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August 2, 2017

City of Madison, Planning Commission
126 S. Hamilton Street
Madison, WI 53703
July 28, 2017

Dear City of Madison Planning Commission:

We, Friends of Lake Wingra, support six (6) draft strategies that were developed from the Imagine Madison outreach process (see Attachment A) and suggest that language supporting the concept of a “Heritage Plan” to protect the viewshed to and from Lake Wingra be included in the upcoming Comprehensive Plan. We believe these six strategies align with our mission and values as a nonprofit watershed group, particularly in this case to protect and preserve Lake Wingra’s history, views, and public access.

Lake Wingra’s limited development along its shoreline provides visitors with a nature escape in the heart of our city. One of our goals is protect and enhance this experience for future generations by maintaining its scenic views and character; which we consider our Heritage Plan concept. The six draft strategies we support provide a strong foundation for the Heritage Plan concept.

We are grateful for the City of Madison’s past support in protecting and improving the Lake Wingra watershed; for example, by adopting the Lake Wingra Watershed Management Plan. We are hopeful to expand our collaborative efforts beyond the health and quality of the watershed by taking steps together to protect the character and spirit of Lake Wingra.

As you review the six strategies we support, in Attachment A, we explain how we feel these strategies align with our “Heritage Plan” concept and why we believe they are important. Thank you for taking the time to review or comments!

Sincerely,

Ben Yahr, Chairman of the Board of Directors
Friends of Lake Wingra

Eric Kerlow Heritage Plan Spearhead – FoLW

Attachment A: Table Detailing Friends of Lake Wingra’s Support

ATTACHMENT A – TABLE DETAILING FRIENDS OF LAKE WINGRA’S SUPPORT

IMAGINE MADISON CATEGORY & STRATEGY	RELATED LAKE WINGRA HERITAGE PLAN CONCEPT IDEALS & GOALS	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
<p>Green & Resilient – Strategy 4 Improve public access to the lakes and seek opportunities to further protect shoreline areas.</p>	<p>Allow community members quick and easy access to outstanding scenic views and the protect the character of the Wingra watershed.</p>	<p>For a city of Madison’s size, it is rare to have a vista like Lake Wingra’s and we strive to preserve and protect this resource for all to enjoy. The neighborhoods surrounding Lake Wingra and Wingra Creek have varied demographics and increasing public access (e.g., continuous bike loop) could have the potential to connect communities and increase accessibility to different parts of the City.</p> <p>The concept of the Lake Wingra Heritage Plan provides a unique opportunity to enhance shoreline protection. The Wingra Watershed is considered an urbanized watershed; which alters the natural water flow and contributes sediments, excessive nutrients, road salt, and other pollutants. About half of the land use is residential neighborhoods and about 15% is commercial uses.</p>
<p>Green & Resilient – Strategy 2 Use parks and open spaces as a framework for development of an interconnected greenway, habitat, nature access, and path system.</p>	<p>Establish a Wingra Recreation Loop that keeps the lake to one side without man-made structures between the path and the lake.</p>	<p>Madison takes pride in being a leader for Bicycle Friendly Communities. We have many great trails, but Lake Wingra still does not have an identifiable or official bicycle loop. The lake is surrounded by excellent paths, like the Wingra Creek Path, the Arboretum, and Vilas Park Drive but a current, feasible continuous loop that allows cyclists to stay safe, near the lake, and enjoy its view does not exist. In our opinion, creating one would not only create an interconnected pathway to different parts of Madison, but enhance the path system and provide increased opportunities for nature access and improve wayfinding.</p>
<p>Form and Connectivity – Strategy 11 Encourage development that is consistent with adopted neighborhood plans, neighborhood development plans, and other adopted City plans.</p>	<p>With residents’ support and other city or neighborhood plan commitments we want to protect and enhance Lake Wingra’s natural viewshed.</p>	<p>Over the last three years, Friends of Lake Wingra has held numerous meetings with neighborhood organizations, City Alderman, and County Supervisors to discuss the Lake Wingra Heritage Plan concept. These meetings have been met with resounding support.</p> <p>The Heritage Plan is consistent with the spirit and message of the existing Greenbush, Midvale/Westmorland, Vilas, and Bay Creek neighborhood plans; and the Monroe Street Commercial District Plan.</p> <p>We also plan to work with the City to incorporate the Lake Wingra Heritage Plan concept, where appropriate, in its first-ever Historic Preservation Plan.</p>

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IMAGINE MADISON CATEGORY & STRATEGY	RELATED LAKE WINGRA HERITAGE PLAN CONCEPT IDEALS & GOALS	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
<p>Culture and Character – Strategy 2 Create and maintain historic districts and properties to preserve the special places that reflect our varied cultures and histories.</p> <hr/> <p>Culture and Character – Strategy 4 Identify and protect historically and culturally significant First Nations/Native American sites.</p>	<p>Protect Lake Wingra as a landmark and continue to ensure limited development occurs to respect and maintain its historical significance.</p>	<p>The land surrounding Lake Wingra has substantial Native American historical significance. In Wisconsin for its size, Lake Wingra has the largest number of prehistoric Indian earthworks in Wisconsin. On its shores existed 148 mounds, 69 remain now. Resolving to adopt and support the Lake Wingra Heritage Plan concept is one step forward in protecting and preserving these historical treasures.</p>
<p>Culture and Character – Strategy 9 Preserve defining views of the lakes, downtown skyline, and State Capitol.</p>	<p>Protect and enhance Lake Wingra’s natural viewshed.</p>	<p>In Madison, lakes are integral to the social and cultural fabric of our urban communities. We are fortunate to have so many, each with a unique personality. Unlike our other lakes, Lake Wingra still has minimal development surrounding it. It offers an escape; visitors can forget they are in the city. This is a rare attraction to be proud of and important to preserve as scientific research continues to highlight that spending time in nature decreases our stress, improves our health, and sharpens our thinking and memory.</p>