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Dane County Zoning & Land Regulation Committee
City-County Building
210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Room 116
Madison, WI 53703

Re: Proposed Amendment to Town of Verona Comprehensive Plan

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Town of Verona in response to the most recent objections filed by the City of Verona to the Town's Comprehensive Plan amendment. Rather than addressing the requested changes individually, the City has taken a broad-brush approach and objects to the amendment in its entirety. In doing so, it overlooks several issues.

Several of the land use category changes included in the amendment were requested by Town of Verona landowners. One such parcel is located in an existing town neighborhood and is proposed to change from the RR 8+ Future Land Use Category to RR 4-8. This parcel is *not even included* in the Future Land Use Map of the City's Draft Envision Verona (Comprehensive Plan). This would imply the City does not view this parcel as an area for future City growth, but it nevertheless objects to the change. Similarly, there are changes prompted by the purchase of lands by Dane County Parks. Those parcels are proposed to be removed from a development category to Natural and Recreational Resources to reflect their current and anticipated future use. Again, these 400 acres are not included in the City's Draft Future Land Use Map and should be of no concern to the City. The opposition to these changes makes no sense.

In general, the City interprets the County's Comprehensive Plan as intending to preserve agriculture by assuring that no development occurs unless it is high density and urban. Such an interpretation, intentionally or inadvertently, would be the death knell for Dane County towns. Without some modest amount of development and corresponding revenues, towns simply cannot maintain services at ever-increasing costs. Rural residential development is needed to preserve the viability of rural areas.

There is a reason agriculture does not thrive in highly urbanized communities. Moderate density "rural" housing provides a logical transition between high density urban development and the incompatible impacts of normal farming operations. People living in rural housing accept the

noise, odors and traffic impediments inherent in agricultural practices. Not all development has to be high density residential subdivisions or high-rise apartments to be compatible with agricultural preservation goals.

In any event, the plan amendment generally *increases* the density of proposed residential developments from the current Town Comprehensive Plan. The lands in Area 4 as identified in the amendment are currently planned for residential use on lots of 2-4 acres, more than 8 acres or are designated as Transitional Agriculture (i.e. future “rural residential development” per the terms of the plan). The proposed amendment would put them all in the densest (2-4 acre) rural residential category. If density is the concern, this amendment improves on the land use plan contained in the Town’s current plan with respect to Area 4. Additionally, a significant portion of the land in Area 4 is actually under the City of Fitchburg’s extraterritorial review jurisdiction, not that of the City of Verona, and is therefore not subject to City of Verona approvals.

The City contends that this amendment would preclude higher density development at a later date, but does not explain why. It is difficult to imagine why a 2-4 acre parcel could not be further subdivided in the future into small lots, just as the 2-4 acre areas already designated in the current plan in Area 4. The City’s objection is transparent. It wants to preclude the Town from the modest development it needs for its financial viability, so the City can annex and redevelop the land with a slightly cleaner slate.

The City also objects to the amendment which would simply recognize the “Wildcat Pit” area as containing non-metallic mineral deposits. It points out that it unilaterally approved a commercial development “directly adjacent to” that site. However, properly documenting the location of mineral resources, and prohibiting development within 1000 feet of those locations are two of the expressed objectives of the County Comprehensive plan:

- A. Develop an inventory to identify potential non-metallic mineral resources of significance.
- D. Allow nonfarm development within 1000 feet of identified significant mineral resources only after it has been demonstrated that the proposed land use or development would not significantly preclude or hinder future nonmetallic mineral extraction.

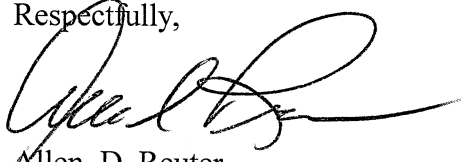
The City’s objection boils down to a complaint that the Town amendment in this regard follows the County Comprehensive Plan recommendations to the letter. It calls that bad planning because the City ignored the same Comp Plan in choosing to site what it now claims is an incompatible development on adjacent land.

In summary, the current Town of Verona Comprehensive Plan contemplates rural residential development in certain areas. Despite the fact that land can always be developed more densely, that plan was approved and incorporated into the Dane County plan. The current

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amendment simply increases the proposed density for some areas which is consistent with the County plan. The amendment to recognize the presence of mineral deposits serves to fulfill the objectives as stated in the County plan. The Town of Verona respectfully requests that the amendment adopted by the Town Board be approved in its entirety and incorporated into the County Comprehensive Plan.

Respectfully,



Allen D. Reuter
Town Attorney

cc: Sarah Gaskell, Administrator