

Friends of Cherokee Marsh & Upper Yahara Watershed

Response to DRAFT Cherokee Special Area Plan

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The *Friends of Cherokee Marsh & Upper Yahara Watershed* (FoCM) want to thank the developer, City of Madison staff, and the Plan Commission for the excellent work that has been done on this plan to date. We appreciate that so many of the community's comments and concerns have been addressed as planning has advanced to this stage.

We now wish to take this opportunity to begin addressing remaining concerns, and to propose changes in the Special Area Plan (SAP) that would help create a truly outstanding development and community resource.

We want to praise the City for their commitment to restoring the full extent of the Cherokee Marsh to a high quality wetland community. This will benefit all of us as it works to help keep the Yahara and Starkweather watersheds flowing with clean, healthy water. We hope that the developer and the City will work to apply current Best Management Practices (BMP) when planning for stormwater management, as is stated in this version of the SAP. We are prepared to assist the City and the developer in any way we can to advocate for appropriate stormwater management practices that will protect the Marsh from any runoff that would be detrimental.

LAND USE

In your packet you will find a description of a re-visioning of a part of this development. We acknowledge that this is a bold concept, and ask that you allow yourselves to consider the possibility. We are faced with the opportunity to create a winning development plan for all players: the community, the environment, the developer, and the City.

Our proposal enhances the marsh's conservation function by providing more of the uplands crucial for wildlife habitat. It leaves a larger swath of open space north of Wheeler Road, which was how the area was envisioned in previous City plans. In addition, it better protects the wetlands adjacent to Subarea 1 (Hornung Range) and Subarea 4 (Wheeler Triangle). Finally, it could preserve all or most of the existing 20-acre forest on the western edge of Subarea 2 (Hornung Woods/Fields).

All this is accomplished by increasing density in the eastern area of Subarea 2 to a level that still falls within the range recommended in the SAP, while also allowing a large number of Dwelling Units to be built and providing the developer investment returns similar to those that might be predicted from the SAP.

Adopting this new version would mean that the City would not have to extend the Central Urban Service Area into Subarea 1, thus saving money for both the City and the developer. This would also guarantee that the City and the developer would not have to go to extraordinary lengths to manage runoff so that it does not end up

damaging the delicate nearby area designated as “high quality peat wetland”. Our proposal would also mean that the neighborhoods directly to the south would have improved access to a large network of trails into the Marsh Conservation Area. Property values in the area (anywhere from ¼ mile to a mile from this expanded park) would improve, as studies indicate is correlated with proximity to accessible natural areas or open spaces.

We believe that it is possible to provide a mix of housing types with a higher density in Subarea 2, and allow Subarea 1 to be restored to a high quality uplands or mesic prairie, with walking and bike trails that connect it to the larger marsh conservation area to the north. Shifting the development planned for Subarea 4 to Subarea 2 will better protect the wetlands adjacent to Subarea 4.

We understand that this proposal will require re-thinking and additional creativity in considering the development of Subarea 2, and we hope that the City and the developer will rise to the challenge. There are a variety of ways that we might work together to achieve this vision, and we hope that we have the opportunity to do so.

SUB AREA 4 (Wheeler Triangle)

There are neighborhood concerns about development in Subarea 4, as well as environmental concerns about the problem of pesticides being used so close to the adjacent wetland (even commercially applied pesticides are a problem for the wetland ecology). Housing on that corner will require significant stormwater management in order to prevent runoff from going into the neighboring wetland, which is not clearly stated in the SAP. Runoff is of great concern to both the neighbors and those of us who are concerned about the maintenance of adequate buffers between any development and the neighboring wetland.

If development must occur in Subarea 4, we ask that the City make it very clear that none will be allowed within the existing Open Space Easement, a portion of which is a county-designated environmental corridor.

POROUS PAVEMENT

Porous pavement is a new technology that is not addressed in the SAP. The technology for this product is continually advancing, but it is already being used in many new developments to improve groundwater recharge and reduce the burden of stormwater management.

Use of porous pavement will greatly decrease the amount of runoff that needs to be “managed”, while also reducing the stormwater fees that the developer or residents have to pay.

We ask the City and the developer to use porous pavement for all paths, driveways and sidewalks constructed in all the Subareas that will be developed, including the paved path between Burning Wood Way and Subarea 5 (the Fifth Addition).

We ask that you make porous pavement a requirement for the paved service road that the City will be constructing, and that you either require or strongly encourage the developer to utilize this pavement in all the Subareas that will be developed.

We encourage the City to consider porous pavement for the streets in this development as well.

We are attaching a description of porous pavement along with some of its benefits.

SUMMARY

The FoCM are committed to working as partners with the neighborhood groups and other concerned citizens, as well as the developer and the City staff, to help this Plan become a truly great one for all of us. We look forward to seeing the plans as they develop, and being a part of the process that refines those plans.