


CITY OF MADISON
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL
CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: May 13, 2010

TO: Common Council
Plan Commission

FROM: Bradley J. Murphy, AICP, Director, Planning Division 

SUBJECT: **Conditions of approval for Charter Street Heating Plant PUD**

On May 10, 2010, the Plan Commission recommended approval of the rezoning of 115 N. Mills Street and 117 N. Charter Street from R5 (General Residence District) and C3 (Highway Commercial District) to PUD-GDP-SIP (ID #18048) to the Common Council subject to the comments and conditions contained in the Plan Commission materials and the two additional conditions of approval that follow. The proposed PUD zoning of the site will provide a regulatory framework for the University of Wisconsin-Madison to renovate and expand the Charter Street Heating Plant to burn biomass and natural gas instead of coal, and to construct a biomass fuel handling and storage facility on east side of N. Mills Street.

The added or modified conditions recommended by the Plan Commission are:

1. That a condition of approval (#53) be added that there shall be no idling of trucks over 5 minutes within the development.
2. That condition #2 of the Report to the Plan Commission be revised to now read: "When commuter rail plans are finalized and whenever freight train schedules change, that the University reopen discussions with the Planning Division, City Traffic Engineer, and City Engineer to propose how the University Charter Street Heating Plant operations will accommodate commuter rail and freight train schedule changes."

The following day, on May 11, staff from the City's Planning Division, City Engineering Division, Traffic Engineering Division and the Office of Real Estate Services and University staff gathered for a regular monthly meeting to discuss implementation of the Charter Street Heating Plant project. During the meeting, various conditions from the May 10 Report to the Plan Commission were discussed, including the scope of those conditions and the timing of their implementation. Three conditions garnered the most discussion: conditions #29 and 30 in the May 10 report from the Traffic Engineering Division, and the revised condition #2 outlined above.

As a result of the discussion, City and University staff agreed on revised language for those three conditions and requested that the new language for those conditions be presented to the Common Council for its consideration during the May 18 public hearing on the PUD zoning request. The proposed language requested by City and University staff follows:

- #2. That the University submit additional information for review by the Planning Division, City Traffic Engineer and City Engineer and approval by the Common Council as part of the first amendment to the specific implementation plan final specific implementation plan for the biomass storage and handling facility at 115 N. Mills Street, which demonstrates the impact the

proposed rail delivery of biomass to the Charter Street Heating Plant will have on existing and future passenger/ freight operations on the Wisconsin Southern Railroad mainline corridor. This information shall clearly conclude that passenger/ freight services in this corridor can be accommodated.

Discussion on #2: During the May 11 meeting, City and University staff agreed that a staff team should be formed to prepare a feasibility study that evaluates the potential impacts that the biomass delivery for the Charter Street Heating Plant could have on passenger/ freight services in this rail corridor. The staff team will include representatives from the Wisconsin Southern Railroad if possible. The timing of the implementation of the condition was changed to coincide with the phase of the Charter Street project that will ultimately result in the commencement of biomass delivery utilizing the rail corridor.

#29. ~~The~~ If necessary, the applicant may be required to shall reconstruct and widen both W. Dayton Street and N. Mills Street, including the intersection of Dayton and Mills, to address the new traffic impacts to these streets by the proposed new facilities. This ~~includes~~ may include new railroad signals, potential new traffic signals, wider bike lanes and space for parking if so required on N. Mills Street. The plans and financing by UW will need to be reviewed and approved by the City Traffic Engineer.

#30. ~~The~~ If necessary, the applicant may be required to shall reconstruct and widen both N. Charter Street and Spring Street, including the intersection of Charter and Spring, to address the new traffic impacts to these streets by the proposed new facilities. This ~~includes~~ may include new railroad signals, potential new traffic signals, wider bike lanes and space for parking if so required on these two streets. The plans and financing by UW will need to be reviewed and approved by the City Traffic Engineer.

Discussion on #29 & 30: The original conditions of approval proposed by the Traffic Engineering Division were a reaction to overly broad language contained in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Charter Street project, which suggested that surrounding streets and traffic operations in the area could be significantly impacted by the University's project. However, following the May 11 staff discussion, it was better clarified how impacts from the plant's operation would affect traffic in the surrounding area, allowing for the language in these two conditions to be modified as proposed. The University indicated that it would revise the EIS document to clarify the potential traffic impacts. The scope of the actual improvements needed to W. Dayton, Spring, N. Charter and N. Mills streets will be finalized during the review of final plans for future phases of the Charter Street project.

In closing, the University of Wisconsin–Madison and Planning, City Engineering and Traffic Engineering staff respectfully request that the PUD for the Charter Street Heating Plant renovation and expansion project be approved with the proposed language for conditions #2, 29 and 30 outlined above.

Cc: Alan Fish, University of Wisconsin–Madison
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