

CRANES

Capital Region Advocacy Network for Environmental Sustainability

On behalf of its member organizations and individuals, advocating collaboratively for the environment of the South Central Wisconsin region (eight counties: Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Rock and Sauk) toward a high quality of life; an ecologically sustainable and just culture; and, the celebration of the beauty of this place, both natural and built.

VISION

The Capital area's environment, including water, land, and air resources, will be conserved or restored to ensure the region's quality of life and the beauty of this special place, for all who live or visit here, now and in the future.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Earth/Art® Resources
Friends of Cherokee Marsh
Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy
League of Women Voters - Dane County
Madison Audubon Society
Sierra Club - Four Lakes Group
W. Dane Coalition for Smart Growth & Environment
West Waubesa Preservation Coalition

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River Alliance of Wisconsin
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16 May 2011

City of Madison Plan Commission
ATTN: Nan Fey, Chairperson
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Suite LL100
Madison, WI 53703

SUBJECT: *Amendment of Comprehensive Plan / Cherokee Special Area Plan*

The *Capital Region Advocacy Network for Environmental Sustainability* (CRANES) requests that the Plan Commission elect to include our 21 March 2011 request for amendment of the Cherokee Special Area Plan (CSAP) on Track 2 of the Comprehensive Plan Map Amendments for formal evaluation and consideration.

Our request was made for environmental reasons, primarily related to uplands habitat, which were brought before the City in 2006 as the Cherokee SAP was under discussion. However, since that SAP was adopted by the City Council in January 2007, there have been significant changes in local precipitation, a trend that experts predict will continue and accelerate in coming decades. These new, record precipitation events and the related future precipitation trends have important ramifications for even the low-density (8-15 du/ac) development envisioned for almost all of Subarea 1 and all of Subarea 6 in the SAP.

There would be even more ramifications from any proposal for high-density development in these two Subareas. Just such a proposal is embodied in a different Track 2 Comprehensive Plan amendment, requested by Cherokee Park Inc. (CPI), which also comes before the Plan Commission tonight. That proposal requests up-zoning by several categories to allow an institutional campus that will increase density to 32-36 du/ac, while vastly increasing the amount of impervious surface (compared to the envisioned low-density residential for this area of the SAP). The proponents may argue tonight that the proposal 149 units of apartment/assisted-living facility have less impact, because seniors will live there, but the 2007 Cherokee SAP already envisioned a 55+ community, with any required government services delivered there by the county, so a fairly similar level of environmental impact was already anticipated when all agreed that low-density was appropriate for an area so close to such a stormwater-sensitive natural resource. What will be different are the requisite institutional infrastructure and staff environmental impacts of a 24-hour assisted living facility, which are significantly different from what was envisioned in the SAP.

So the CRANES proposed amendment for down-zoning actually deviates far less from the Cherokee SAP than does the CPI's proposed amendment, while responding to important changes since that SAP was approved in 2007.

Recently CPI has made an interesting informal, verbal proposal regarding a change in the siting of the senior facility. CPI requested that CRANES support this new proposal before the City, and also withdraw our amendment request, but we were unable to agree to that request by tonight. CRANES is discussing this new proposal with its various partner organizations, to reach consensus. We also want to honor the support for our proposed amendment, which has drawn petition signatures from almost 400 people, so must assure there is an adequate public participation plan, with consideration by Northside neighborhood groups. In any event, the new CPI proposal will also require a Comprehensive Plan amendment, assuming the City Council adopts the Cherokee SAP as a Track 1 amendment tomorrow night.

In light of all the above, CRANES recommends that the Plan Commission tonight approve our Comprehensive Plan map amendment request for Track 2 consideration.