

DRAFT

April 12, 2005

Mr. Brian Swanson
University of Minnesota
335 Morrill Hall
100 Church Street SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455

RE: Comments on the University of Minnesota Football Stadium Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) and Draft Scoping Decision Document (SDD)

Dear Mr. Swanson:

Attached are the EAW and SDD comments from the City of Minneapolis. These comments have been approved by the Transportation and Public Works Committee on April 19, 2005. The full City Council will take action to approve or modify these comments on April 29, 2005. If further changes are brought forward by the City, I will send you follow up correspondence.

The City of Minneapolis looks forward to its continued involvement in the University and its stadium efforts.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS

Jon Wertjes
Director of Traffic and Parking Services
Department of Public Works

Cc: Fabry, Abadi, Rae, Sheehy, Christenson, Sporlein, Bever

Attachment – City Comments dated April 12, 2005

DRAFT
Comments on University of Minnesota Football Stadium
EAW and Draft Scoping Document

City of Minneapolis

EAW COMMENTS

Description (pg 5)

- The project description in the EAW states that the stadium will include food service and concessions. The EIS should provide detail on the size and scope of these operations and note whether any retail and/or commercial space is being planned within the complex that would compete with existing businesses in the Stadium Village commercial district. The EIS should explain whether the food service and concessions are meant to be year-round businesses open to the public.
- The EAW states that the University proposes to construct a 50,000 seat football stadium. The EIS should note whether any other events or users are planned for the facility throughout the year, including frequency and duration.

Site Selection (pg 7)

- The last paragraph in this section (page 8) does not indicate that the site is currently used for public transportation purposes (streets, transitway, sidewalks, and trails) and public/private utility purposes (water, sewer, telephone, electricity, etc).
- The project proposes and describes a general stadium site location. Based on the EIS efforts and findings, it is anticipated that a more specific stadium location will be clearly defined to meet and mitigate any and all EIS findings. This is noted in the Scoping Decision Document - page 3, Modified Designs and Layouts but is not in the EAW or stated as potential outcome of the EIS.

Permits (pg. 9)

- **The City of Minneapolis also requires storm water and erosion & sediment control permits.**

Land Use (pg 9)

- The EAW states that the project will be compatible with surrounding community land uses and with the framework of the University of Minnesota Twin Cities Campus Master Plan. The EIS should note the project's compatibility and/or lack thereof with the City of Minneapolis' adopted small area plan for the SEMI lands that lay north of the proposed stadium site. Particular attention should be noted in the EIS how the proposed stadium relates to the infrastructure improvements noted in the SEMI Master Plan. Likewise, the EIS should explain the project's compatibility and/or lack thereof with the City of Minneapolis' comprehensive plan policies for University Avenue SE and the Stadium Village activity center.

Water Quality – Surface Water Runoff (pg 14)

- A storm water management plan will be needed to drain the site's storm water to the City's infrastructure. As such that plan should include rate control since the receiving water body is the Mississippi River.
- The EAW states that the EIS will not include a discussion of receiving water bodies as it relates to surface water runoff because this runoff will connect to the existing storm water system. The

proposed project anticipates that it will increase the number of acres of impervious surface and will therefore increase the amount of runoff generated. The EIS needs to discuss the effect both in terms of quality and increase that surface water runoff will have on the Mississippi River.

Traffic (pg 19)

- The EAW states that traffic generated by a 50,000 seat stadium is not expected to impact the regional highway system. The regional highway system as defined by the Metropolitan Council includes both freeway and arterials systems. For example, this would include University Avenue and other arterials. There will be impacts to the regional system, both freeways and arterials.
- Given that multiple events currently occur and in the future will occur simultaneously within the campus environment (Mariucci Arena, Williams Arena, etc.), traffic generated by the stadium must be analyzed in the EIS in conjunction with these other traffic generators in relation to the overall transportation system.
- 4th Street SE and University Avenue SE are both one-way arterial streets that operate as a pair to and from I-35W. The proposed stadium location will disrupt the function of the 4th and University pair, limiting traffic connection to I-35W, and placing greater pressure on other freeway access points (University Avenue SE to Highway 280, Huron to I-94). The limited points of access to the freeway system from the stadium location causes greater congestion. The EIS should explore stadium alternatives that do not disrupt the 4th and University pair, and an alternative providing for clockwise or other diverted traffic flows.
- The EAW states that parking for the stadium will be handled by current University parking facilities and that the University will seek to replace lost parking spaces on or near the site but does not anticipate a large increase or decrease in the total number of spaces available. Spillover parking in the surrounding neighborhoods of Marcy-Holmes, Prospect Park East River Road and Como is of great concern to residents. The EIS needs to specifically address the parking for the stadium in terms of number of spaces lost, number of spaces to be provided by existing facilities, the number of spaces to be replaced at the site and how spillover parking in the neighborhoods can be prevented or mitigated.
- The EAW for this section makes no mention of how the proposed stadium will be integrated with planned light rail (LRT) and/or bus rapid transit (BRT) for the Central Corridor between Minneapolis and St. Paul. The EIS should explore how a stadium and additional transit service can be integrated.
- The EAW for this section focuses solely on auto traffic. The EIS should explain how pedestrian and bicycle traffic systems will be carried out in conjunction with the increased auto traffic that will be generated by the proposed stadium.
- As part of the traffic related impacts, parking is a major concern near and around the stadium. Given the simultaneous events, adjacent land use needs plus the stadium's needs, a thorough analysis of the parking demand, supply and mitigation alternatives will be need to effectively address the subsequent traffic operational issues.

Vehicle-Related Air Emissions (pg 19)

- The proposed stadium location will disrupt the function of the 4th & University pair, limiting traffic connection to I-35W, and placing greater pressure on other freeway access points (University Avenue SE to Highway 280, Huron to I-94). The limited points of access to the freeway system from the stadium location causes greater congestion. Due the high arrival and departure of event traffic, it is anticipated that idling traffic will occur that may impact air quality. The EIS should include a full environmental air quality study to fully examine the effect of vehicle-related air emissions for the area.

Odors, Noise and Dust During Construction (pg 20)

- The EAW states that the University will work with surrounding businesses and communities to mitigate any construction noise impacts. Construction-related dust and odors will be controlled, at a minimum in accordance with the University's standard construction procedures and that the EIS will not include a discussion of odors, noise and dust during construction. The EIS should document the details of the University's best practices for the control and mitigation of construction-related odors, noise and dust.

Nearby Resources (pg 22)

- The EAW states that the historic Fire Station No. 19, which is directly adjacent to the proposed stadium site, will not be directly impacted by the proposed project. Also, the EAW states that no discussion of archaeological, historical, architectural resources; prime or unique farmlands; designated parks, recreation areas, or trails; scenic views and vistas; and other unique resources will be discussed in the EIS. The EIS should examine the effect that construction of the stadium and realignment of the road will have on Fire Station No. 19 and other unknown nearby resources.
- A pedestrian-bicycle trail currently exists (U of M Transitway Trail) on or near the site and a future connection (Dinkytown Trail) is planned and funded. The EIS should document trail impacts, mitigation and findings.

Compatibility With Plans and Land Use Regulations (pg 23)

- The EAW states that the stadium project is compatible with the University of Minnesota Twin Cities Campus Master Plan. The City of Minneapolis wants to ensure that the project does not conflict with the policies of the City's comprehensive plan, particularly with regard to University Avenue and Stadium Village and the adopted small area plan for the SEMI area to the north of the stadium site. The EIS should explain how the proposed stadium project is consistent or not with these two plans.

Cumulative Impacts (pg 24)

- The 2nd dot point indicates the SEMI planning efforts. Please correct this statement to denote this is beyond the planning stage and implementation has begun.
- The 11th dot point indicates the Pillsbury A-Mill EIS. Traffic Question 22 should account for the A-Mill project impacts.
- The EAW does not include a discussion of the impact on the Metrodome that will result due to the Gophers vacating their lease contract early. The EIS should explain in detail how the Metrodome will be affected by this early departure from the lease contract.

SCOPING DECISION DOCUMENT (Items not duplicated from above EAW comments)

See EAW comments.