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I write to compliment the city's planning staff on drafting an excellent neighborhood development plan for the Shady Woods area that is true to other planning objectives, including maintaining appropriate greenspace and preserving the Ice Age Trail corridor previously approved by the National Park Service and several other government agencies. Although I am a contributor to and active volunteer for the Ice Age Trail Alliance (the nonprofit group that acquires land or access rights and builds and maintains the trail), I write here as a private citizen and not as a representative of the Alliance.

While some affected landowners have expressed opposition to the plan (partially cloaked as merely a plea for delay), the draft correctly recognizes that a broad trail corridor which affords views of natural landscape instead of suburban backyards must be preserved if the trail through this area is to be a destination rather than merely an access route to other trail segments. Moreover, the presence of prominent, relatively undisturbed glacial features makes this corridor worthy of preservation as a segment of potential trail worth walking for its own esthetic merit. If it is not preserved now, it never will be, as development will destroy or at least devalue the natural features worth preserving while creating vested competing existing use interests.

The draft also correctly observes that a broad trail corridor, while removing land from potential development, does so mostly with land that is at best only marginally suitable for development. At the same time, a broad corridor provides an amenity for adjoining lands, thereby enhancing their value and offsetting the loss of development value on acreage within the protected corridor.

In summary, I heartily support the concept of a broad trail corridor embraced by the plan and urge its approval. Please share my comments with the appropriate review bodies.

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