



“Whispering Coves” General Development Plan Verona, Wisconsin



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Midthun Property, LLC

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Intent

Forward Development Group, LLC (FDG) is requesting approval of this General Development Plan for a residential development known as “Whispering Coves.” General Development Plan area encompasses approximately 170 acres and is envisioned to include up to 275 residential units comprised of traditional single-family lots and condominium-style units, just over 40 acres of open space, including parklands and stormwater management facilities, and wetland, and a roughly 12-acre future school site.

General Development Plan Location

Location and Surrounding Development

The project site is located west of County Highway M (CTH M or North Main Street) and south of County Highway PD (CTH PD or McKee Road) on lands that were recently annexed by the City of Verona. The site is currently an agricultural tract that is generally surrounded by rural land uses, some of which are undergoing development (see attached Zoning Map Exhibit). The project site is within the City of Verona Urban Service Area and within the planning area of the City’s adopted North Neighborhood Plan.

Surrounding land uses and jurisdictions include the following:

- The University Ridge Golf Course to the north, across CTH PD (City of Madison)
- The Meriter McKee Clinic to the northeast across CTH M and CTH PD (City of Madison)
- A utility station, West Madison Bible Church, and rural residential lots to the east across CTH M (Town of Verona)
- Undeveloped agricultural land (Backus property) to the southeast (Town of Verona)
- The Kettle Creek North single-family residential subdivision, under development to the south (City of Verona)
- A former quarry currently used as a City brush collection site and planned for future City park and utility substation to the west (City of Verona)
- Rural residential lots to the southwest and west (Town of Verona)
- Epic Systems a half-mile to the southwest (City of Verona)

Overall, the existing land uses are representative of an area transitioning from rural to suburban character.

East 40

Since the lands along CTH M also known as the “East 40”, provide the “Whispering Coves” General Development Plan main point of access and will serve as the neighborhood’s gateway, there is value mentioning and clarifying the development intent for those lands as it relates to the “Whispering Coves” General Development Plan.

The East 40 **is not a part** of the “Whispering Coves” General Development Plan. These lands will be owned and developed separately by Midthun Property Group in the future as development opportunities arise. An individual Zoning Map Amendment has been submitted to the City for review and approval of conventional zoning, including Urban Residential for Lots 1 and 3 and Suburban Commercial for Lot 2 as noted on the Preliminary Plat and Zoning Map Amendment Exhibit. It is anticipated that when development occurs on these lots it will meet the standards of the proposed conventional zoning districts,

or individual Planned Development District zoning will be requested as needed. Consistency with the adopted North Neighborhood Plan will be evaluated at that time.

While not a part of this General Development Plan, the East 40 is a part of the proposed overall Whispering Coves Preliminary Plat land division.

Project Overview: Themes and Images

Design Concept

The residential neighborhood design concept, created by the Rick Harrison Site Design Studio, utilizes an innovative approach to land planning that begins with the pedestrian path network to prioritize the pedestrian experience and ensure ample connections to origins and destinations. The primary goal of the design is to maximize the sense of community and foster social interaction through thoughtful placement of sidewalks and paths, useable green spaces, and through attention to vistas from homes, paths, and streets.

A key component of the neighborhood design is the concept of “coving,” an approach to land planning that uses meandering road patterns and varied home setbacks to provide more openness and improve views. This in contrast to a more traditional neighborhood development pattern which would utilize a gridded street pattern with homes standing “shoulder-to-shoulder,” in rows all facing the street. The curvilinear street pattern adds interest to the streetscape and slows traffic speeds, invites walking, increases safety at intersections, and adds value by creating a unique sense of place and neighborhood identity.

The curvilinear street layout minimizes environmental impacts by limiting overall site grading and paving necessary for roadways and development to occur. Curvilinear streets are better able to respect and accommodate the existing, natural site terrain. In addition, to ensure that infrastructure costs are supported by adjacent improvements, streets are double-loaded with development lots wherever possible.

As part of the design concept, open spaces also play a key role in placemaking. By interspersing open areas and trails throughout the neighborhood and with special consideration given to vistas from the homes and from streets, an overall design effort that will result in the visual appearance of openness and connectedness. Open spaces will be discovered as one travels along pathways instead of them being predetermined places centrally located within a subdivision. Unique to “Whispering Coves” General Development Plan is also a central greenway that contains a hierarchy of pedestrian pathways and an intermittent stream water feature.

The “Whispering Coves” General Development Plan includes an abundance of pedestrian connections and open spaces, a strong sense of community and place, and variety in housing products for the local market. This General Development Plan establishes a framework for the general organization and layout of land uses and public infrastructure that are illustrated in the attached exhibits.



“Coving” creates more interesting streetscapes

General Development Plan Land Uses

Whispering Coves General Development Plan

The General Development Plan area is comprised of roughly 170 acres to be developed by North Neighborhood LLC as a residential neighborhood providing both traditional single-family detached residential units and condominium units resembling “small lot” residential development.

The Whispering Coves General Development Plan area is planned for primarily single-family detached homes, with some variety in product type and lot size to accommodate the market and provide varying price points within the neighborhood. Other land uses proposed within the General Development Plan area include open space/parklands for stormwater management and recreational uses, and a roughly 12-acre site reserved for a potential future elementary school.

Platting for the proposed land division will be completed in phases, with the first phase consisting of 120 acres, including the East 40 and the two 40-acre parcels adjacent to the west. This is consistent with the recommended phasing in the City’s North Neighborhood Plan (see Phasing Plan Exhibit).

Parcels located within this General Development Plan may be further subdivided in the future via condo plat, or adjusted via plat or CSM, with City approval, including those intended to be developed as condominium units. Such future subdivisions must be described in detail as part of future Precise Implementation Plans (PIPs) for each phase or site.

Whispering Coves General Development Plan Land Use Summary Table			
Land Use	Total Unit Count	Land Area (Acres)	Density (DU/Acre)
Traditional Single-Family Detached	222	80.3	2.76
Condominium "Small Lot" Single-Family Detached	53	9.7	5.46
Right-of-way	N/A	28.7	N/A
Parkland Dedication/Open Space	N/A	16.7	N/A
Stormwater Management	N/A	22.8	N/A
Totals	275	170.3	4.11 (Average)

Treatment of Natural Features

Topography

The project site consists of rolling terrain with high points in the northwest along CTH PD (elevation 1100 ft) and a saddle in the southwest (elevation 1090 ft). Lands generally drop down to the east, where a closed kettle basin (elevation 990 ft) receives drainage from most of the property, including the "East 40."

Endangered Species and Archeological Assessment

Investigations have been conducted for endangered species and archeologically significant resources; no significant resources were found that require action.

Wetland Delineation and Concurrence

The project site was evaluated for the presence of wetlands to comply with current WDNR requirements for developments over one acre in size. Wetlands were delineated and concurred within the General Development Plan area, generally located at the southwest quarter of the East 40. Protect to the natural wetland resource, this area is noted on the Preliminary Plat land division and within the General Development Plan as a conservancy park.

No additional wetlands were delineated on the project site west of this closed kettle basin.

Stormwater Management

The planned stormwater management facilities will meet City, County, and CARPC requirements. The most stringent policies require all new development in this area to infiltrate the runoff volume required by the CARPC Urban Service Area Amendment (USAA) and require the development to provide adequate storage for back-to-back 100-year, 24-hour storm events. In addition, all runoff must be treated for water quality and rate control, to provide clean water and safe discharge downstream of the development.

Most of the development will be served by a "regional" stormwater system that will collect and route stormwater from the various subwatersheds through a series of basins. These basins include detention and infiltration basins designed to meet City and CARPC USAA standards for total suspended solids (TSS), rate control, and stay-on volume. The system is designed to manage the levels of water within the natural kettle system to protect property and the natural wetland resource. Site grading has been designed to route and collect stormwater from impervious surfaces (streets, driveways, and parking lots) and convey it to detention basins for pretreatment and then to basins for infiltration.

Site constraints include the location of soils suitable for infiltration and the lack of an emergency outlet of the closed kettle system.

Due to the lack of an emergency outlet from the closed system, a stormwater pump station will be located at the northwest corner of the kettle. As part of the stormwater management system, an intermittent stream has been incorporated to create a water amenity along the main multi-use path and central greenway.

The associated force main will provide water for the amenity, recirculating the water uphill from the kettle basin to a high point within the westernmost 40 (Block 28 of the plat). The pump system will also control water levels in the kettle and feed the infiltration basins while providing a small intermittent stream that traverses the site. Additionally, within Outlot 4, a shallow basin will provide for open flow conveyance and infiltration.

Following unusually large rain events, the pump system can move excess water to a discharge point at the west end of the property and ultimately to a discharge point provided by the City to maintain the kettle's water elevation at or below elevation 999.3 feet (approximately one foot below the level for back-to-back 100-year storm events in the predevelopment condition) to protect on- and off-site properties.

The stormwater outlots are proposed to be dedicated to the public, and will contain regional facilities owned and maintained by the City. Maintenance of the amenity will be addressed in the covenants and Development Agreement. Stormwater drainage easements for conveyance purposes are indicated on the proposed Preliminary Plat. Storm facilities will connect to existing pipes located within CTH M, improvements which are currently under construction with estimated completion in 2019.



Stormwater management as a green space amenity

The General Development Plan’s stormwater design provides outfalls for both the school site and the East 40 to drain into the proposed “regional” facilities located within the General Development Plan area. The school site will not be required to do additional treatment and is fully accounted for within the General Development Plan’s “regional” system.

Development of the lands within the East 40, will be required to provide additional treatment to meet specific performance standards. The specific performance standards will be established for these lots as part of the final Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP) and will also be part of each site’s respective development plans at the time of development. Maintenance agreements will be provided for these basins in the SWMPs prepared in conjunction with each site’s development plans.

Parkland Dedication

As part of the land subdivision, the developers intend to dedicate approximately 16.7 acres of parkland to the City. As discussed during the concept planning stages with the City, the vision for this development relies on a hierarchy of multi-use trails and adjacent open spaces; many of which are designed more as “linear parks.” The “linear park” concept fits current-day trends in recreation, including a growing interest in walking, running, cross country skiing, and biking for example, compared to previous focus largely concentrated on programming for large athletic fields for the general public. As noted in the General Development Plan Trail System Plan, the trail network is also designed to be integrated into places with stormwater conveyance, providing a water feature that will enhance the open spaces throughout the neighborhood.

Proposed park facilities include:

- Roughly 7.4 acres of multi-use path corridors;
- Approximately 8.5 acres of conservancy park (comprised of the delineated kettle wetland and its 35-foot no-grading buffer); and
- An estimated 0.766 acres of pocket park space located within cul-de-sac islands.



Examples of conservancy park amenities

The specific improvements and equipment that will enhance these areas will be subject to coordination with the City, but generally include structured play equipment for children and/or pavilions within the cul-de-sac islands, and passive-recreation amenities such as bench seating, little libraries, and fitness equipment within the linear parks. The images in this section show examples of the facilities envisioned for specific park areas.



Examples of cul-de-sac park amenities



Examples of linear park amenities

Relationship to Adopted City Plans

Comprehensive Plan

Verona's 2010 Comprehensive Plan anticipates that the City will grow to nearly 24,000 residents by 2030 – more than double the 2010 population (10,619 according to the Census). The share of population age 65 and up is anticipated to grow as a share of the community. The proposed development will align with the City's long-range planning goals and objectives, including but not limited to the following:

Housing Goal 3: Encourage a variety of new housing options within the City

- Policy: Diversify the city's housing stock by providing more high-end and 'executive' style housing.
- Policy: Diversify the city's housing stock by providing more affordable housing.
- Policy: Provide a variety of housing options that is distinct/different from housing options available in Madison.

Transportation Goal 1: Improve North-South traffic between Verona and Madison.

- Policy: Work with the Town of Verona and the City of Madison to insure that north-south streets parallel to CTH M are planned and accommodated as the Verona Area grows.

Transportation Goal 2: Provide adequate transportation systems in and around Verona to insure easy movement of people and goods.

- Policy: Continue to create off-street bicycle paths according to the City's bike path plan.
- Policy: Continue to require new commercial and residential developments to provide sidewalks.

Transportation Goal 3: Protect residential areas from high volumes of traffic by preventing conflicts between traffic and residential land-uses.

- Objective 3-C: Discourage 'cut-through' traffic in residential areas adjacent to arterial streets.
- Policy: Investigate and implement traffic calming measures in residential neighborhoods that are adjacent to high-volume arterial streets.

North Neighborhood Plan

The "Whispering Coves" General Development Plan is located within the City's North Neighborhood Plan ("Neighborhood Plan") planning area. As noted in the Neighborhood Plan, the project site is located within the area that is more specifically identified as the Central Planning Area. Development within the Central Planning Area is anticipated to occur within the first three phases of the overall North Neighborhood build-out. Future land uses within the Central Planning Area are primarily identified as "Suburban Residential," "School," and "Open Space/Wooded."

The General Development Plan is consistent with the Neighborhood Plan, which calls for Suburban Residential land uses (both single-family and duplex lots ranging in size from 6,000 square-feet to 10,000 square-feet, with 15-25-foot setbacks providing for transitions between residential and nonresidential areas, front porches and garages setback from the house). Refer to Page 19 of the Neighborhood Plan for additional details.

Development within the General Development Plan area is comprised of traditional single-family detached housing with varying lot sizes ranging from roughly 8,000 square-feet to 29,000 square-feet. The larger lots are primarily located along major transportation corridors (CTH PD) or along exterior subdivision boundaries. Additional lot area in these locations seems appropriate and would allow for adequate areas of transition or buffers to be incorporated into each individual lot's development plan, including landscaping or berming.

With regard to building envelope locations, front setbacks are greater than the minimum required for the underlying NR zone district (25 feet) on most lots. The intent of the increased setback is to achieve the desired "coving" character for homes that results in the visual appearance of openness.

Also as part of the General Development Plan, there are two areas that are intended to be developed as condominium-style residential units. While these areas are being platted as large lots currently, development in these areas is intended to resemble "small lot" single-family detached housing that provides a smaller-scale home and adds a different price point to the overall subdivision. A total of 53 units are anticipated in these two areas.

When these areas develop consideration will be given to providing transitions between adjacent land uses, including those to the north and east by incorporating an attached housing product type instead of a detached. The housing type will be primarily determined by market demand at the time of development. The North Neighborhood Plan envisions a future school to be located within the "Whispering Coves" General Development Plan area. The Verona Area School District has been consulted throughout the planning process and a 12-acre school site is reserved for a potential school to enable VASD to acquire the site for future use, should they decided to do so.

Other Neighborhood Plan goals that inform the GDP include:

- "Development patterns will provide residents a complete neighborhood with the option of walking, biking, or driving to places within the neighborhood."
- "Streets will be designed for slower speeds."
- "Walking in the neighborhood will be a pleasant and interesting activity."
- "A variety of public spaces is critical to the overall identity of the neighborhood and serves as social gathering places."

As part of the development, Hemlock Drive and Tamarack Way will be extended north to serve the subdivision and provide connections to CTH PD in the north. Two collector streets will be constructed running east-west and north-south through the development and will accommodate vehicle travel, on-street parking, and pedestrian traffic. Local streets will connect individual lots to the collector street network, creating links within and beyond the neighborhood.

The table below provides an overview of the consistency of the General Development Plan with the North Neighborhood Plan.

Neighborhood Plan Consistency			
	North Neighborhood Plan	“Whispering Coves” General Development Plan	Plan Consistency (Y/N)
Recommended Uses	Single-family and duplex lots	Single-family residential Condominium “small lot”	Y
Use Description	Suburban Residential	Low density residential	Y
General Development Guidelines	Reduced setbacks Front porches Garages setback from the house	Variable setbacks with some modifications Front porches Garages setback from house a minimum of two feet	Y
Development Intensity*	Lot sizes range from 6,000 sq. ft. to 10,000 sq. ft.	Lot sizes range from 8,000 sq. ft. to roughly 29,000 sq. ft.	Y
Setbacks**	15-25-foot front yard to provide smooth transition from residential to nonresidential land uses Smaller setbacks on smaller lots	Front yards range from 25+ Side yard setbacks request reduction from 10 feet to 8 feet	Y
School Site	Centrally located	12-acre school site incorporated into General Development Plan area; VASD consulted on school location	Y

***Development Intensity:** Large lots are a result of the coving design concept and general lot location within the subdivision. Larger lots are primarily located along exterior subdivision boundaries, including adjacent to major roadways, where additional space for a buffer would be appropriate. In addition, the coving design concept itself plays a role in the overall lot size due to its curvilinear street network. The result is pie shaped, deep lots that are located along curves.

****Setbacks:** As a result of the coving design concept, setback modifications are being requested as part of the General Development Plan, specifically as it relates to side yards. The curvilinear street alignment design produces lots that are not rectangular and parallel to the street. Given the different lot shape, it is merely a corner point that is at the reduced side yard setback dimension (in this case 8-foot minimum). From the minimum point, the side yard setback then increases along the depth of the lot, producing a much greater setback at the opposite end of the building envelope. The net result is an average side yard setback that is considerably greater than the minimum 10-feet.

Rationale for Planned Development District Zoning

Planning for the development of this tract began in the late 2000s. Revisions to the plans and preliminary plat have been made and the revised concept plan for the development was presented to the City in the summer of 2017. Coordination with City staff has been ongoing since that time. The development is proposed as a Planned Unit Development, consistent with the City’s preferences and to enable flexibility on certain site design standards in order to ensure high quality design and architecture.

Specifically, the “Whispering Coves” General Development Plan provides for:

- Creative and flexible design requirements to achieve the desired street and open space character associated with the coving concept;
- A unique sense of place, openness, and connectivity by connecting each resident to an amenity;
- Housing product types not available elsewhere in the Verona area;

- Transportation infrastructure that promotes walkability, provides enhanced connectivity and pedestrian and bicycle safety by providing for slightly narrower streets and a robust path system; and
- Improved transportation system connectivity with north-south and east-west road connections.

The following sections specify in more detail how the General Development Plan complies with City ordinance standards and where flexibility is requested.

Description of Exemptions Requested from Underlying Zoning Districts

This section provides an overview of the exemptions requested from City’s zoning ordinances. A summary table is provided below for quick reference.

As part of the zoning analysis **Neighborhood Residential (NR)** zoning was used as a reference point for the traditional single-family development. In thinking about the future development of the condominium units, **Community Residential (CR)** zoning should be utilized as the underlying zone district reference point. A more comprehensive zoning analysis of the development of the condominium units will be completed based on specific development proposal(s) for each of these areas.

Land Use

Proposed land uses within the “Whispering Coves” General Development Plan do not require any exemptions from land use requirements. Single-family residential development is a permitted use in the NR zoning districts.

Density and Intensity

Overall, the intensity and density of the proposed residential development is consistent with underlying zone district standards. All lots within the General Development Plan area meet the minimum lot area standards and maximum gross density.

A total of 275 single-family residences (includes traditional single-family (222) and condominium “small lot” units (53)) are proposed over the course of roughly 90 acres. The resulting average gross density within the General Development Plan area is 4.11 dwelling units per acre.

More specifically, the proposed density across the areas noted as traditional single-family development is 2.76 dwelling units per acre where the maximum gross density of 5.0 dwelling units per acre is permitted. Similarly, within the areas designated for condominium development, the proposed density is 5.46 dwelling units per acre where the maximum gross density of 6.0 dwelling units per acre is permitted.

Bulk Standards

The intent of the Planned Development District is to allow for flexibility in the City’s design standards to encourage and allow for innovation in land use development. The General Development Plan seeks to modify the side yard setbacks for the traditional single-family residential development throughout the General Development Plan area. The proposed side yard setback is eight feet where 10 feet is specified by the underlying NR zoning. As a result of the coving design concept, setback modifications are being

requested as part of the General Development Plan, specifically as it relates to side yards. The curvilinear street alignment design produces lots that are not rectangular and parallel to the street. Given the different lot shape, it is merely a corner point that is at the reduced side yard setback dimension (in this case 8-foot minimum). From the minimum point, the side yard setback then increases along the depth of the lot, producing a much greater setback at the opposite end of the building envelope. The net result is an average side yard setback that is considerably greater than the minimum 10-feet.

Landscaping

No exemptions are requested to landscaping standards as relates to the development sites in General Development Plan area. Special consideration will be given to the overall landscape treatment along the trail network and within median islands to provide an enhanced design aesthetic throughout the subdivision as well as sense of place. Additional consideration will also be given to protecting and enhancing the wetland habitat located within the General Development Plan area as a key amenity for the surrounding residential development.

Zoning Standards Not Met within the General Development Plan Area		
<i>Traditional Single-family Residential Development – Plat Blocks 2-21 and 23-28 (Referencing Neighborhood Residential (NR) Zoning)</i>		
Standard	Code Section	Details
Interior Side Yard Setback: 10 ft (20 ft building separation)	Sec. 13-1-46, 13-1-161	All Lots: 8 ft side setback (16 ft building separation) is proposed to help achieve coving, and to provide some flexibility for building placement on lots shaped by curvilinear streets.

In addition to the modification to the side yard setback, certain subdivision ordinance standards also require exemptions in order to achieve the design vision for the “Whispering Coves” General Development Plan. The exemptions are noted below.

Exemptions to Subdivision Code		
Standard	Code Section	Details
Tangents: Minimum 100 ft between reverse curves on arterials and collectors	Sec. 14-1-72(p)	Exemption needed for Street A within the East 40, due to alignment of lots and wetland in this area.
Intersections: Intersections along collector streets shall be spaced no closer than 800 ft	Sec. 14-1-72(t)	Exemptions needed. Along Street A where intersection spacing is <100 feet: Street P (West condo area) Street D Street E Along Street A where intersection spacing is <200 feet between Street B and Street F
Cul-de-sacs and Dead Ends: Dead end streets require a turnaround of 120 ft and a roadway turnaround of 100 ft in diameter.	Sec. 14-1-70(i)	Hammerhead turnarounds are provided for the temporary dead ends, and at Street E (which may be permanent and has grading

		challenges but also has an effective emergency turnaround utilizing the nearby Street M cul-de-sac).
Block Length: 500 ft minimum / 1,200 ft maximum	Sec. 14-1-72(a)	Exemption needed for blocks exceeding 1,200 feet: Street B (west side only, edge of plat) Street F
Large Lots: Parcels that are 2x the minimum lot area shall be so arranged to permit re-dividing in accordance with zoning.	Sec. 14-1-73(j)	A handful of single-family lots are more than twice the minimum area due to coving layout and large yards; however these lots are not intended to be re-divided. (Lots in the East 40 may be further subdivided.)

Generally, the intent of the Planned Development District is to allow for flexibility in the City’s design standards to encourage and allow for innovation in land use development. The Planned Development District review criteria are intended to establish the most appropriate use of land and improve the character and quality of new development.

The variations from the standards that have been requested result from the following design objectives:

- Respecting the site’s existing topographical features and minimizing overall site grading, creating a more environmentally friendly neighborhood;
- Protecting the site’s existing environmental features, including wetland and wooded areas, by introducing a network of curvilinear roads and multi-use paths;
- Establish efficient use of land by double loading streets and minimizing the overall site paving; and
- Create a unique sense of place by providing open space amenities that are accessible and encourage social interaction.

The variations from the standards are needed based on the unique terrain and environmental features of the property. The varied terrain is the basis for the curvilinear street design and block layout, which seeks to minimize site grading and work with the land. The stormwater management needs of the development are also unique in that the closed basin requires a pumping and conveyance system to stabilize water levels within the ponds.

In addition, topographic conditions of the site combined with the City’s required connection points impact the street layout, particularly in the west end where adjacent lands contain rural residential lots that preclude the option of connecting through-streets. The proposed design seeks to balance infrastructure costs with developable lots by double-loading all streets where possible.

Except for the specific restrictions and exemptions described in this General Development Plan, the City Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances will regulate land uses and development within the “Whispering Coves” General Development Plan.