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Sent: Wednesday, January 22, 2020 10:03 AM

To: Dan McAuliffe (dmcauliffe@cityofmadison.com) <dmcauliffe@cityofmadison.com>

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Subject: concerns of the Sherman Neighborhood Association re: Oscar Mayer Strategic Area Plan

Dear Mr. McAuliffe,

The members of the Sherman Neighborhood Association (hereafter, SNA) are responding to a proposed redevelopment plan for the land formerly occupied by Kraft Foods Inc. and the surrounding area within the Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan (hereafter, OMSAP) boundary.

The OMSAP charts a direction for the Oscar Mayer site which is substantially different than the vision we in the neighborhood have previously set out through city planning processes. SNA recognizes the impact of the Kraft property on the city and region at large; however, the boundaries of the special area plan fall almost wholly within our boundaries. It troubles us that the City has gone to such lengths to obtain input from those across Madison, and has used this input to radically redirect the vision that we on the Northside have set out for ourselves.

The Northport-Warner Park-Sherman Neighborhood Plan (adopted Nov 2009) emphasizes that future development should not disturb or destroy the existing character of the neighborhood. Per that plan, development in our neighborhood should enhance local economic development, enhance recreation and sustainability of green spaces, create stable and inviting places to live, enhance the gateway corridor, and encourage compact, green building that minimizes resource consumption and environmental impacts. The OMSAP plan as written does not uphold several of these tenets:

Enhancing Recreation and Sustainability of Green Spaces

There is strong support on Madison's Northside and in the Sherman Neighborhood for preserving the wetlands known as the Hartmeyer Natural Area. The Friends of Hartmeyer Natural Area have advocated for keeping all 30 acres of the Hartmeyer land for open natural space for the neighborhood, which the group has offered to city planners as a plan option called the Conservation Concept (Concept C). At a Common Council meeting late in 2019, an amendment by Ald. Syed Abbas putting \$20,000 dollars into the budget to fund a review of the Hartmeyer wetland boundaries and environmental concerns resoundingly passed the Common Council. The current draft plan contains images proposing the redevelopment of the Hartmeyer property with low to medium-density multi-story housing units, new roadways, and a major reduction in

the overall size of the wetland to a 3-acre pond and a 5-acre park. We do not support this concept, and instead, wish to preserve the full acreage of the natural area.

Enhancing the Gateway Corridor and Transportation

Public transit improvements, interconnecting pedestrian and bike paths to other areas in the city, and the creation of a Metro north transfer station that is no longer safety-challenging, isolated, unwelcoming and nearing its capacity, should be a key part of the plan; we do not feel this is adequately reflected. As the city looks toward adding a large number of residents to the Northside, let us also look at creating a well-integrated transit system that people willingly choose for their commutes and that supports greater transit access to the Northside.

The OMSAP proposes major changes in the roads in and near the Oscar Mayer site, including turning Packers Avenue from a highway into a city street and cutting a new Coolidge Street extension through the Oscar site, the Hartmeyer wetland, and through to Sherman Avenue. However, it is not clear that this will be allowed by the Canadian Pacific Railroad, which has control over the railroad crossings affected by any road changes, or by the State Department of Transportation, which has a vested interest in Packers as a highway.

Nowhere in the new OMSAP, which is focused on creating well connected and walkable, transit-based neighborhoods does it show a high demand for more roads to be installed. Clearly, the Mayor wants fewer cars on the roads than we currently have; why add more roads when neighbors would prefer pedestrian connections between neighborhoods? Perhaps a bridge over Packers Avenue could also announce the gateway of innovative planning that we are endeavoring to produce through this process, and would be clearly more in keeping with the comprehensive plan.

If and when a Metro facility and an MG& E transportation and supply facility are brought to our community, the movement of traffic on the Northside will be forever changed for the worse. If the plan for Metro is to eventually move all of its operations to this north facility in a couple of decades, large vehicle traffic will increase greatly, which will cause more pedestrian hazards and air pollution in a residential area and harm to area businesses. The bus barn concept is in stark contrast to the otherwise stated vision of the OMSAP and the comprehensive plan to create a living, walkable, commerce-friendly space.

Encouraging Compact, Green Development

The current comprehensive plan recommends that traditional neighborhood development principles should be followed to ensure complete neighborhoods. According to the current draft OMSAP, there is a projected addition of 4,000 households that would be added to the north side of Madison by 2040. This will almost double our

current neighborhood population, and will drastically change the character of our neighborhood.

In the creation of complete neighborhoods, we would recommend that additional housing, if any, at the Oscar Mayer site and elsewhere on the Northside, include more of the missing middle housing that keeps with the current scale of the neighborhood and helps address concerns expressed by the Mayor regarding available housing stock. Small apartment buildings, single-family houses, small rental units and rowhouses, and perhaps live/work units can add to the mix of housing needed to support a diverse and walkable area for our new neighbors and the current population which would help maintain and preserve the existing character of the neighborhood. Not all renters want to live in a high rise. The greater the range of available housing, the more that new housing is likely to attract a wide range of renters likely to want to focus on resources, businesses, recreation and community activities in the surrounding neighborhood.

Minimizing Environmental Impacts

At a meeting at Lakeview Lutheran Church in the fall of 2019, city staff and local residents shared environmental information related to the various contaminated areas within the Oscar Mayer Special Area Plan boundaries. The city held up an RFP for conducting an environmental site assessment due to the current owners of OM Station only allowing property access when a more firm agreement to purchase was in place. Now that the city has been awarded the \$7 million towards the purchase of the land at OM Station through a U.S. Federal Transit Administration (DOT) Bus and Bus Facilities Grant (hereafter, FTA grant), the intent must be for the city to proceed with its plans to conduct an environmental site assessment as part of its due diligence towards any proposed future purchase of acreage at OM Station for a Metro bus facility.

Our neighborhood seeks to understand what responsibility the city will assume in cleaning up known subsurface contamination and providing a safe facility for Metro workers. According to the Metro facility analysis report, employee safety was first on the list of many reasons they want to eventually move all Metro operations from their current location on E. Washington to the OM Station facilities. Building 43, where employees will work, could be subject to off-gassing from the toxic substances in the ground and must be addressed. Toxic substances also need to be addressed in the other building proposed for purchase (Building 50) to ensure future occupants are safe from chronic long-term exposure.

Careful evaluation of historically contaminated subsurface lands has to be a priority as large redevelopment projects are considered for Madison's Northside on the Oscar Mayer property. Numerous contaminants have been found in our surface water (PFAS) and groundwater (Trichloroethylene and Ethylene Dichloride, to name a couple). These subsurface waters still flow through areas that were historically marsh and wetland, and that includes the Oscar Mayer site as well as most of Madison's Northside. Presumably,

this flow of subsurface waters is the source of the toxic vapors referred to above. All contaminants site-wide also need to be fully tested and addressed.

The city in the OMSAP planning process trumpets the benefits of the contemplated changes at this location, and admittedly, there may be potential benefits. However, the city—if it values longstanding neighborhoods and businesses—needs to also look beyond the glossy hypotheticals and consider what is valuable in the Sherman Neighborhood and on Madison’s Northside that will be at risk if this OMSAP plan unfolds as proposed. Caution and due diligence may help prevent foreseeable adverse consequences.

We urge the City of Madison to thoughtfully consider ways to implement a redevelopment plan for the Oscar Mayer site which will preserve the character of the Sherman Neighborhood within which it is located. This includes, but is not limited to, the concerns set forth above: preserving the quality of life for existing residents and the stability of existing businesses; preserving all 30 acres of Hartmeyer wetlands; preventing congestion by good traffic planning on all streets in or near the Oscar Mayer site, and particularly on Aberg Avenue; locating any bus barn for Metro elsewhere, not in empty Oscar warehouses; and taking responsibility for mitigating or avoiding foreseeable effects of subsurface contamination.

The need to address these concerns fully is imperative. A detailed, substantive response would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time and attention.

Neighborhood Council/Board of Directors,
Sherman Neighborhood Association:

Carrie Baranowski, Chris Elholm, Jennifer Argelander,
Justin Dobson, Chet Hermanson, Lynette Jandl,
Dolores Kester, Lesleigh Luttrell, Michelle Martin, Carolyn Rumph, Pat Tuchscherer, Renee Walk

The Sherman Neighborhood

The Sherman Neighborhood Association (SNA) extends on its western border along N. Sherman Avenue and Fordem Avenue all the way from Northport Drive south to E. Johnson Street, then along a line extending north from First Street on the east to the point where this line intersects with the railroad corridor, then north and east along the railroad corridor until it intersects with Commercial Avenue. From this point the neighborhood border extends eastward along Commercial Avenue to Packers Avenue, then north along Packers to the intersection with Northport curving west to intersect with N. Sherman Avenue. The Sherman Neighborhood boundaries thus include the entire Oscar Mayer property, which comprises almost all of the OMSAP plan area. As of 2018, the Madison Neighborhoods website estimates 2,835 people live in SNA. (<https://madison.apl.wisc.edu>)