

**DRAFT  
FINDINGS OF FACT  
AND  
RECORD OF DECISION**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET  
for  
Abbott Northwestern Hospital Campus Expansion Project**

**Location: Bound on the north by 26<sup>th</sup> Street, on the west by Chicago Avenue,  
on the east by 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and is ½ block north of the 29<sup>th</sup> Street Midtown  
Greenway in Minneapolis, Minnesota**

**Responsible Governmental Unit:  
City of Minneapolis**

**Responsible Governmental Unit**

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## **I. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND RECORD OF DECISION**

A mandatory Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) was prepared for the above named project according to the Environmental Review Rules of the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) under Rule 4410.4300, Subp. 14.B (4). The City of Minneapolis is the Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU). Exhibit B includes the Record of Decision.

## **II. EAW NOTIFICATION AND DISTRIBUTION**

On May 27, 2001, the City caused the mandatory EAW to be published and distributed to the official EQB mailing list and to the official project mailing list. The EQB Monitor published notice of availability on that same date. The City caused a notice to be printed in the Star Tribune newspaper on May 24, 2002 regarding the availability of the EAW and the public comment period. Exhibit C includes the public notification record.

## **III. COMMENT PERIOD, PUBLIC MEETING, AND RECORD OF DECISION**

The City held a public comment meeting on June 19, 2002. One individual from the public attended and provided comments. Three letters were received on the EAW (refer to Exhibit D for the written comments). At its meeting on May 30, 2002, the Committee of Whole of the Minneapolis Planning Commission considered the EAW. The Zoning and Planning Committee of the Minneapolis City Council will hold a public meeting on the EAW and the draft of this "Findings of Fact and Record of Decision" document during its July 16, 2002 meeting. Notification of these public meetings were distributed via the City's standard notification methods and to the official list of registered organizations (refer to Exhibit C). The Committee will forward the recommendation at the meeting and the City Council and Mayor may give final approval on July 26, 2002 (refer to Exhibit E).

#### **IV. SUBSTANTIVE COMMENTS RECEIVED AND RESPONSES TO THESE COMMENTS**

The following sections include the substantive comments received and City responses to those comments (refer to Exhibit D for the written comments).

##### **A. Minnesota Historical Society, May 31, 2002**

The Minnesota Historical Society has reviewed the EAW and had the following comments:

**Comment:** The survey report produced by Minnesota Historical Society concludes that the area of potential effect for the proposed childcare center includes one historic property that meets National Register criteria: the Goodlund Rowhouse at 733-739 East 27<sup>th</sup> Street. We agree with the conclusion that construction of the center will not affect the historical characteristics of this property. Therefore, we conclude that the proposed childcare center will not affect any properties that are listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The report indicates that planning is underway for a larger campus expansion project in the area. We note that this letter only addresses the Section 106 review requirements for the proposed childcare center. The report and this letter do not address historic resource issues for the larger project area.

**Response:** So noted for the record.

##### **B. Minnesota Department of Transportation, May 31, 2002**

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) staff reviewed the EAW for this project and had the following comments:

**Comment:** The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) staff reviewed the EAW for this project and has no comments, as the proposed project should have little or no impact on Mn/DOT's highway system.

**Response:** So noted for the record.

##### **C. Metropolitan Council; Eli Cooper, Director, Planning and Growth Management; June 19, 2002**

The staff review finds that the EAW is complete and accurate with respect to regional concerns and raises no major issues of consistency with Council policies. An EIS is not necessary for regional purposes. However, staff does have the following comments:

**Comment:** The Midtown Greenway is a designated Regional Trail, connecting the Minneapolis Chain of Lake Regional Park with the Mississippi Gorge Regional Park. The proposed parking garage will be adjacent to the regional trail. The design and landscaping of this part of the project should provide a safe, convenient and attractive connection between the trail and the hospital campus. Having office or other uses that include windows overlooking the trail will provide a more attractive work environment overlooking the Greenway for employees. Having people instead of cars overlooking the Greenway will also be more attractive for trail users, as well as providing some additional safety for trail users. The location and the design of the driveway entrances to the ramp should be carefully considered so that they are not barriers to the connection between the campus and the trail. Bike racks / storage should be provided for employees that commute to work on the trail and from other places.

The EAW states that no adverse impacts are anticipated on the Midtown Greenway. The Abbott Northwestern Hospital Campus expansion should be designed so that there are positive impacts on the Greenway and that it is an amenity for the campus to be adjacent

The EAW should, but does not, address the visual impact of the proposed garage on the Midtown Greenway. The design of the garage and associated landscaping should be accomplished in such a way as to enhance the visual impacts from the Greenway.

**Response:** As a part of the City's normal process for zoning permits, the Planning Department and the Minneapolis City Planning Commission (CPC) will review development plans to determine compliance with the standards of the Minneapolis Zoning Code, specifically, Chapter 530, Site Plan Review. Planning staff and the CPC will evaluate the plans using standards that apply to building placement and facades, access and circulation, landscaping and screening, as well as site context, lighting and glare, and crime prevention through environmental design. Planning staff and the CPC will evaluate how the development plans are consistent with the standards of the city's comprehensive plan and other, approved small area development plans.

**Comment:** Sanitary sewer service connection plans for the proposed project will need to be submitted to the Metropolitan Council Environmental Service Municipal Services staff for review, comment and issuance of a construction permit before connection revisions can be made to either the municipal or metropolitan wastewater disposal system.

**Response:** So noted for the record.

**Comment:** Before the expansion is approved, all the buildings on the campus should be inspected to assure that there are no existing rain leaders that allow precipitation runoff to enter the sanitary sewer system.

**Response:** All previously combined roof drains have been separated.

**Comment:** The EAW notes that the areas involved in the proposed expansion are already substantially impervious surfaces and that the proposed project will increase the amount of impervious surface by a “minimal” amount, and that the city will require a Storm Water Management Plan for the project. The proposed expansion will add to the impervious surface on the site and likely result in more storm water being directed to the Mississippi.

**Response:** A stormwater management plan is required to be reviewed and approved by the City of Minneapolis. A removal rate of 70 percent of suspended oils will be attained, consistent with the city’s requirement.

**Comment:** Staff recommends that the city require the project to substantially reduce surface water runoff from the project area. The plans should include innovative storm water management techniques. The Council’s web site provides some examples like rain gardens and green roof technology at: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/environment/Watershed/bmp/manual.htm>. In addition, native landscaping materials should be utilized throughout the campus to help mitigate the large percentage of impervious surfaces on the site.

**Response:** A stormwater management plan is required to be reviewed and approved by the City of Minneapolis. The stormwater management plan will address the entire facility and entire project site. A removal rate of 70 percent of suspended solids will be attained, consistent with the city’s requirement. The suggested management techniques are noted for the record. The City’s landscape architect will review the landscape plans prior to the issuance of zoning permits. Consistent with City policies, he emphasizes the use of native materials.

**Comment:** The plan has specific goals that can be implemented through this proposed expansion. “Accommodate diverse transportation users and multi-modal uses” and “provide landscaping that will contribute to the visual and functional aspects of the corridor.”

**Response:** The Abbott Northwestern Hospital Campus Final Travel Demand Management (TDM) Plan will state how the hospital will accommodate diverse transportation users and multi-modal uses. The final site and landscaping plan will indicate the visual and functional contributions the development will have on its surrounding uses. The City’s Zoning Code and Stormwater Management Ordinance aggressively promote landscape plants that beautify and screen and help to manage stormwater in an environmentally beneficial manner.

**Comment:** The proposed expansion appears to increase parking supply slightly more than employment. This peak hour traffic congestion is projected to result in Level of Service D or E at some of the intersections that would likely need to be negotiated by one of the new transit routes mentioned in passing on p. 19 Appendix C; specifically, a direct

bus route from I-35W and Lake Street Station following 28<sup>th</sup> Street through Portland Avenue.

**Response:** The final TDM Plan for the project will ensure a close match of the parking supply to the expected parking demand. Parking demand forecasts will take into account the mode split for the solo driver as well as the transportation alternatives, and the opportunities for shared parking. The TDM measures will build on the already aggressive efforts that the hospital is currently implementing to decrease transportation impacts and encourage the alternatives to the solo driver, such as subsidies for MetroPass, which is the region's most effective transit subsidy program. The TDM measures for this project include but are not limited to MetroPass, carpooling, vanpooling, bicycle commuters and telecommuters.

**Comment:** The largest portions of new commute trips, 36%, are projected to come from southwest of the campus. This is likely to come from the I-35W South corridor, which makes the new transit link mentioned above more viable. Viable if it is coupled with a new I-35W and Lake Street Station. The EAW should point out that transit would need transit advantages through some of these approach routes, if buses were to really attract a share of these new trips.

**Response:** Refer to prior response.

**Comment:** On page 16, in section 4.3 – Mode Splits, there is an assumption that none of the new patient and visitor trips will be by any mode other than SOVs. This doesn't seem reasonable. The EAW should look at Metro Transit Route 5 ride check data for bus stops on Chicago Avenue at 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> Streets and compare it to the number of work trips that are estimated to be made by bus by ANW employees found on page 11. There is a very large margin of trips on Route 5 at these stops over and above the estimated ANW work trips by transit, something around 1,700 per weekday. The area is completely dominated by the ANW campus. It is reasonable to conclude that a significant number of these transit trips are now made by visitors and outpatients. That should be true in the future.

**Response:** In order to develop a conservative traffic analysis, the mode split is assumed to be predominantly solo drivers. The parking analysis is the critical one for making assumptions as regards mode split for solo drivers and people who rely on alternative transportation modes.

**Comment:** The maps in the packet were prepared by SRF. They point out the bus stops on Chicago Avenue at 28<sup>th</sup> Street, but don't show the other bus stops serving the ANW campus on Chicago Avenue and on 26<sup>th</sup> Street. The maps should be revised to be complete.

**Response:** The maps have been revised and are included in the Final TDM Plan and as Exhibit F of this Findings document.

**Comments:** There are several places reference is made to existing bus service, for example, on page 21. Route 43 is not really a significant contributor to travel to ANW now, and since it will be discontinued in September of 2002, it should not be mentioned.

**Response:** So noted for the record. The Final TDM Plan will address this comment.

**Comment:** A new version of Route 43 appears on some of Sector 5 Service Concept maps. The EAW should also discuss potential new bus routes linking ANW / Children's and Wells Fargo Home Mortgage with stations in the I-35W South and Hiawatha Corridors.

**Response:** So noted for the record. The Final TDM Plan will address this comment.

**D. Ausma Sperberg, 2606 Chicago Avenue South, June 19, 2002**

**Comment:** There should be a clear statement of whether 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a one-way or two-way traffic lane. The statement should provide direction at the intersections of 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 28<sup>th</sup> Street and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 27<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Response:** The developers will work with the Public Works Department to place better signage at these intersections as well as provide appropriate stripes on 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

**Comment:** Truck deliveries, waste hauling should occur during allowed business operation times.

**Response:** To limit the noise generated by these activities, the developer agrees to have deliveries and waste hauling occur within the allowed hours of 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

**Comment:** There should be designated loading areas on Chicago Avenue.

**Response:** The developer will work with the Public Works Department to eliminate four existing parking spaces near the intersection of Chicago Avenue and 26<sup>th</sup> Street to accommodate commercial loading areas.

## **V. ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN THE EAW**

The EAW and this draft "Findings" report address the following primary environmental effects:

### **1. Transportation impacts and the Travel Demand Management Plan**

The EAW included an extensive analysis regarding the expected transportation impacts potentially associated with the project. In response to the need to mitigate the identified impacts, the EAW included the draft Travel Demand Management Plan. Review of the TDM Plan generated some comments regarding its completeness and effectiveness.

### **2. Surface Water Runoff**

The EAW included extensive analysis regarding the potential impacts of surface water runoff. The review of the EAW generated some comments regarding the analyses completeness and effectiveness. In response to the need to mitigate the identified impact, a stormwater management plan shall be reviewed and approved by the City of Minneapolis prior to the issuance of any permits.

## **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 (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**

#### **1. Transportation impacts and the Travel Demand Management Plan**

The transportation analysis conducted for the EAW thoroughly examined all anticipated impacts and concluded that the traffic volumes generated by the development will not result in significant traffic impacts to the area and regional roadway systems.

Development projects in the City of Minneapolis of over 100,000 square feet such as this project require the adoption of a Travel Demand Management Plan that has

been approved by the City. Many of the adopted plans and policies of the City stress the importance of transportation issues and especially transit. The primary purpose of a Travel Demand Management Plan is to encourage the use of transit and other alternatives to single occupant vehicle use. The Final Travel Demand Management Plan will be included as an attachment to the Final Findings of Fact and Record of Decision document. The draft Travel Demand Management Plan is attached to this document (Exhibit E). The final TDM Plan will address all of the comments from the Metropolitan Council staff.

## **2. Surface Water Runoff**

The analysis regarding surface water run-off conducted in the EAW thoroughly examined all anticipated impacts and concluded that there will not be a substantial change from the existing conditions. Redevelopment plans also will comply with the City's Stormwater Management Ordinance.

Development projects in the City of Minneapolis of over one acre such as this project shall submit a Stormwater Management Plan that has been approved by the City prior to the issuance of any permits. Many of the adopted plans and policies of the City stress the importance of minimizing off-site stormwater run-off, maximize overland flow and flow distances over surfaces covered with vegetation, increase on-site infiltration, minimize off-site discharge of pollutants to ground and surface water and encourage natural filtration function. The approach to minimizing the potential impacts of surface water run-off shall employ best management practices.

## **B. Cumulative Effects of Related or Anticipated Future Projects**

As stated in the EAW and elsewhere in this report, there are no known future phases of this project not already considered as a part of this EAW.

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

**1. Transportation impacts and the Transportation Management Plan**

The Final Transportation Management Plan shall be approved by the Planning Director and the Public Works Director of Transportation prior to the Zoning and Planning Committee meeting.

**2. Surface Water Run-Off**

When a project requires a major permit from the City, such as a conditional use permit or a site plan review permit, the City is often able to exact project concessions that further the City's adopted plans and policies. In addition to the required conditional use permit and the site plan review required for this redevelopment proposal, the redevelopment plans will have to comply with the City's Stormwater Management Ordinance. An Erosion Control Plan and Permit is also required.

**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 EISs Previously Prepared on Similar Projects.**

The EAW currently contains or references all of the known studies that would likely provide information or guidance regarding environmental effects, which can be anticipated and controlled. The primary environmental effects of the project will be transportation impacts. The transportation analysis and TDM Plan incorporated the information from the EAW developed for the Wells Fargo Home Mortgage Campus project (negative declaration, May of 2001).

## **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 4410.4300, Subpart 14.B (4).
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.**

### **Exhibits:**

- A. Project Description
- B. Record of Decision (not yet included)
- C. Public Notification Record
- D. Comment Letters
- E. Council/Mayor Action (not yet included)
- F. Approved TDM Plan (not yet included, draft available upon request)
- G.

# EXHIBIT A

## Project Description

# EXHIBIT B

## Record of Decision

## EXHIBIT C

### Public Notification Record

# EXHIBIT D

## Comment Letters

## EXHIBIT E

### Council/Mayor Action

# EXHIBIT F

## Approved TDM Plan

# EXHIBIT G

## “Directional Distribution”