



Request for City Council Committee Action
From the Department of Planning and Economic Development
Division of Planning

Date: 3/25/04

To: Council Member Gary Schiff, Chair, Zoning and Planning Committee, and Members of the Committee

Subject: Environmental Assessment Worksheet for the Bridge Place Condominium Project

Recommendation:

Based on the information in the file and in the attached "Findings" document, the City Council should conclude the following:

1. The attached "Findings" document and related documentation were prepared in compliance with the procedures of the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act and Minn. Rules, Parts 4410.1000 to 4410.1700 (1993).
2. The attached "Findings" document and related documentation have satisfactorily addressed all of the issues for which existing information could have been reasonably obtained.
3. The project does not have the potential for significant environmental effects.

Consequently, the City does not require the development of an Environmental Impact Statement for the project.

Previous Directives:

- On 8/18/03, the City Planning Commission approved the project.
- On 10/21/03, the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission approved the project.
- On 11/21/03, the City Council denied an appeal of the Planning Commission decision.

Prepared or Submitted by: J. Michael Orange, Principal Planner, Planning Division (612-763-2347, michael.orange@ci.minneapolis.mn.us)

Approved by: Barbara Sporlein, Planning Director

Presenters in Committee: Michael Orange

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget.
(If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)

Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget

Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget

Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase

Action requires use of contingency or reserves

Other financial impact (Explain):

Request provided to the Budget Office when provided to the Committee Coordinator

Community Impact: Resolved through public hearings and approvals (refer to Exhibits B and C in the attached "Findings" document).

Neighborhood Notification: Refer to Exhibits B and C in the attached "Findings" document

City Goals: In compliance

Comprehensive Plan: In compliance

Zoning Code: In compliance

Other: None

Background/Supporting Information Attached: "Findings of Fact and Record of Decision for the Environmental Assessment Worksheet for the Bridge Place Condominium Project," draft dated 5/25/04

FINDINGS OF FACT AND RECORD OF DECISION

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

For the Bridge Place Condominium Development

Location: 220 Second St. S. and 225 First St. N. in the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota

Responsible Governmental Unit: City of Minneapolis

Responsible Governmental Unit

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Proposed dates of adoption by the Minneapolis City Council April 2, 2004 and Approved by the Mayor (date)

I. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND RECORD OF DECISION

The City of Minneapolis prepared a mandatory Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for Bridge Place Condominium according to the Environmental Review Rules of the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) under Rule 4410.4300, subp. 31 Historical Places, demolition of a non contributing property listed on the National Register of Historic places or the State Register of Historic Places by its location within the Saint Anthony Falls Historic District. Exhibit A includes the project summary, and Exhibit B includes the Record of Decision.

II. EAW NOTIFICATION AND DISTRIBUTION

On January 30, 2002, the City caused the EAW to be published and distributed to the official EQB mailing list and to the City's official project mailing list. The EQB published notice of availability in the *EQB Monitor* on Monday, February 2, 2004. A notice was printed in the

StarTribune newspaper on February 8, 2004, regarding the availability of the EAW, and the public comment period. Exhibit C includes the public notification record.

III. COMMENT PERIOD AND RECORD OF DECISION

The comment period for this EAW was open from February 3, 2004 through March 3, 2004. During this period seven written comments were received. No other comments were received. Exhibit D includes the full text of the comment letters received. At its meeting on (April 25, 2004,) the Minneapolis Planning Commission's Committee of the Whole considered the EAW. The Zoning and Planning Committee of the Minneapolis City Council held a public meeting on the EAW and the draft of this "Findings of Fact and Record of Decision" document during its (April 25, 2004) meeting. Notification of these public meetings were distributed via the City's standard notification methods and to the official list of registered organizations, see Exhibit C Public Notification Record.

IV. SUBSTANTIVE COMMENTS RECEIVED AND RESPONSES TO THESE COMMENTS

The following section includes a summary of the seven written comments received. Comments on the EAW were received from George Carlson, Peter Zimpleman, the Minnesota State Historical Society, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, The Metropolitan Council and the Minnesota Department of Transportation. The City's response to the comment follows each summary. Exhibit D provides the complete written comment submitted by all respondents.

A. George L. Carlson, 110 Bank Street SE, Minneapolis, February 27, 2004

Mr. Carlson had several comments on the role of the Minneapolis City Planning Commission and the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission and how they conducted their review of the Project. The decisions and recommendations of the Commissions were appealed to the Minneapolis City Council where these concerns were heard and discussed, and after review and deliberation the City Council denied the appeal of the Commission's decisions and approved the Project. Since these comments are not determinative if the Project has the potential for significant environmental effects, they are simply noted for the record.

Comment 1. The Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) is neither accurate nor complete with regard to compatibility with plans and land use regulations, item 27.

Response. The EAW was accurate and complete in its discussion of the compatibility of the Project with applicable plans and regulations. The EAW identified all plans and regulations in Section 27 and Section 8. The discussion of compatibility of the development with its surrounding development and its consistency with the comprehensive plan is addressed in the Minneapolis City Planning Staff Report dated August 18, 2003, beginning on page 3 of that Report, specifically in the analysis of findings 2 and 5. The staff recommendation (page 4)

finding “This proposal is consistent with the comprehensive plan” was confirmed by specific actions of the City Planning Commission and the Minneapolis City Council granting the requested Conditional Use Permit that was the subject of that analysis. This finding and these documents were incorporated by reference into this EAW at “Public meetings” in section 27 and in section 31.

Comment 2. The Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) is neither accurate nor complete with regard to its discussion of nearby resources, item 25.

Response. The EAW was accurate and complete in its discussion of the compatibility of the Project in its discussion of nearby resources. In addition to the general review of the City Planning Commission, the height and design of the project were specially reviewed by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission. Nearby resources in the St. Anthony Falls Historic District were discussed in the Staff Investigation and Report dated August 5, 2003 through the report of October 15, 2003. The character of the nearby resources is described in part D. Findings, of that report. These findings are reproduced as part of the response to the Minnesota Historical Society. The height and other impacts of the Project on the surrounding nearby resources, and compatibility with the Historic District were the subject of testimony before the HPC, discussion by its members, and action by the Commissioners and the City Council finding the Project appropriate at this site. This finding and these documents were incorporated by reference into this EAW at “Historic resources” in section 25 and in section 31.

Comment 3. Proper Notice was not provided of the City’s review process.

Response. Notification of all meetings and hearings was distributed via the City’s standard notification methods and to the official list of registered organizations.

B. Peter Zimpleman, La Rive Condominium Resident, March 3, 2004

Mr. Zimpleman noted his frustration with the nature of the process and outcome of the City’s review of the Project.

Response. Noted for the record.

C. Britta Bloomberg, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Minnesota Historical Society, March 3, 2004

Comment 1. Section 25a of the EAW does not include information on the nature of the area’s historic resources, the impacts on those resources, and the potential measures to avoid or mitigate adverse effects.

Response. The EAW, by reference to the City’s record of the decision process, provided information on the nature of the area’s historic resources, the impacts on those resources, and the potential measures to avoid or mitigate adverse effects. The Saint Anthony Falls Historic District Regulations adopted by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission in June of 1980 recognizes the variety in the nature of the area’s historic resources and divides the District into

eleven sub-areas that contain structures with common features and that share common concerns. The potential impacts of this project in this subarea of the District, and the appropriate mitigation measures, were discussed at the initiation. when the HUD building was to be preserved and reused, and at the conclusion the review of the Project in the “Findings” and “Staff Recommendation” sections of the August 5, 2003, and the October 15, 2003 Heritage Preservation Commission staff investigation and reports on the Project. The concluding, October 15 report, made the following findings about the Project and recommended the listed mitigation measures:

D. FINDINGS:

1. The property located at 220 South Second Street / 225 South First Street is a non-contributing property to the St. Anthony Falls Historic District. The HUD Building is considered a non-contributing property due to its date of construction and architectural design.
2. The property is located in the South First Street subarea of the historic district. The design guidelines for this subarea only addresses changes to the Post Office, they do not specifically address the design of new construction across First Street. For this reason, the proposed building must be reviewed for its compliance with the purposes and general regulations described in the *St. Anthony Falls Historic District Guidelines*.
3. The South First Street subarea is bounded by Hennepin Avenue, South Second Street, Third Avenue South and the river. The blocks bounded by First and Second streets, Hennepin and Third Avenue have lost most of their historic context and character. The current buildings in this area are generally modern, high rise residential buildings that range from 16 to 32 stories in height. These buildings do not relate to the nearby historic buildings in regards to siting, height, proportions of facade, massing, materials, details, nature of openings, and colors.
4. The proposed parking structure and four-story base of the proposed tower will be approximately the same height as the five-story Courtyard Hotel that is located kitty corner from the site, next to the Milwaukee Road Depot. However, they will be taller than the surrounding historic buildings, including the Post Office Annex located across First Street, the Hall and Dann Barrel Company Factory (Mill Place) located across Third Avenue and the Old Federal Building that is located across Second Street. They will also be approximately 26’ taller than the Rivergate Parking Ramp that is located directly to the property to the west
5. Although the proposed parking structure and four-story base of the tower will be slightly taller than the adjacent historic buildings, they will be shorter than the historic buildings that stood on this site during the period of significance for the historic district. Consequently, the height of the parking structure and the base of the tower are acceptable.

6. The four-story base of the tower and the parking structure comply with the general regulations for the historic district in terms of siting, height, proportions of facade, walls of continuity, rhythm of projections, directional emphasis, materials, texture, roof shapes, details, and color.

7. Along First Street, the tower will be setback 27'. This setback will disengage the tower from the base of the building and will allow the base the tower to read as a four-story building along First Street, which will allow the historic buildings along First Street to maintain their visual prominence.

8. One of the purposes of new construction as outlined in the *St. Anthony Falls Historic District Guidelines* is to “foster along the riverfront and adjacent areas a viable community geared to the pedestrian.” Furthermore, the guidelines require infill construction to be visually compatible with historic buildings in terms of nature of openings. The absence of windows on the second and third floors of the four-story base of the tower will create an unfriendly pedestrian environment along First Street. Moreover, the absence of windows on the second and third floor is not compatible with the architectural character of the historic buildings in the area that have windows on every floor. Windows should be added to the second and third stories of the four-story base of the tower.

9. The height, scale, and massing of the proposed tower is not compatible with the historic buildings in the area. The proposed building will be between 120' and 140' taller than the Churchill Building which is currently the tallest building in the South First Street subarea of the St. Anthony Falls Historic District. However, given the height and scale of the existing high-rise buildings in the area bounded by Hennepin Avenue, Third Avenue, and First and Second streets, the proposed 39-story building, will not have any greater an adverse affect on the historic district than the existing 16 to 32 story buildings in this subarea of the historic district.

10. A building with of this height, scale, and massing would not be appropriate in other subareas of the St. Anthony Falls Historic District.

11. The proposed storefront awnings comply with the guidelines for awnings in terms of location, number, materials, and installation.

12. The proposed surface applied individual letter sign is not an allowed sign type. Additionally, the size and height of the proposed sign exceeds the maximum size and heights allowed for wall signs. However, the proposed sign is acceptable in this instance because it will be installed on a new building, it will not materially impair any historic fabric, and the sign will fit the size and scale of its proposed location.

13. The metal railings in the cornice of the parking structure are not compatible with the architectural character of the historic buildings in the South First Street subarea of the historic district, which have solid cornices and parapets.

E. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the HPC adopt staff findings and approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed project subject to the following conditions:

1. The top of the building/penthouse must be clad with precast concrete. Plaster and EIFS are not acceptable exterior cladding materials.
2. Except for the spandrel glass between floors on the tower and the frosted glass on the exterior of the parking ramp, the door and window glazing must be clear, non-tinted, non-reflective glass.
3. Windows must be added to the second and third stories of the four-story base of the tower.
4. The railings proposed for the cornice of the parking structure are not approved. The cornice must be a continuous band of concrete.
5. The townhouses located on the roof of the parking structure must be setback 11' from the west property line.
6. The trees and all other vegetation on the roof deck of the parking structure must be setback so that they are not visible from the street.
7. Only the building identification sign on the porte cochere is approved. Any additional signage will require additional approvals.
8. The building identification sign cannot flash or be animated in any way.
9. The awnings must comply with the shape requirements for awnings that are listed in the *Design Guidelines for On-Premise Signs and Awnings* and the HPC staff must approved the final shape for the awnings.
10. The awnings must be attached the door and window frames. Additionally, the awnings cannot be cannot be illuminated.
11. The HPC staff must approve the final building materials, the exterior light fixtures and the colors for the building.
12. The HPC staff must approved the final construction plans for the project.

This information, and the flow of the public testimony and comment and Commission and Council discussion and response, is found in the reports and hearing records of the HPC consideration of the Project. These documents were incorporated by reference at "Historic resources" in sections 25 and 31. A complete copy this record will be provided to the Minnesota Historical Society upon their request.

Comment 2. The HUD building, as a non-contributing element of the Historic District may be removed as long as it was not a federal building and no funding, permitting or licensing by the federal government is involved.

Response. While the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development was for a time a tenant in the building this was never a federal building and no funding, permitting or licensing by the federal government is involved in the Project. We note the concurrence with the decision of the HPC the building may be demolished, see above Finding 1.

Comment 3. Information should be prepared and evaluated to determine whether the block included potentially significant archaeological materials and to determine whether and archaeological survey of the parcel should be completed in advance of the construction.

Response. The proposer will, as an additional condition of final permit approval, initiate and provide this information expanding the information of Section 9 of the EAW to the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission and the Minnesota Historical Society for their evaluation

Comment 4. The height of the proposed building is problematic, and will be out of character with the historic district as a whole.

Response. The potential impact of the height of the Project was problematic throughout the process of public review and approval the Project, see HPC staff findings 5, 9 and 10 above on the role of the subareas identified in the 1980 District Regulations, and the compliance of the Project with the City's plans and regulations. The height of the Project was discussed in testimony at public hearings and incorporated into the findings and approvals by the City Council, City Planning Commission and Heritage Preservation Commission. This public record of consideration of these impacts and their resolution was incorporated by reference in this EAW in sections 25 and 27 and 31.

Comment 5. The MHS concurs with the HPC recommendations and conditions on the importance of detailing the base of the building.

Response. Compliance with HPC conditions is a condition of final permit approval

Note: The St. Anthony Falls Historic District is not locally designated as reported in Section 25 of the EAW. However, the HPC has design review control over the St. Anthony Falls Historic District pursuant to the Minnesota Historic District Act of 1971 as amended.

D. Kathleen Wallace, Regional Director, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, March 3, 2004

The DNR comment letter contained a section providing the purposes and goals of the designation of the Mississippi River Critical Area Corridor as background for their specific comments. This background on the purpose and goals of the designation are noted for the record.

Comment 1. Item No. 8. The notice to the DNR and the subsequent November 12, 2003, comment from the DNR to the Zoning and Planning Committee on this project was not initiated by notice by the City as stated in section 8 of the EAW, but by contact with the DNR by a party who appealed the City Commission's approvals of the Project.

Response. Noted for the record

Comment 2. Item No 14. The EQB, the predecessor oversight agency prior to the DNR, not the DNR, approved the City's current adopted Critical Area Plan in 1989.

Response. Noted for the record

Comment 3, also to Item No. 14. "The proposal to replace a three-story structure with a structure 450 feet in height and a parking area does not comply with the required guidelines for areas within the Urban Diversified District in the Mississippi River Corridor..."

Response. The proposed height of the Project is consistent and permitted by the City's adopted Critical Area Plan and regulations implementing the guidelines of the Urban Diversified District in the City of Minneapolis. Exception to the guidelines for maximum height in the Urban Diversified District of the Critical Area Corridor for the area of the Corridor in downtown Minneapolis has been part of the City's plans and regulations since the designation of the Corridor in 1976. Both of the City's first two Critical Area plans, adopted in 1979 and 1989, and provided to the Environmental Quality Board, the then oversight agency, contained polices specifically exempting the area of the Minneapolis Central Riverfront from the height regulations of the Urban Diversified District. The policies of these plans are implemented by section 551.710 of the City's zoning ordinance:

ARTICLE VIII. MR MISSISSIPPI RIVER CRITICAL AREA OVERLAY DISTRICT

551.710. Height of structures. The maximum height of all structures within three hundred (300) feet of the Mississippi River or the landward extent of the floodplain of the Mississippi River, whichever is greater, and within one hundred (100) feet of the top of a bluff, shall be two and one-half (2.5) stories or thirty-five (35) feet, whichever is less. *The height limitations shall not apply to the central riverfront between Plymouth Avenue North and I-35W, or the east bank from First Avenue Northeast to Central Avenue. (emphasis added)* The height limitations of principal structures may be increased by conditional use permit, as provided in Chapter 525, Administration and Enforcement. In addition to the conditional use standards contained in Chapter 525 and this article, the city planning commission shall consider, but not be limited to, the following factors when determining maximum height:

- (1) Access to light and air of surrounding properties.
- (2) Shadowing of residential properties or significant public spaces.
- (3) The scale and character of surrounding uses.

(4) Preservation of views of landmark buildings, significant open spaces or water bodies.

The 1979 Plan defined an area on both sides of the River for exception from height regulation. In the 1989 Minneapolis Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area Plan, July, 1989, Section II Development and Protection, A. Land Use, Policy 2 Building Height Limits, a. “Building height limitations are appropriate in all parts of the City except in and around Downtown”, provides the policy basis for the definition of “in and around downtown” in the City’s Zoning Code.

A November 30, 1999, DNR Memorandum from Steve Johnson, River Management Supervisor to Sandy Fecht, MNRRA Hydrologist, with the subject “Structure Height in the Mississippi River Critical Area” addressed the height issue, and closed by noting “Feel free to distribute this to communities and citizens in the corridor as appropriate”. In that memo (page 4) Johnson noted:

“In looking at the values we’re directed to protect, I can envision waiving the structure height limits in the immediate downtown areas of Minneapolis and St. Paul, since none of those values exist any longer and additional tall structures would blend instantly with the existing landscape. That is not true, however, for the rest of the Critical Area corridor, including the areas immediately across from the two downtowns”

Johnson goes on to accept the Metropolitan Council’s definition of downtown Minneapolis as between Plymouth Avenue to I 35W on the River’s right descending bank.

Bridge Place is located in a part of the Mississippi River Critical Area Corridor that has since the designation of the Corridor been recognized in adopted plans, City ordinance, and comment by DNR staff as appropriate for an exception waiving any general height restrictions in the Corridor.

Comment 4, also to Item No. 14. Implementation of the City Zoning Code’s six-story/84 feet maximum height for the Downtown Height Overlay District would go a long way toward meeting the intent of Executive Order 79-19.

Response. As part of the 1999 adoption of the revised zoning code, the boundaries of the Downtown Height Overlay District were carefully mapped. The Project, and the surrounding blocks, were located outside the area mapped for inclusion in the Downtown Height Overlay District. The comment is noted for the record.

Comment 4., Item No. 17. Consider the use of a “green roof”.

Response. Noted for the record

Comment 5., Item No 21. Recommendation the proposed development include a parking plan and assessment of the entire area to ensure parking will be adequate for the proposed White Water Park Recreational Facility.

Response. The parking demand for this project will have no adverse impact on the parking availability in this part of downtown. The Project will include 420 off street parking spaces to serve 283 residences. Thirty three on street spaces directly adjacent to the Project will also be available for use by visitors. The parking study and analysis prepared for the Project and reported in section 21 of the EAW found “Parking provided by the project parking ramp and available on street substantially exceeds the expected parking demand”.

The potential parking demand for Mississippi White Water Park, proposed to be located along the east bank of the River at the Falls, is discussed in the “Mississippi White Water Park Design Report Outline, June 30, 1999”. This report is available on the DNR web site. Parking demand is discussed in Section 9, Operations, specifically Section 9.A.1.4 Parking Demand. In this section, Table 10-2-Parking estimate, provides “a rough guess of the parking requirements for the course”. Table 10-2 estimates daily parking demand for tubers, private boaters and fishermen ranges from 30 spaces to 161 spaces, of which 56 spaces will be provided on site. The peak parking demand will be generated by on-shore spectators for small special events, 333 spaces, and large special events, 1667 spaces. When the Park is developed and open, participants and spectators will have access to public and private parking as part of St. Anthony Main, on the east bank, and, via the connection of the Stone Arch Bridge, parking on the downtown side of the River. This parking meets the demand for the thousands of spaces used for a Twins or Vikings event. The issue of parking for spectators may be more of an issue of scheduling rather than space. If large and small spectator events can be scheduled for evenings and weekends, and can avoid conflicts with Vikings and Twins, or other Dome events, the parking that serves the much larger Dome events will be available to serve events at the Park.

5. Item No. 25. A 450-foot tall structure only one block from the river, towering significantly higher than existing lower structures would have a significant impact on the scenic resources of the Corridor and would not preserve, enhance or create views from the River.

Response. This will not be the case. From the River the Post Office building is in the foreground and blocks any view of the base of the project, and the top of the project is part of the background of the tall buildings that create the downtown Minneapolis skyline, including the 775 ft tall IDS Center building, with the Project blending into the landscape of these very tall buildings.

This potential impact was fully and completely noted, recognized, analyzed and discussed, considered by the public, staff, and City appointed and elected officials of the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission, the City Planning Commission, and the City Council, as part of the City’s review and hearings on the Project. The public record of consideration of these impacts and their resolution was incorporated by reference in this EAW in sections 25 and 27 and 31.

F. Kelly Garvey, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, March 4, 2002

Comment. The MPCA has chosen to not review this EAW, and therefore has no specific comments. This decision does not constitute a waiver by the MPCA of any pending permits

required by the MPCA. It is the responsibility of the project proposer to secure any required permits and to comply with the permit conditions.

Response. Noted for the record

G. Phyllis Hanson, Metropolitan Council, February 27, 2004

Comment 1. Item 8. Sanitary sewer service connection plans for the project will need to be submitted to both the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services Municipal Services staff for review and issuance of a construction permit before connection can be made to either the municipal or metropolitan wastewater disposal system.

Response. Noted for the record.

Comment 2. Item 17. Council staff encourages the City to work with the developer to incorporate stormwater detention and reuse technology into the proposed project to minimize the frequency and volume of stormwater runoff discharges from the site.

Response. Noted for the record.

H. Brigid Gombold, Minnesota Department of Transportation, March 2, 2004

Comment. Two access permits from MNDOT will be required for the entrance and exit onto TH. 65 (Third Avenue).

Response. Noted for the record.

V. ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN THE EAW

The EAW identified and discussed three issues. First. Compatibility with plans and land use regulations. This has been resolved by City determinations, and was the subject of public comment. Second, potential traffic congestion. This issue was addressed by a specific traffic analysis which identified no significant potential for congestion, and therefore assumed conformance with air quality standards. The Project will also be regulated by a "Travel Demand Management Plan" for the Project which will be reviewed and approved by the City. No comments were received on this issue. The final issue was surface water quality. The DNR commented on this issue and asked for additional green space, especially that a "green roof" be considered at this site.

VI. COMPARISON OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS WITH EVALUATION CRITERIA

In deciding whether a project has the potential for significant environmental effects and whether an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is needed, the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board rules (4410.1700 Subp. 6 & 7) require the responsible governmental unit, the City in this case, to compare the impacts that may be reasonably expected to occur from the project with four criteria by which potential impacts must be evaluated. The following is that comparison:

A. Type, Extent, and Reversibility of Environmental Effects

The loss by demolition of the “HUD” building, which was the reason for the preparation of this EAW, is not a significant environmental effect as determined by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission and confirmed by the comment of the Minnesota Historical Society. The EAW provided a specific studies of the potential traffic and parking impacts for the Project and found no potential impact, and the consultant concluded the trips from the Project will not cause a violation of air quality standards; the potential impacts of the height of the Project were analyzed by City staff and deliberated on by City Commissions and the City Council and no potential for significant environmental effects at this site were recognized; standard construction techniques, similar to those used in other similar projects in downtown will be used and regulated by City ordinances and any impacts will be non persistent; the project is consistent with and implements City Plans and regulations; mitigation of the design has been accomplished through the HPC process and conditions of approval; all limiting the potential for significant environmental effects of the Project.

B. Cumulative Effects of Related or Anticipated Future Projects

The construction of another high density residential development in this district does not create a precedent or environment for future projects. The Project is not a stage of a subsequent project and is not connected to any other development; City plans and regulations anticipate and permit the Project on this site; the traffic and parking study assumed and anticipated growth in traffic and parking demand in downtown, and incorporated these assumptions into its findings; all limiting the potential for significant cumulative or unanticipated environmental effects from the Project.

C. Extent to Which the Environmental Effects are Subject to Mitigation by Ongoing Public Regulatory Authority

As part of the public review of the Project a number of conditions to mitigate any potential significant environmental effects were offer and required and their implementation is a condition of approval for all permits that will allow construction of the Project. And, as part of the EAW process another condition, the assessment of whether the block has significant archaeological materials, has been added, and the requirement for additional permits have been placed as a condition of approval. The City has the process, authority, competence and staff to assure these conditions are fulfilled.

D. Extent to which Environmental Effects Can be Anticipated and Controlled as a Result of other Environmental Studies Undertaken by Public Agencies or the Project Proposer, or of Environmental Reviews Previously Prepared on Similar Projects.

The construction of another large multi story residential building in the center of a central city follows many precedents, and is known event with known impacts.

VII. DECISION ON THE NEED FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Based on the EAW and the above analysis, the City of Minneapolis, the responsible governmental unit (RGU) for this environmental review, concludes the following:

1. The EAW and related documentation were prepared in compliance with the procedures of the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act and Minn. Rules, Parts 4410.1000 to 4410.1700.
2. The EAW and related documentation have satisfactorily addressed all of the issues for which existing information could have been reasonably obtained.
3. The project does not have the potential for significant environmental effects.

Consequently, the City has determined that the EAW is adequate and that the City does not require the development of an EIS for the project.

3/18/04

Exhibits:

- A. Project Description
- B. Record of Decision
- C. Public notification record
- D. Comment letters
- E. Council/Mayor action

EXHIBIT A Project Description

Develop a 283-unit, 39-story condominium building served by 420 (298 new) parking spaces and 3,000 sf. of retail at 3rd Avenue and 2nd Street in the St. Anthony Falls Historic District in downtown Minneapolis, replacing a three-story, vacant, office building constructed in 1979 and a 61 space surface parking lot.

The project site is located in downtown Minneapolis. It occupies the southeast two-fifths of the block bounded by Second Avenue South on the northwest, First Street South on the northeast,

Third Avenue South on the southeast, and Second Street South on the southwest. The long axis of the building will face Third Avenue South. See Attachment C.

The project site is currently occupied by the vacant HUD Building, an office structure with 61 underground parking spaces, and an adjoining surface parking lot containing 61 parking spaces. Adjacent to the site on the same block is the Rivergate Apartments, a 269-unit, 16-story, rental apartment development.

The proposed development involves the construction of a 283-unit, 39-story condominium building with six levels of enclosed parking. Of the 283 dwelling units, 276 will be located in the condominium building and 7 will be located in a two-story townhome building located over the parking structure. The townhome building is connected to the condominium building via an internal hallway. Amenities within the building include a clubhouse, an outdoor rooftop deck, a pool, and guest suites.

The proposed tower will be set on a four-story base that generally ranges from 53 feet (“ft.”) to 62 ft. in height depending on the location. The base of the building will be built out to the property line on First Street South, but will be set back along Third Avenue South. The base of the building will have a tripartite form with a defined base, shaft, and capital. This part of the building will have a reddish-brown brick exterior; gray, rusticated, precast concrete piers; and limestone colored, precast concrete cornice and trim. Large windows will be located in each bay. The windows will have black prefinished metal frames and frosted glass glazing. See Attachment D – Elevation-First Street South

Two stories of the enclosed parking will be underground; four will be above ground. The parking portion of the development will contain approximately 420 parking spaces, an increase of 298 spaces over the current uses. The main entry and exit to the parking will be off Second Street South. A secondary parking entrance will be off the lobby pull-in on Third Avenue South. The loading entrance is off First Street South.

Conventional construction techniques will be used to build the project. Work is expected to commence in March of 2004 with demolition of the HUD Building. Site excavation will follow in July of 2004. Construction will commence simultaneously with site excavation and will last until approximately December of 2005. Occupancy will occur in the first half of 2006.

EXHIBIT B

Record of Decision

Environmental Review Record for the Bridge Place Condominium Development Environmental Assessment Worksheet

CHRONOLOGY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROCEDURES OF THE MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

DATE ITEM

1/30/04	City staff distributes EAW to official EQB mailing list and Official project list.
2/02/04	Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) publishes notice of availability in <i>EQB Monitor</i> . 30-day comment period commences.
3/3/04	End of EAW public comment period.
3/25/04	City staff present EAW to City Planning Commission (CPC), Committee of the Whole.
3/25/04	Zoning and Planning Committee (Z & P), City Council, consider "Findings of Fact and Record of Decision" report.
4/2/04	City Council approves Z & P Committee recommendation and makes a finding of Negative Declaration: EAW is adequate and no EIS is necessary.
date	Mayor approves Council action regarding EAW via Early Signature process. City publishes notice of Council/Mayor decision in <i>Finance and Commerce</i> . Moratorium on issuance of final permits lifted.
date	City publishes and distributes Notice of Decision and final "Findings" report to official EAW mailing list.
date	EQB publishes Notice of Decision in <i>EQB Monitor</i> .

EXHIBIT C

Public Notification Record

The following describes the public notification process of the Planning Division for the Bridge Place Condominium Development EAW

1. The City maintains a updated list based on the Official EQB Contact List, expanded to include local officials. The list used for the Bridge Place EAW, dated 3/3/2004, follows. All persons on that list were sent copies of the EAW. The Planning Division also distributes copies of the EAW via interoffice mail to elected and appointed officials.
2. Parties known to be interested in this project or requesting a copy of the EAW. For the Bridge Place EAW, those provided copies of the EAW were:

Mr. Alan Joles
 Director of Community Planning and Development
 Department of Housing and Urban Development
 Kinard Financial Center Suite 1300
 920 Second Avenue S.
 Minneapolis, MN 55420

George Carlson
 110 Bank Street - # 90
 Minneapolis, MN 55414

George Rosenquist
 121 Washington Avenue S
 Minneapolis, Mn 55401

John Livingston
 121 Washington Avenue S.
 Minneapolis, MN 55401

3. A notice of the availability of the Bridge Place EAW, the dates of the comment period, and the process for receiving a copy of the EAW and/or providing comment was:
 - a. Published in the EQB Monitor on February 2, 2004
 - b. Provided to the city's Communications/Public Affairs office for notice and distribution.
 - c. Published in the Minneapolis Star Tribune on February 2, 2004

4. A copy of the proposed Findings of Fact and Record of Decision for the Bridge Place EAW and a notice of the Zoning & Planning Committee Meeting where it will be considered was sent to the expanded Official EQB contact list and to those who had provided written comment on the EAW.

5. After the City Council acts on the environmental review, the Planning Division distributes the results of the decision and the final document to the Official EQB Contact List.

EXHIBIT D

Comment Letters

1. George Carlson
2. Peter Zimpleman
3. Minnesota Historical Society
4. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
5. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
6. Metropolitan Council
7. Minnesota Department of Transportation

EXHIBIT E

Council/Mayor Action