

Mike Heubsch, DOA Secretary
Cindy Torstveit, DFM Administrator
Summer Strand, DFD Administrator
101 E Wilson Street
Madison, WI 53703

December 8, 2014

Dear Secretary Heubsch and Administrators Torstveit and Strand:

The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) recently initiated RFP #505-004 to replace the aging Department of Transportation (DOT) Hill Farms facility located on Sheboygan Avenue in Madison, Wisconsin. The RFP scope includes the sale of surplus land at the site. Many present and future stakeholders are identified in the RFP; however, a community of stakeholders appears to have been overlooked. Located in the northwest corner of the Hill Farms site on less than one acre of land, the Sheboygan Avenue Community Garden has quietly flourished for more than 30 years!

The Sheboygan Avenue Community Garden respectfully requests a meeting with Departments of Facilities Management (DFM) and Facilities Development (DFD) Administrators, City of Madison entities, and Garden representatives to discuss parceling of the Garden site from the scope of RFP #505-004 to best serve general public interest. The meeting is requested as soon as possible, prior to the conclusion of the BAFO Evaluation and before the Letter of Intent is executed. Community stakeholders are prepared to discuss alternative funding to lease and/or purchase community garden space.

Per Building Commission Policy & Procedures Manual VIII.G.2, surplus property should be offered to other public bodies to determine if the general public interest can best be served by sale to another public body.

Per Wisconsin Legislative Council Legal Memorandum, Building Commission requires that, if state property is to be sold, state agencies should cooperate with local governments in sales arrangements in a manner which will lend support to local long-range planning and zoning ordinances.

Land use planning allows designated areas to be developed in specified ways. City of Madison support of the Sheboygan Avenue Community Garden has precedence as the 2008 Hill Farms Redevelopment Plan included a provision to maintain the existing Garden or relocate the Garden to a suitable location nearby with good sun, soil, and water.

The 2014 Hill Farms Neighborhood Master Plan proposes multiple, high-rise apartments and condominiums surrounding Hilldale which would significantly increase density and the demand for access to tillable soil/gardening space as would the currently proposed Hill Farms DOT Redevelopment.

Sheboygan Avenue Community Garden current demographics:

- Provides gardening space and additional benefits for more than 100 households:
 - More than 10 ethnic groups – cultural diversity and awareness
 - 45% apartment dwellers – access to green space, pesticide free
 - 40% low income – a means of independence
 - 30% over 55 years of age – source of community and social connection
- Inclusive: approximately 20% new gardeners each year
- Harvested fruits and vegetables are food sources for garden families – this produce is not for sale!
- Education: grade school field trips, graduate & undergraduate research, free educational sessions
- Outreach: Food Pantries, Plant a Row, New Garden Fund, Community Action Coalition events

Community gardens are a model of how neighbors of diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds can work together to increase cultural understanding, provide social support, and build trust for the benefit of the entire community. The Sheboygan Community Garden respectfully asks for open discussion and assistance to preserve the Garden.

Thank you for taking the time to read and respond to this letter. Your service to the State of Wisconsin is greatly appreciated. The Community Garden looks forward to hearing from you shortly.

Sincerely,

Cindy Statz, Garden Coordinator
Sheboygan Avenue Community Garden
coordinator@sheboygancommunitygarden.org
608-421-0277

cc: R.J. Binau, Mayor Soglin, District 11 Alder Chris Schmidt, Nan Fey, Mark Woulf, Matt Tucker