

Testimony to Plan Commission on Resolution R-18-14, Feb. 18, 2014

Before you is the question, “Shall the City apply to CARPC for urban services in the Northeast and North Stoner Prairie Neighborhoods **at this time?**”

For the Northeast Neighborhood, there are three principal reasons to defer application:

1. Response time is about 9 minutes for fire, and 14 minutes for EMS. The mayor has delayed the building of a new fire/EMS station to serve the area until 2019, from 2015. The Neighborhood Plan, developed by a committee I chaired, assumes the fire/EMS station will be in place, and indicates it’s a prerequisite for development.
2. Potable water needs sufficient users to maintain quality. Permitting development over hundreds of new acres around the City reduces assimilation rates. When this area is opened for development, all the City’s new development should be focused in the area, to minimize the time water users must contend with stale water.
3. Aquifer recharge in the Northeast Neighborhood is thought to be on a knife-edge. Too much recharge will flood homes in the Meadowview subdivision. Not enough recharge will dry out the Waubesa Wetlands, a State Natural Area and “one of the highest quality and most diverse wetlands remaining in southern Wisconsin” (DNR). The Neighborhood Plan explicitly calls for a reexamination of the new Dane County Groundwater Model, which has not yet been done.

I strongly recommend that you not request urban services for the Northeast Neighborhood until these three conditions are addressed.

For the North Stoner Prairie Neighborhood, there are also three principal reasons to defer application:

1. The area is very flat and internally drained. More than 40 acres have been allocated for storm water storage, and the Neighborhood Plan calls for an emergency pumping system to handle historic back-to-back events. The need for emergency pumping should simply disqualify the southern part of the neighborhood for future development.
2. The area has weak transportation connections, which would be hard to expand. The Neighborhood Plan calls for realignment of Lacy Road to the west, but an approved comprehensive development for the area doesn’t do that. Seminole Highway can’t be expanded around Dunn’s Marsh and the trails due to wetlands. The area will be completely auto-dependent, with all traffic going through the Verona/McKee or Fish Hatchery/Beltline

bottlenecks. The traffic impact on Lacy Road between Devoro Road and South Fish Hatchery has not been studied.

3. The area is the first area farmed in Fitchburg, beginning in the 1840s, and is among the most productive agricultural land in the world. Agriculture doesn't generate much traffic, and little or none to the north, and is compatible with flooding. While residents of the adjoining neighborhoods are supportive of the Neighborhood Plan, every person I asked would be very happy to have it in agriculture longer, deferring development until there are more compelling reasons.

I strongly recommend that you not request urban services for the North Stoner Prairie Neighborhood until there are there are definite expansion plans for Sub-Zero's facilities.

The arguments for advancing these applications are not convincing. In the short term, we don't need more building lots in the Oregon school district, with single-family lots planned in Uptown and along the south side of McKee Road. Likewise, we don't need more building lots in the Verona School district beyond the 160-some planned for the Hammersley quarry. We should see how these lots are assimilated in the next few years before approving even more development land. Should the USA amendment applications advance, the new development land would have a suffocating effect on plans in the works for the south side of Lacy Road, in the Oregon school district and already in the urban service area with infrastructure already installed.

Much has already been made the cost to taxpayers of maintaining infrastructure over time, and that suggests that we should attempt to concentrate development in areas already served by roads, water, and sewer. That's the exact opposite of the tactic of putting as much urban service area as possible in play with these applications.

Should these factors change, the applications before you can be forwarded to CARPC at any time. They should be forwarded separately, as each is separately and individually warranted.

Please be responsive to the wishes of citizens, the values of existing homes and businesses, and most importantly, good planning principles. Do not advance these applications this year.

Thank you.

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