



**Hennepin County Public Works  
Strategic Planning & Resources Department**

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June 12, 2013

Ms. Hilary Dvorak  
City of Minneapolis  
250 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 300  
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Dear Ms. Dvorak:

On behalf of Hennepin County I am submitting the following comments to the Draft Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) Order for the East Village Development.

Per the May 13, 2013 notice in the Environmental Quality Monitor, the East Village Development AUAR review area includes the five-block area in downtown Minneapolis, with three blocks bounded by South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, South 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Chicago Avenue South, and the two additional blocks bounded by South 4<sup>th</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, South 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Park Avenue South.

There are two development scenarios proposed for study in the AUAR, both stated as consistent with the Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan. The notice also states that the park areas described in both the Maximum and Minimum Development Scenarios are consistent with the plaza/park plan proposed by the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority (MSFA) and being evaluated under the Minnesota Multi-Purpose Stadium EIS (Environmental Impact Statement).

While the County generally supports the visions of both the East Village Development described in the AUAR Order and by the MSFA, we are concerned about the significant effects from the various proposed roadway closures of both Park and Portland Avenues and 5<sup>th</sup> Street that are being discussed. Although it is not officially stated in the draft EIS or the AUAR Order, there have been proposals as part of the East Village Development which include permanent single-block closures of Park and Portland Avenues, which function as a one-way pair of minor arterial County roadways that provide important access. The closure of these roadways would result in a reduction in the network capacity, break in roadway connectivity, shift in transit routes, severing the bike network, and reduce the access and mobility for emergency vehicles and County services. The County does not support the complete closures of either Park or Portland Avenues.

All said, the County's main request at this time is for the AUAR to expand the traffic analysis beyond the described AUAR boundary to include the cumulative impacts from both the proposed East Village Development and the Multi-Purpose Stadium as far as Washington Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South, South 8<sup>th</sup> Street and I-35W. Expanding the scope of traffic analysis will provide a fuller understanding of the cumulative effects from both of these significant projects. We would also like to request the AUAR provide additional clarity into the proposed plaza/park regarding what scenarios are being considered for road closure (ie, partial/permanent/temporary closures).

I appreciate your consideration of Hennepin County comments at this time and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

  
David Jaeger  
Manager, Environmental Policy