zoning staff (2021 through 2024/5): Tim Parks, Kevin Firchow, Chrissy Thiele, Jenny Kirchgatter, Jeff Greger, Angela Puerta
- City of Madison Alder Isador Knox (2024/5) and prev. Alder Sherry Carter (2022)
- Dane County Zoning staff: Roger Lane, Pamela Andros, Majid Allan (2021-2022)
- Town of Madison board approval gained (hence since defunct) (2022)
- Neighborhood Residents and local leaders of the Community (2022)
- City of Madison Development Assistance Team (2022)
- Introductory City of Madison Plan Commission meeting (2022)

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After two years, a local minority developer, **Eminent Development Corporation**, has demonstrated a willingness and desire to revitalize this important part of South Madison, providing affordable senior housing to the area. Julian Walters is a native and resident in Madison, indeed the South Madison area. He is committed to this City and the opportunity that a development like this may offer.

Zoning Regulations

Property Zoning:
Current Zoning: TR-V2
Proposed Zoning: TR-U1

Dwelling Unit Density: Proposed: 74 units proposed / 1.55 acres = 49 units per acres
Current Zoning TR-V2 requires 1,500 sf lot area per unit, results in maximum 45 units.
Proposed Zoning TR-U1 requires 750 sf lot area per unit; results in maximum 90 units

Building Height: Proposed: 4 stories; 51' from first floor elevation.
~80 feet from SE lot corner. * Note the dramatic slope of lot across south property line creates an undue hardship for this height measurement.
Height Maximum per current zoning TR-V2: 3 stories or 40 feet
Height Maximum per proposed zoning TR-U1: 5 stories or 65 feet
Height Maximum per South Madison Plan: 5 stories (measured from Badger Road)

Lot Coverage: Proposed: approximately 70%
Current Zoning TR-V2 requires: 70% max.
Proposed Zoning TR-U1 requires 75% max.

Auto Parking Requirements: (not in a T.O.D. district) Proposed: 1.3 stalls per dwelling unit
Required: Min. 1 stall per dwelling unit; Max. 2.5 stalls per dwelling unit

Bicycle Parking Requirements: Proposed: at least 74 indoor stalls and 8 outdoor stalls
Required: 1 per unit up to 2 bedrooms, ½ space per additional bedroom; 1 outdoor guest space per 10 dwelling units

Of Note:

The 'Residential Future Land Use Categories' table on page 20 of the Growth Framework in the Plan includes a provision that allows large and courtyard multi-family buildings to be considered appropriate on properties recommended for LMR in "select conditions" at up to 70 dwelling units an acre and four stories of height. (This proposal seeks approximately 47 units per acre.)

We believe that the slight increase in density and the reconciliation of height fosters the generation of much needed affordable senior housing, and is a worthy endeavor that we encourage the City to support.

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Description of Development:

Housing

The building will consist of 74 living units, as shown in the attached concept plans. There will be a mixture of Studio, one bedroom, two bedroom, and three-bedroom units with ratios as follows:

Studio / Efficiency:	8
1 Bedroom:	47
2 Bedroom:	17
3 Bedroom:	2
Total Units:	**74 units**

The building rent rates will be capped for Senior Housing per WHEDA standards.

Additionally, the project will include many amenities for its residence that will include: Electric vehicle charging stations, Secured underground auto parking, bicycle parking in excess of 1 stall per unit, fitness center for residents, community space for shared use, and outdoor terraces and community space.

Site Design

The site design will maximize the topography to allow development into the hillside, minimize effects of existing bedrock, and orient the building to the east, nearer the commercial zoning district “CC” which allows up to 8-story commercial buildings.

Resident parking will be located below grade and accessed from the existing driveway to the east. Additional visitor parking stalls, and guest bicycle parking will be located at grade along the base of the building.

Greenspace will be provided in the interior courtyard at grade, on a terrace along the base of the building, at grade along Badger Road, and partially on a rooftop patio. Residents will each have outdoor patios for additional open space. Our intent is to maximize greenspace on site, and the courtyard and vertical development (vs horizontal) afford this opportunity.

Burse Engineering has developed a site plan that effectively controls stormwater on this redevelopment property. The steep grades and presence of bedrock limit the locations of on-site infiltration, however this conceptual plan will meet local regulations.

Electric and gas will be brought to the site from Badger Road with transformers and metering occurring on the south side of the building. New services will be required.

Water will be extended from the existing water main to the east of the development.

Sanitary sewer will need to be replaced and upsized. This proposal would seek to extend a sanitary main in Badger Road, east from approximately Rusk Avenue.

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Building Design – Exterior

The building footprint and floor levels are a product of the site dimensional requirements and existing topography. Parking and lower levels are built into the east side of the hill. Bedrock will present challenges for excavation deeper into the hillside.

The building massing is terraced at ground level, and stepped at the upper floors to respect the neighboring properties. The color and material pallet is not finalized, but a combination of masonry at the lower levels and lap siding above is most likely. Color and material will provide texture variety and minimize the scale of the building.

We intend to review the exterior and site designs with the City Urban Design Commission, and will work collaboratively to achieve a wonderful project visible on this prominent site.

Demolition

To facilitate this project, the existing structure, parking lot and any accessory structures to the building will need to be razed. The existing building is approximately fifty years of age, and of no significant value. The structure is not conducive to relocation or reuse. This proposal requests a demolition permit be granted for the project, as illustrated in the attached drawings.

In Closing

The development afforded by this zoning amendment request will bring much needed affordable senior housing to the City. The location is in close proximity to businesses and services, providing access to public transportation, bike routes and is adjacent to zoning districts and the beltline which will not be adversely affected.

Our team is happy to discuss the merits of this project, and would certainly enjoy discussions around the details. As this is simply a request for zoning amendment and conditional use, we know that there are many details to resolve prior to site plan approval.

We realize there is much to be done to finalize the design and engineering, and will work with City staff to achieve the necessary approvals. We hope you agree that this project will be transformative to the City, meeting stated public objectives, and worthy of approval.

As always, please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have regarding this request.

Respectfully,

SKETCHWORKS ARCHITECTURE, LLC

Steve Shulfer, Architect / Partner