

CAPITOL

NEIGHBORHOODS, INC.

MADISON, WISCONSIN

November 3, 2025

Plan Commission
City of Madison

Re: 139 West Wilson Street

The developers for this proposal first brought their plans to the Bassett neighborhood over three years ago. Over the course of that time, the neighborhood has had many conversations with members of the development team and we are appreciative of the time they have spent with us. However, the neighborhood has had serious concerns regarding this proposal from the beginning and most of those concerns remain.

The development team has recently made some significant changes to the design of the exterior of the building in response to concerns raised and several prior UDC meetings. At their October 22 meeting the UDC recommended approval of the proposal based on the design revisions. At the same time several commissioners expressed serious concerns with the inadequate entry drive and loading areas to service a building of this size and number of units.

In response to concerns expressed in meetings with the neighborhood steering committee the development team has made some limited changes to the entry drive and proposed loading areas. However, the neighborhood does not believe that this proposal meets several of the Standards for Approval for Conditional Uses.

For Conditional Use permits the ordinance requires that the Plan Commission find that all of the conditions of the applicable Approval Standards are met.

Approval Standard 5: Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, parking supply, internal circulation improvements, including but not limited to vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, public transit and other necessary site improvements have been or are being provided.

The driveway is simply too narrow and too limited: The driveway/loading zones are inadequate to handle the amount of traffic from food and package delivery vehicles, trash and recycling trucks, ride shares and taxis, as well as move-in, move-out vehicles that a 320 unit building without parking will generate on a daily basis. Much of this traffic will be unscheduled and not schedulable. Such traffic will likely overwhelm that space at times and lead to blockage of the sidewalk, cycle track and likely the traffic lane.

Inadequate turn-around space for large vehicles: The designated turn-around is too small for larger delivery and sanitation trucks. This will force them to perform high-risk, multi-point turns, potentially backing out into Wilson Street's heavy traffic. These maneuvers will create a significant hazard for pedestrians and cyclists using the adjacent cycle track and sidewalk.

Turn-around path is not functional: Even for smaller delivery vehicles the designated turn-around space is too limited to function adequately. This is visibly demonstrated in the applicant's Revised

Plans dated 10-22-25 on the Site Circulation and Loading Plan. (page 27 of the plan set) This plan shows the two vehicle temporary loading zones. The vehicle turn-around movement is for the vehicle parked closest to the street. The vehicle movements require extending beyond the driveway at the lake side and then on exiting the drive the vehicle does not stay within the drive apron, crossing the street terrace. If a second vehicle is in the driveway or a vehicle is parking in the loading zone, turning around would not be possible. This is a clear demonstration that the proposed driveway/loading zone is a single vehicle space.

The code-required pedestrian exit path from lake side of the building will also be sharing this space. A designated pedestrian path is not provided. The visitor bicycle parking is on this same side of the building and will be sharing the space with the vehicles as well.

Approval Standard 1: The establishment, maintenance or operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, or general welfare.

Vehicles backing into the public right of way: All large trucks and many other vehicles will be backing out from the drive across a public sidewalk, a cycle track and into a single lane busy street. Conflicts and safety concerns abound for all other users of this public space.

Potential for public right-of-way blockage: During peak usage times, vehicles will have no choice but to block the public right-of-way, including the cycle track and sidewalk, creating a severe public safety issue.

Conflict between vehicles and pedestrians: The plan combines resident access to the lake side amenity and building exit with the primary drive area. The volume of vehicle traffic will place pedestrians at risk, directly contradicting the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines

Snow removal: Snow removal from this drive space will be problematic without blocking the public right-of-way.

Approval Standard 3: The uses, values and enjoyment of other property in the neighborhood for purposes already established will not be substantially impaired or diminished in any foreseeable manner.

The concerns noted above related to Standards 1 and 5 will have spillover effects that will adversely affect adjacent properties as well as the general public using the sidewalk, cycle track and street.

Recommendation:

We urge the Plan Commission to find that a number of the Approval Standards have not been met and to **deny** the request for a Conditional Use permit.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jonathan Cooper and Peter Ostlind
for the Bassett Neighborhood Steering Committee,
Capitol Neighborhoods, Inc.