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Subject: Reiland Grove plat feedback (88206)
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Dear Plan Commission and Reiland Grove team,

We are seeing the area just beyond I90 filling in already, out Milwaukee St, Cottage Grove Rd, Buckeye Rd, Lien Rd, High Crossing, etc. To start infill out along Commercial is the logical next step, and we should allow further infill and tax base creation within Madison city limits, rather than expecting people to take their wages home to the ever-receding horizon. Today it might be Deforest, tomorrow it might be Columbus.

That said, I have a couple particular points of feedback on the proposed plat:

1. The residential monoculture

While the creation of housing and diverse housing types is valuable, this is simply too broad of an area to cover with housing without including any walkable amenities. Much of Madison's west side for example was developed as almost exclusively residential, and it has created long-standing challenges for planning, transportation, transit, and more.

There needs to be some heterogeneity or flexibility in our zoning, to allow small businesses to spring up to serve residents once they arrive. This would greatly increase the value of homes within the plat, and be of value to the city, in terms of delivering services to the residents of this plat

Even if commercial amenities are (eventually) added at Reiner & Commercial (as shown in the Comp Plan), that will be a very long walk away from a lot of the housing shown in this plat.

At the very least, properties along the wide boulevard in the center of the plat would make a logical "mini downtown" for this somewhat standalone community. Particularly as it approaches the traffic circle at the end, and the large park beyond. That would also make for a prime location for a civic resource. A community center, or library for example.

Another strategy could be to designate certain corner lots as mixed-use from a zoning perspective. That way, even if they're used for residential initially, they could later be converted to commercial spaces, in places where there's sufficient demand.

The underlying land use plan does not take these things into account, but that underlying land use plan is from 2009, and I believe Plan Commission could find the plat consistent with Madison's overall land use plans if some commercial and/or multi-use parcels were included.

2. Enormous right-of-ways

ROW within Madison is most often in the 60-66 ft range, and for >90% of streets, this is more than enough. This plat includes a number of streets with larger street widths, and I think as the applicant team starts to apply Madison's Complete Green Streets guidelines (if they've somehow never seen it before), they'll soon come to realise that the planned street widths are

overkill for the planned vehicle volumes, and for maintaining speeds appropriate to the interior of a neighborhood.

This is especially true because it doesn't look like the plat includes any high-density residential that would require different apparatus types from the Fire Department.

For example, the street layouts shown include a 26 foot wide alleyway. According to NACTO, lane widths >11 ft are conducive to high speeds. So unless these alleys are intended for high-speed traffic in both directions at once, building them 26 ft wide would be a mistake. Alleys don't need to be bidirectional at all, but in cases where they are, it should be a width where one vehicle has to pull over to let another pass. Typically this would be more like 15 ft. There are great examples in Madison (like Monona Ct) that are narrower still. Keeping these alleys narrow would also free up additional acreage to sell.

Regarding the 100 ft wide central boulevard, that's wide enough that you could close off half the ROW and turn it into another row of shops, and still have plenty of room for a travel lane in each direction, a multi-use path, and a sidewalk. That would make the area that much more activated, vibrant, and self-sustaining, and maybe that is indeed what will eventually occur here. But of course, there's no need to do all that "after-market" when these are all just lines on a page today.

As I understand it, this preliminary plat is our main chance to get this right; a final plat is reviewed for consistency with the preliminary plat, and any changes thereafter will have to go through a very long process. So I encourage you to take this round of review seriously.

Thank you,

Nick Davies
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