

April 7, 2013

Jule Stroick  
Planning Division  
P.O. Box 2985  
Madison, WI 53701-2985

Dear Jule:

The Sunset Hills Neighborhood Association met on March 18, 2013 to discuss the proposed Hoyt Park Area Joint Neighborhood Plan. Representatives from our neighborhood association have been actively involved with the planning process for almost three years. We believe this plan will be critical in maintaining the high quality of life in our area over the next few decades.

The Sunset Hills Neighborhood Association represents approximately 100 households in the near Westside of Madison. We are located immediately to the South of Hoyt Park. Our association is very active. Each year we hold a business meeting in November, and we sponsor several social events, such as a picnic in June and a winter reception in February. The Board meets on a quarterly basis and we publish a quarterly newsletter.

To solicit input into the planning process, we have been including updates on the plan in each of our quarterly newsletters and we have encouraged residents to attend the public events. When we received the final draft of the plan, the link to plan was circulated on our neighborhood listserv. We announced our meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> and requested comments if residents were unable to attend the meeting. Finally, we delivered information on the meeting to each household a few days prior to the meeting. The Board compiled the feedback we received on the plan and approved this letter.

Our highest priority in the plan recommendations is the discussion regarding the property at 3801 Regent (the property immediately across from Hoyt School). We had a separate neighborhood meeting to discuss this issue and made several recommendations that were included in the plan. The new zoning code proposes a mix-use designation for this site and we are concerned that any development be consistent with the deed restrictions that protect the trees, preserve the low impact use, and limit the type of materials that would be used on this property.

Our second highest priority is the discussion regarding Reservoir Park improvements. The tower and municipal well have been the source of much discussion in the neighborhood. We are very pleased with the city's allocation of \$100,000 for new playground equipment in the park and proposed improvements in landscaping. We hope that the neighborhood plan will spark additional discussion and action to improve the park.

One plan recommendation that the association does not support concerns the height restrictions for development on University Avenue. The plan recommends a minimum of two stories in most focus areas. We recognize that new development on University Avenue will most likely be multiple stories, but there may be some situations where a single story may be economically viable. Some residents thought this language was unnecessarily restrictive for existing business owners that may wish to expand their operation on University Avenue.

Finally, the association does not support the language on page 75 (paragraph 4; line 3-4) regarding consideration of "restricting automobile and truck traffic, including limiting portions of the road to bicycle/pedestrian traffic only" on Owen Parkway. The association, along with the Friends of Hoyt Park, prefer to keep traffic open on Owen Parkway.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the plan. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Gary P. Green". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and "P".

Gary P. Green  
President, Sunset Hills Neighborhood Association



# Hilldale Row

Condominium Association  
Madison, WI 53705

May 13, 2013

At its annual meeting on April 11, 2013, the Board of the Hilldale Row Condominium Association voted to support the Hoyt Park Area Plan's interest to *encourage varying housing density, height, and size in transition areas between commercial and single-family residential (e.g., Hilldale area)*. (policy #10 p.11) and to *support a range of housing options to accommodate a variety of income levels, age groups, household sizes, and people with special needs*. (policy #5 p.11)

We feel well placed to express support for the Plan because we are a living example of a successful higher density residential cluster located in a transition area. Our small development of 40 units includes three-story townhouses, one- and two- bedroom flats, and several specially-designated first-floor "accessible" units adjacent to a pedestrian-friendly outdoor and indoor mall that provides structured parking for cars and modern parking racks for bicycles. Not only does the Hoyt Park Area Plan balance interest in such New Urbanist *residential* development with the area's desire for lower density nicely-landscaped detached single family houses, but it also identifies areas suitable for mixed use developments that use architectural designs that blend in with existing buildings.

Steven Siehr  
President  
Hilldale Row Condominium Association



May 15, 2013

To: Jule Stroick, Neighborhood Planner, Madison WI  
From: Kenneth F. Raffa, Ph.D., Sunset Village Community Association President  
Re: Hoyt Park Area Joint Neighborhood Plan

Sunset Village Community Association met on May 9 to evaluate the March 13, 2013 draft of the above plan and related materials. The highlights are:

1. We are pleased with the hard work, open process, and broad and sustained neighborhood and city participation that went into this plan. We feel the March 13, 2013 version reflects our past and future vision, by both maintaining the uniqueness of our 'Neighborhood in a Forest', and proposing innovative improvements. It represents our neighborhood's consensus, based on inputs from hundreds of residents through surveys and steering committee meetings. We are particularly proud of how it expresses our neighborhood's unique character and contribution to Madison's diversity of community types.
2. We appreciate the useful suggestions by city staff in the Parks Commission, Metro Transit System, Traffic Engineering & Parking Divisions, and Planning Commissions. We look forward to integrating some of these suggestions into future iterations.
3. We also recognize the alternate vision for our neighborhoods proposed by city staff in the Economic Development Division. We understand that posing alternate visions encourages us to revisit previously vetted options. We were disappointed, however, that this report did not acknowledge our plan's proposals for increased development in several focus areas deemed appropriate during neighborhood deliberations. This leaves the impression that anything less than intensified development in every focus area is considered unsatisfactory. We are particularly concerned about the proposed loss of religious use at the Mt. Olive site. An active congregation currently uses this site, the Steering Committee's draft explicitly identifies churches as an important part of our neighborhood's character, and there is already a paucity of places of worship within our boundaries.
4. Sunset Village Community Association voted 16-1 to approve the March 13, 2013 draft of the Hoyt Park Area Joint Neighborhood Plan.

In addition to the above, we note the following:

1. Our editing committee identified some typographical errors, mislabeling of figures, inconsistencies between different sections of the document, and inconsistencies between current text and outcomes of votes taken by the Steering Committee (attached). They also noted that the draft refers only to a 'petition' to maintain low density/height and restricted use at the Mt. Olive site, but omits the quantitative data. Without the actual data, this is misleading. We have repeatedly requested, and request again here, that the results of neighborhood input not be omitted. Specifically, this petition included 432 people, including 35 of 44 non-church properties within 200 ft., is the single most comprehensive input on any issue within the entire Hoyt Plan, and is consistent with SVCA's 85% vote on this issue. Similarly, a survey that succeeded in generating large neighborhood input (over 400 respondents) was conducted by consultant Vandewalle early in the process, and indicated that Mineral Pt. consistently ranked as the lowest of four options for development. These survey data are not provided in an Appendix despite several requests. Inclusion of public data is important for adhering to the descriptions of how this process would proceed. We also note that Page 116 (Business Survey, Focus Groups) of the March 13 draft is listed as 'To be Completed'. Our approval of plan is contingent on these corrections.

2. In your description of edits in response to other neighborhoods that have already responded, you asked for our help in clarifying deliberations regarding Owen Parkway. Our recollection is that both the Friends of Hoyt Park and the Steering Committee decided to retain two-way traffic, a decision with which we concur.

Finally, we would like to thank you for your hard work and communication throughout this process. We look forward to continued close interaction as our plan moves forward, and are always willing to provide clarification where needed. SVCA intends to evaluate any changes that are made to this plan after it has passed through the various government bodies and before its final presentation to Common Council.



## The VanChaMasShe Neighborhood Association

May 28, 2013

The board of the VanChaMasShe Neighborhood Association has voted its approval of the Hoyt Park Area Joint Neighborhood Plan. VanChaMasShe congratulates everyone from the community and the city who contributed their time and expertise to the development of this Plan. In particular, we would like to thank the committee co-chairs – Jason Valerius and Jean MacCubbin – and Jule Stroick from the Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development for their tireless work and commitment to this project.

There are some aspects of the Plan that VanChaMasShe would prefer to address sooner than the implementation portion of the Plan recommends. The Plan Implementation section on Bike and Pedestrian Facilities states “Expand bicycle routes and connections throughout the Hoyt Park Area” as a long-term goal. VanChaMasShe believes this is inadequate. Specifically:

- **Chapter 7 Bike and Pedestrian Facilities: S. Franklin Avenue (between Speedway Road and Regent Street).** VanChaMasShe would prefer this issue is addressed in the near term. North-south traffic is steadily increasing on Franklin Avenue. The extended Southwest Commuter Path (up Glenway Avenue, around the corner on Speedway Avenue) is orienting more and more bike traffic to Franklin Avenue. We should accelerate plans to formalize Franklin Avenue as the natural bike egress from the Southwest Commuter path to the Kendall Bike Boulevard and to campus/UW Hospital. We believe that any plan to place a bike path along Franklin Avenue should also address a safe crossing of Speedway Road at the terminus of South Franklin.
- **Chapter 7 Bike and Pedestrian Facilities: 400-700 blocks of Ridge Street (between Bluff Street and University Avenue).** Again, we have a situation of increasing north/south traffic on Ridge Street combined with more bike/pedestrian traffic due to the addition of a crossing signal at Ridge Street and University Avenue. This issue warrants a near-term solution.
- **Chapter 7 Bike and Pedestrian Facilities: Extend Kendall Avenue Bike Boulevard through the area via Bluff Street.** We recognize that Bluff Street has a completely different character from Kendall Avenue, and that a bike boulevard may not be the best solution. But this is another example of a bike safety issue that should be addressed in the near term.
- **Focus Area L: Mid-block walkway on eastern edge of the Les Châteaux property.** Our understanding is at one time the property owner was obligated to maintain this mid-block path, but this may no longer be the case. The pathway is presently blocked by overgrowth of vegetation; we would like to see it reopened under the aegis of property owner or the city.

Further, and regrettably, the Plan devotes one sentence to – or does not mention at all – some important items we feel should be addressed. These are:

- **Hoyt School stormwater runoff.** The Infrastructure section of the Plan states “Hoyt Park and School on-site stormwater management should be explored more fully.” The Plan should offer some actual recommendations – particularly for the Hoyt School property, which is comprised almost entirely of non-permeable surfaces (rooftops, parking lots, sidewalks). In spite of the recent addition of a containment area on the school playground, a significant amount of runoff flows downhill from Hoyt School into Hoyt Park and the neighborhood to

the north. Specific discussion of permeable paving for the parking areas would be a good start. VanChaMasShe believes this should be at-least addressed in the Implementation Strategy for Chapter 11, with a designation of a timeframe for implementation.

- **Steps and accompanying flume from Hoyt School playground to Shepard Terrace.** This well-established pedestrian pathway to Hoyt Park is used extensively by residents east of the park. It is not mentioned in the Plan, nor is it identified on any map in the bike/pedestrian section. This pathway – particularly the stormwater flume – is in need of repairs and the stairs and flume are not effectively maintained (leaf and snow removal) by the city or school district. We regret that the Plan does not address maintenance of this pathway, long-term plans to renovate it, or its contribution to stormwater runoff problems below Shepard Terrace.
- **Increasing use of Hoyt School/Hoyt Park service roads for bicycle egress.** Since MSCR staff began using the Hoyt School playground for vehicle parking, there is no longer a chain across the service road entrance east of Hoyt School at Regent Street. This invites bicycle cut-through activity. VanChaMasShe regrets that the Plan does not specifically address this problem. We recommend more visible signage at the Bluff Street entrance to the service road, and addition of signage at the Regent Street entrance – where there is presently none – enforcing the no bikes policy.
- **Developing a Bird Sanctuary Pilot Project behind Hoyt School.** This is mentioned in the Parks and Open Space section as something to consider. VanChaMasShe obtained a grant and implemented a bird sanctuary and winter garden behind Hoyt School in 2012. The plan should be updated to reflect this.
- **Social Capital.** This section is an innovative component of the plan and gets to the heart of what brings us all together across the entire Plan Area. Regrettably, Section 10 of the Plan lists six policies, but the Implementation Plan in Section 11 only covers two. The Plan should be updated to better align the Policies with Implementation. Some suggested language on implementation:

*“Promote neighbor interactions and the identity of the Hoyt Park Area through low cost, highly visual enhancements at key gateway locations and public gathering places; though installation of low cost neighborhood amenities; and through the use of public art in private and public settings. Identify and remove regulatory barriers to these enhancements, amenities and public art.”*

In conclusion, we would like to state that the VanChaMasShe Neighborhood Association is in favor of continuing the HPAJSC, or a similar entity, to help with the implementation of the Plan (a great feature of the Social Capital section). The planning process was not entirely successful at bringing all the neighborhoods together to achieve consensus; we hope that a continued collaboration on Plan implementation will be more successful.

Again, our thanks to the HPAJSC co-chairs, representatives from the City and its consultant firm, and residents of the Plan Area who invested their time, passion and expertise in the development of the Hoyt Park Area Joint Neighborhood Plan.

Best regards,



Dale Bengston  
President, VanChaMasShe Neighborhood Association



BJ Haman, President  
Rocky Bluff Neighborhood Association  
502 Ridge Street  
Madison, WI 53705

**To:** Jule Stroick, Planner IV  
Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development  
Planning Division; Neighborhood Planning, Preservation & Design Section

**From:** BJ Haman, President  
Rocky Bluff Neighborhood Association

**Date:** May 21, 2013

**Re:** Letter of Support for the Hoyt Park Area Joint Neighborhood Plan

The Rocky Bluff Neighborhood Association (RBNA) has enjoyed participating in the Steering Committee for the Hoyt Park Area Joint Neighborhood Plan (HPAJNP) over the past year. Many thanks to Co-Chairs Jason Valerius and Jean MacCubbin for their leadership throughout the process.

RBNA has reviewed the final version of the Plan dated March 13, 2013, as well as City departmental comments of the Plan, which we appreciate. We support the Plan with these corrections and comments:

**Corrections to Final Plan:**

- Per page 1 of the February 18, 2013 Steering Committee minutes, the Final Plan does not accurately reflect language about bike transit on Bluff Street. Pages 58, 60, 62, and 80 of the Plan should each be revised to be consistent with the Steering Committee decision.
  - **For example, on page 58 of the Final Plan**, bullet two in the Bike Routes section, “Bike Boulevards Extension,” should be deleted and the text in the first bullet should read:
    - **On-street Routes:** Implement on-street routes through a mixture of signage, on-street bike lanes, and a bike boulevard. For example, improving bike transit west of the Kendall Avenue Bike Boulevard requires further study; multiple options and routes should be evaluated, including the use of Bluff or Stevens Streets.
- Per page 2 of the February 18, 2013 Steering Committee minutes, the decision was to designate only three bus stops for “improvement” and each were listed. The remaining stops were only to be identified, rather than “improved.” Please make changes accordingly to Map 7.1 on page 59 of the Final Plan.

**RBNA’s Top Priorities for the Hoyt Park Plan:**

- Maintain the existing character of the neighborhood as a tree-canopied urban forest flanked on the northern boundary with businesses on University Avenue. People have specifically chosen to live in this neighborhood because of the rural feel with urban conveniences.
- Maintain the neighborhood’s rural feel with minimal street lighting, creative alternatives to traditional sidewalks, open space corridors, tree-lined streets, and keeping traffic patterns at appropriate speeds. These valued characteristics are to be cherished and protected, and have even been highlighted in a recent Isthmus article. (Abode Supplement to the Isthmus April 5, 2013 issue.)

**Pedestrian Pathways:**

- Some departmental comments suggest removal of the Steering Committee’s various provisions regarding pedestrian pathways. The Committee’s provisions were intended to be creative solutions to very difficult issues, balancing the desire for safety with maintaining the rural-type ambience at the heart of the neighborhood – an ambience documented throughout the Plan.
- Departmental comments suggest that sidewalk installation would not necessarily mean loss of mature trees. This optimism is encouraging, and RBNA appreciates the attention to mature trees. However, in



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looking at Ridge and Harvey, it is difficult for us to see how preserving trees would be achieved. In addition, grading issues will make sidewalk installation more challenging and expensive. Furthermore, sidewalk construction is likely to damage significant and beautiful landscape work invested in by property owners.

- Some comments suggest that an inviting walking environment is promoted only by a traditional sidewalk system. Rocky Bluff's experience differs, given that many neighborhood residents currently enjoy walking on Rocky Bluff's streets without sidewalks. We are hopeful that at any such time when this is addressed in our neighborhood, more creative solutions (rather than only traditional sidewalks) can be pursued to better balance safety and the unique character of the neighborhood.

#### **Density and Height Issues:**

- Some comments address an assumed benefit to higher density. While increasing density along University could benefit some economic interests, it is not clear that such an increase within the planning area would benefit the neighborhood or the City as a whole.
- Madison's Comprehensive Plan calls for improving the economic well-being of the City in part through quality-of-life enhancements. Higher density and its accompanying rise in traffic, light pollution and noise run counter to the City's quality-of-life goal. RBNA believes that the City's economic development goals are best served through a more balanced approach that is a compromise between density and quality-of-life. That compromise is carefully reflected in the Plan's requirement for a 4-story maximum along University. This is also reflected in the Steering Committee's considered decisions regarding land use and density along Mineral Point.
- It doesn't appear advisable to agree to higher density beyond 3 or 4 stories before solutions to the significant University traffic and public transportation issues have been implemented and evaluated.
- Going above 4 stories is a very dramatic change from currently existing 1-2 story land uses. In fact, many Rocky Bluff residents appear to be quite content with the 1-2 story uses. In this regard, allowing up to 4 stories is already a significant compromise.
- Going above 3 or 4 stories in the relatively shallow lots along University will make appropriate transitions into Harvey, a largely residential street, challenging and awkward. In addition, the northern views from Barlow and other streets to the south will be compromised and light pollution will be increased. Protecting the viewshed of Quarry Park also should be an important goal for our greater community. The neighborhood opposes such significant changes to the character of Rocky Bluff.
- Some comments recommend that the Plan evaluate land use and zoning on a parcel-by-parcel basis. RBNA would welcome an opportunity to participate in a finer-grained planning discussion for the area.
- The distinctive rural feel, the views of Quarry and Hoyt Parks, as well as the mature trees throughout the neighborhood, are each important, irreplaceable, unquantifiable assets which our community may desire to protect. These values should be considered in any development process. And indeed, while these values may not appear to be economic in nature, by addressing the Comprehensive Plan's economic goal of quality-of-life, they ultimately have significant economic impact.

#### **Other Responses to Departmental Comments:**

- As a clarification to a comment regarding residential use in some focus areas, RBNA's intentions with the Plan were to provide that areas which are currently residential were to remain residential.
- In response to a departmental comment, RBNA is opposed to removing language regarding ingress/egress on University Avenue. Any development would have to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, but the Plan reflects neighborhood wishes, especially for minimizing any further traffic congestion on Harvey Street.



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- The use of Stevens Street as a bike boulevard location was included as an option to be explored, as the traffic volume and sharp curvatures of Bluff were deemed potentially dangerous to bike boulevard traffic. In addition, a Bluff bike boulevard would likely be incompatible with neighborhood residents' use of Bluff as an important route in and out of the neighborhood by car.

#### **A Neighborhood Plan – Process, Vision, and Voice:**

When RBNA got involved in the HPAJNP, we were enthusiastic about the opportunity to help shape our wider neighborhoods' vision for the area. As became clear during the many months of Steering Committee meetings, all associations involved have deep care and respect for our neighborhoods and parks and dearly cherish their character and charm. Indeed, these are neighborhoods inhabited by individuals who will invest time and resources in their area and keep them friendly, appealing, safe, and vibrant.

Thus, as planning continued, it became clear that it was critical to preserve the unique combination of having rural-type streets in a "neighborhood in a forest," while having a location convenient to other parts of the City. As expressed through many Steering Committee decisions, this is part of the neighborhoods' vision.

As the comments make clear, City departments sometimes have a different vision: for example, higher density on University Avenue, denser development on Mineral Point Road, installation of traditional sidewalks. Each of these alternatives would greatly tilt the balance against the quaint, rural feel of the neighborhood in a forest and make the neighborhood more urban or suburban in places. And finding balanced solutions to these issues emerged as a major focus of the Steering Committee's work. Therefore, while these solutions may not be in accordance with City recommendations, the neighborhoods' documented vision should, at minimum, be allowed to exist alongside the City's vision.

At decision points in the future, whether for development, sidewalks, or other neighborhood changes, many parties will have a say in shaping the outcome at that specific time: City departments, commercial property owners, developers. The market, too, will have its "voice" heard. At this time – this neighborhood Plan – is the primary opportunity for the neighborhood to have a voice. That notion is emphasized by a recent Capital Times article ("Neighbors of building projects find influence diminished by new zoning code," May 8, 2013). In other words, this Plan's process is the time for the neighborhood vision to be heard and documented.

Moreover, if as some comments suggest, height maximums on University are revised in the Plan, or the Plan's creative sidewalk alternatives are deleted, this Plan would no longer be a neighborhood plan, but a city plan for the neighborhood. Height limits and sidewalk alternatives are RBNA's primary issues. To simply remove the compromise solutions the Steering Committee worked to achieve would greatly diminish the neighborhood's voice and vision.

The zoning code is cited as rationale for higher height limits on University. Yet, the zoning code would exist with or without a neighborhood plan. And the zoning code provision here is an upper limit, not a requirement. In general, if the plan were to precisely match the zoning code, or other previously existing policies and documents, what would be the purpose of such a plan? Why volunteer so much time in a difficult process only to match language which already exists elsewhere? The purpose of a neighborhood plan should be to provide more detailed visions, restrictions, and recommendations than the City or zoning code already provides.

If this is a neighborhood plan, please let the neighborhoods' voices be heard. It is important that this document, going forward, truly represents the neighborhoods' wishes.



BJ Haman, President  
Rocky Bluff Neighborhood Association  
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**As RBNA Looks to the Future:**

- A high priority for RBNA is to be actively involved in future discussions related to pedestrian pathways. Many members have expressed concerns about sidewalks generally, and in particular, RBNA is especially opposed to sidewalks on Ridge St. We look forward to working with the city to explore alternative solutions for pedestrian safety.
- RBNA would welcome an opportunity to participate in a finer-grained planning discussion regarding land-use and density for the area, as suggested by the Planning Division.
- For any redevelopment that may be proposed in the RBNA area, our priority is to see development respect the surrounding character of the neighborhood in relation to appropriate scale, height, and density, as well as in relation to traffic and parking impact on the neighborhood's residential streets. Appropriate transitions into the neighborhood near University, views, and viewshed protection will also be important to evaluate with neighborhood input.