Subject: Public Comment on Southwest Area Plan (Final Draft) – Protect Meadowood Infrastructure, Safety, and Fiscal Sustainability

Date: June 1, 2026

To:

- Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway
- Members of the Madison Common Council
- **Transportation Commission** (For Review: June 3, 2026)
- **Community Development Block Grant Committee** (For Review: June 4, 2026)
- **Landmarks Commission** (For Review: June 8, 2026)
- **Plan Commission** (For Review: June 15, 2026)

Dear Mayor, Alderpersons, and Committee/Commission Members,

As a resident of the Meadowood neighborhood for almost 30 years I am writing to share feedback regarding the final draft of the Southwest Area Plan as it moves through its upcoming committee reviews and final Council approval. While I support thoughtful planning for Madison's growth, the current draft leaves several critical neighborhood lifelines vulnerable to displacement and fails to adequately account for the cumulative traffic impacts facing our community.

I ask that each of your respective bodies address these specific gaps in the plan before recommending or voting for its final adoption:

1. Require Binding Safeguards Against Community Displacement

The plan designates the Meadowood Shopping Center as Community Mixed-Use (CMU), opening it up to multi-story redevelopment. While I appreciate that the draft notes a desire to "maintain community space at Meadowood if the shopping center redevelops," a desire is not a guarantee. The Meadowridge Library, the MSCR Neighborhood Center, and NewBridge are the lifebloods of our neighborhood.

- **My Request to the Plan Commission & CDBG Committee:** The City must commit to using proactive equity and community development tools—such as the Land Banking fund referenced in Economy Action #3—to secure permanent civic space on this site, ensuring these vital neighborhood services are not displaced by private development.

2. Address the Cumulative Traffic Impacts on Raymond Road

The plan rightly identifies Raymond Road as part of the City's High Injury Network. However, the proposed long-term solution to evaluate a "road diet" (reducing vehicle lanes) on Raymond Road directly conflicts with the massive influx of traffic that will soon come from the approved Midpoint Meadows development on Marty Road. Relying on reactive monitoring after these neighborhoods are built is a disservice to pedestrian safety.

- **My Request to the Transportation & Plan Commissions:** The City must conduct a comprehensive, forward-looking cumulative traffic impact study that balances the planned lane reductions on Raymond Road with the realistic traffic volumes generated by the westward expansion.

3. Ensure Binding Traffic Management for MMSD Reconstructions

The neighborhood heavily feels the impact of school pickup and drop-off traffic, particularly around Toki Middle School and Orchard Ridge Elementary. While Transportation Actions #13 and #14 mention "coordinating" with MMSD to build on-site traffic loops during their upcoming building projects, "coordination" is not enough to protect neighborhood safety.

- **My Request to the Transportation Commission:** The City must ensure that these internal traffic management loops and pedestrian safety measures are strict, binding requirements for MMSD's conditional use and occupancy permits, rather than optional suggestions.

4. Preserving Mid-Century Neighborhood Character

While Meadowood is a relatively young community of 50 to 60 years old without an abundance of century-old historic properties, it represents a distinct and vital era of Madison's post-war mid-century architectural and cultural design. As the neighborhood faces sweeping zoning changes, we must ensure that high-density redevelopment does not completely erase this mid-century fabric before it has the chance to reach its full historic maturity in the decades to come.

- **My Request to the Landmarks Commission:** I ask that the commission look to the future and closely monitor how these significant land-use changes impact our existing neighborhood character. Growth should be guided so that it complements, rather than clears away, the unique 1960s architectural heritage and open space design that defines Southwest Madison.

5. Addressing the Fiscal Reality of Rapid Growth

Finally, looking beyond the specific text of this land-use plan, we must confront the broader operational reality of adding thousands of new residents to the southwest side. This scale of development will naturally drive up demand for essential city services—including police, fire, community development, and public health services. With the State of Wisconsin maintaining strict levy limits, the city cannot continue to fund these expanding operational costs by simply shifting the burden onto the backs of existing property taxpayers.

- **My Request to the Mayor, Common Council, and CDBG Committee:** Before greenlighting any area plan that accelerates this level of density, the City must clearly articulate a sustainable, long-term fiscal strategy to fund the necessary expansion of public safety, community development, and health services without compounding the financial strain on current homeowners.

Thank you for your time, your dedication to our city, and your careful consideration of how this plan will impact the daily lives, safety, and financial well-being of Southwest Madison residents for decades to come.

Sincerely,

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Meadowood Resident