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June 15, 2015

To: Madison Common Council Members
From: Friends of Starkweather Creek Board
Subject: Portage Rd Proposed Development

After meeting with City Planning and attending the neighborhood meeting on June 9 with T. Wall Enterprises, we continue to be concerned about the following items and offer recommendations below:

- 1) **The setback from the wetland.** The current 10 foot setback is inadequate to protect water quality and wildlife habitat. Given the density of the development and the steepness of the slope, the wetland is not adequately protected. We understand there has been some confusion about the protected status of the environmental corridor in the south half of this property, but it does include a wetland that was delineated about one year ago. The Madison Comprehensive Plan recommends a **75 foot wetland buffer**. The relevant passage is quoted below from Volume 1 page 6-3 of the adopted Comprehensive Plan (bold emphasis added):

*"Environmental corridors are primarily based on drainageways and stream channels, floodplains, wetlands and 75 foot wetland buffers, woodlands, public and private recreation lands and other open space land that creates continuous open space corridors. The DCRPC has identified and mapped environmental corridors in all of the Urban Service Areas of Dane County. In Madison, environmental corridors also include lands of unique or valuable scenery or vegetation, wildlife habitat, and buffer areas that are needed between incompatible land uses. Madison's Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park is a part of the publicly owned portion of the private and publicly owned Cherokee Marsh Environmental Corridor. **At the time that land adjoining an environmental corridor is proposed for development or is added to the Urban Service Area, developers are generally required to provide more detailed field surveys delineating wetlands and 100-year floodplains. This more detailed mapping is used to refine the environmental corridors.**"*

<http://www.cityofmadison.com/planning/ComprehensivePlan/dplan/v1/chapter6/v1c6.pdf>

- 2) **The possibility of excess runoff during construction, especially with portions of this project being built within 10 feet of the wetland.**
- 3) **The impact on the trees.** There is no indication of which trees will be preserved and how they will be protected during construction.
- 4) **Access to and Future City plans for this greenway.** The plans do not show how the open area will be developed to provide access for the public and the apartment residents. Madison is planning to install a bike path next year through the environmental corridor in the south half of this property to eventually allow bike passage under or over the interstate and beyond, as well as access to the existing sanitary sewer under this corridor. We strongly support installing this bike path, and feel the developer/owner should play an active role in this project, including financial assistance for improvements.

The Friends of Starkweather Creek request that the Common Council consider the following conditions for approval of this proposed development:

- A. The setback from the wetland shall be increased to as close to 75 feet as possible, in accordance with the City's Comprehensive Plan..
- B. Condition #35 shall be clarified to specify what "higher standard of erosion control than the minimum standards set by the WDNR" will be put in place during construction.
- C. The developer shall provide a map that clearly shows the landscaping and trails proposed for the open space, what trees will be saved, and how the apartment residents and the public will access the south side of the three lots that are designated as useable open space. The plan will also include a protection plan for the trees that will be saved and will be done in consultation with an ISA (International Society of Arboriculture) certified arborist.
- D. Condition #24 shall be clarified to note that public access be allowed within all of the bike path and stormwater easements covering the southern half of the property.
- E. The developer shall provide financial assistance to the City for improvements to the planned bike/pedestrian path through the environmental corridor in the southern half of the property, including items such as a better bridge, educational signage, native plantings, invasives species removal, and creek bank/bed improvements.

We appreciate this opportunity to provide input on this development and look forward to working with the city on the bike path project.

Sincerely,

(sent electronic)

Lance Green, Co-Chair
Dea Larsen-Converse, Co-Chair
Friends Starkweather Creek Board
<http://starkweatherfriends.org/>

Cc: Eric Rortvedt and Wendy Peich, Wisconsin DNR
Mike Kakusca, CARPC