

ADEQUACY DECISION

FOR THE

NORMAN POINTE OFFICE DEVELOPMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)

November 20, 2000

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INTRODUCTION

Duke-Weeks is proposing redevelopment of a 20.2 acre parcel located south of Green Valley Drive and west of Norman Center Drive in Bloomington. The proposed project consists of the demolition of two existing office buildings and 710 parking spaces in order to accommodate construction of two 9-story 282,800 sq. ft. office buildings, a 14-story 423,646 sq. ft. office building, and a hotel of approximately 95,500 sq. ft. Structured parking would be provided for 3,776 cars, with an additional 38 spaces in surface lots (total 3,814 spaces).

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

EIS Notification, Distribution and Comment Periods

In accordance with Minnesota Rules, part 4410.2700, the EIS was completed and distributed as follows:

- February 21, 2000 – Scoping Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) and Draft Scoping Decision notice of availability published in the *EQB Monitor* and distributed to all persons and agencies on the official Environmental Quality Board distribution list for review and comment.
- March 9, 2000 – Scoping Public Meeting
- March 22, 2000 – End of Scoping comment period.
- April 3, 2000 – Scoping Decision adopted by City of Bloomington, the Responsible Governmental Unit
- August 7, 2000 – Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) distributed to all persons and agencies on the official Environmental Quality Board distribution list for review and comment, notice of availability published in *EQB Monitor*.
- August 30, 2000 – DEIS Public Information Meeting held (published in *Sun Current*).
- September 15, 2000 – End of DEIS comment period.
- October 16, 2000 – Final Environmental Impact Statement distributed to all persons and agencies on the official Environmental Quality Board distribution list for review and comment, notice of availability published in the *EQB Monitor*.
- November 1, 2000 – End of FEIS comment period.
- November 20, 2000 – Determination of the adequacy of the EIS.

Comments Received on the FEIS and Responses

- #1 Minnesota Department of Transportation, Sharon Anderson, October 18, 2000
The Minnesota Department of Transportation reconfirmed their previous comment regarding the need for coordination of potential impacts to their right-of-way.

Response: As stated in the FEIS, the project sponsor will coordinate with MN/DOT with regard to right-of-way impacts.

- #2 Homeowners Adjacent to the Proposed Property, Patrick & Rebecca Logan & undersigned, October 30, 2000

The homeowners at Normandale Lake Townhomes and the Tower at Lake Normandale provided a comment letter with the following concerns: 1a) Traffic scenario descriptions and related mitigation, 1b) Transportation Management Plan details, 1c) Concurrent roadway improvements, 2) Open space dedication, 3) Stormwater routing, 4) Magnitude and impact of Building IV, and 5) Water quality and wetland impacts.

Response:

1a) The DEIS and FEIS traffic study included evaluation of eight scenarios. The scenarios were based on the project schedule (phasing) and potential scheduling of future roadway improvements at two intersections (I-494/East Bush Lake Road and Normandale/84th Street).

As part of the traffic study, actual traffic counts were obtained for key intersections. Based on the traffic count data, a model was developed to determine the existing levels of service at key intersections (Scenario 1). The model was also used to predict future levels of service for future increases in background traffic growth (Scenario 2), as well as traffic increases due to project construction (Scenarios 3 – 8).

For each scenario analyzed, a list of recommended roadway improvements (mitigation) was identified. The intersection levels of service determined through the modeling and stated in Table 1-1 of the FEIS do not include any of the recommended roadway improvements, i.e. they are unmitigated. The recommended roadway improvements/mitigation for each scenario would improve the levels of service to acceptable levels.

The study identified a variety of roadway improvements for Scenario 2, the 2003 No Build. These improvements are recommended with or without construction of the proposed project. Thus, the implementation of the improvements recommended for Scenario 2 are the responsibility of the appropriate roadway authority, and are not a prerequisite for construction of the proposed project. Impacts that are directly the result of the proposed project would require mitigation prior to or concurrent with project construction. Thus, in order to

proceed with Building II construction (Scenario 3) the project proposer would provide funds to the city to install a signal at the intersection of Norman Center Drive and Bridge Road. Scenario 4 would require the identified improvements at the intersections of Norman Center Drive/Bridge Road, Norman Center Drive/Normandale Lake Blvd and 84th Street/Normandale Lake Boulevard. Additional roadway improvements may be required by the city, depending on the current traffic conditions, funding and an updated schedule for future improvements. Scenario 7 includes improvements at the I-494 and East Bush Lake Road interchange, and would require the identified intersection improvements at Norman Center Drive/Bridge Road, Norman Center Drive/Normandale Lake Blvd and 84th Street/Normandale Lake Boulevard. Additional roadway improvements may be required by the city, depending on the current traffic conditions, funding and the updated schedule for future improvements.

1b) As stated in the FEIS, the project proposer is currently working on the Travel Demand Management Plan. The specific requirements, goals and details of the plan will be coordinated with the City of Bloomington. Additionally, the plan will be reviewed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Metropolitan Council, and local transportation providers to identify reasonable and feasible measures for alternative modes of transportation.

1c) See 1a above.

2) As stated in the DEIS and FEIS, the project sponsor owns the entire parcel proposed for redevelopment. The proposed project will not cause the loss of public spaces. The net open space on the site will remain essentially the same as currently exists, with a slight net increase in pervious space. The project will include a more elaborate trail system within the campus-like setting.

Reconfiguration of Green Valley Drive would likely impact public open space. However, the future Green Valley Drive reconfiguration is part of a larger Minnesota Department of Transportation project that includes the reconstruction of the East Bush Lake/I-494 interchange. Mitigation of open space impacts would be part of the mitigation required for the roadway improvement project, and would not be directly required as part of the proposed development.

3) As stated in the DEIS, the proposed project would have positive impacts on water quality by incorporating stormwater ponds into the site design which do not presently exist. Additionally, these ponds would provide improved rate control and storage volume to retain stormwater, with a net beneficial effect on downstream water levels.

4) The DEIS and FEIS provide analytical framework for the scope of development allowable on the project site, as described in the project alternatives. As noted in previous documents, the type and intensity of the proposed

development is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and Metropolitan Council's guidelines for redevelopment within the project area.

The location and detailed design of Building IV would be reviewed and evaluated through the City's Planned Development process. Design details, such as lighting and building height, would comply with City code. Additionally, the final location, size and design details that would be proposed for the project are dependent on future market conditions.

5) See 3 above. Additionally, the FEIS discussion of internal traffic circulation to Building IV was responding to a City request to provide such circulation. The only way to provide internal circulation would be to build a road through the pond, since it is in the center of the site. This would likely not be allowed by regulatory agencies and would not be environmentally sensitive. This alternative for internal circulation was not considered feasible.

#3 Allan D. Anderson, October 29, 2000

Mr. Anderson lists fifteen areas of concern including the following: stormwater impacts and management, impacts to water utility services including his own water pressure drop, wildlife impacts including the effects of traffic on geese and deer in the area, impacts on the Normandale fishery, conflicts with recreation users of Normandale Lake, traffic congestion, traffic accidents and injuries, telecommunication services, impact on property values and public participation.

Response: The Scoping Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW), DEIS and FEIS provided information on most of the concerns identified in the letter. The items that the EAW Scoping Document excluded from the EIS based on a determination that the potential for significant environmental impacts does not exist are as follows: stormwater impacts and management, impacts to water utility services (including his own water pressure drop), wildlife impacts related to geese and deer in the area, impacts on the Normandale fishery, conflicts with recreation users of Normandale Lake, telecommunication services, impact on property values and public participation.

The proposed project would result in improved stormwater quality and rate control based on the provision of an on-site stormwater management system that would integrate storm sewer improvements incorporating traps and skimmers and rate control ponds.

Given the location of the project and current land use characteristics there would be no discernable impacts to wildlife within the immediate area. Redevelopment of the property would not result impacts to threatened or endangered species nor is it expected to have a significant impact on fish or wildlife common to the area. The property does not contain any sensitive ecological resources such as native prairie, colonial waterbird nesting colonies or regionally rare plant communities.

The Scoping EAW noted that the project would be served by the City water supply and distribution system that is adequate to satisfy project water use without any major alterations or modifications. The project is located within the Normal Service Level area that is a combination of distributing reservoir, gravity and direct pressure distribution system. The commentator is located in the City's High Service Level distribution area that includes northwest Bloomington excluding the area north of Normandale Lake and east of Bush Lake Road and I-494 (area of project location). This area, primarily because of topography, is basically a gravity distribution system. New development in the excluded area should not result in impacts in the High Service Level area.

With regard to impacts to pedestrian and park and recreation facility users, pedestrian safety would be improved when roadway improvements are implemented, such as signalization and the addition of turn lanes, the provision of additional trails incorporated into the site plan, for improved pedestrian access and movement within the project site. The project would have no direct impact on the Normandale Lake unit of the Hyland-Bush Anderson Regional Park Reserve.

Specific items related to these areas may be addressed as part of the City consideration of a request for Planned Development Rezoning, Preliminary Development Plan approval and Final Development Plan approval of any particular phase of the project. A listing of City of Bloomington required permits and approval is shown on page 9 of the FEIS.

Concerns that are listed in the letter that were addressed in the EIS relate to traffic and traffic impacts. Specifically the letter identifies the Normandale Boulevard and West 84th Street intersection, Normandale and I-494 interchange and the Bush Lake Road and I-494 interchange as "bottlenecks." The letter, also, raises concerns on the impact on the local street system, and wider impacts on the regional roadway network. These concerns are addressed in the FEIS. The improvements to the local roadway network, including the intersection improvement at Normandale Boulevard and West 84th Street, to accommodate elements of the development are included in the listing of mitigation measures related to eight development scenarios. Regional improvements, including the additional lanes to I-494 and interchange improvement at Bush Lake Road and Normandale Boulevard are factored into the transportation modeling. Impacts to the regional traffic level from the project would result in a minor increase in traffic levels.

Items not considered in the Environmental Review documents include public notification, telephone service, and local property values. The notification followed the Environmental Quality Board rules using the approved EQB distribution list. The quality of telephone service is a function of the local provider. Although this was not evaluated in the EIS, it is expected that the local provider will provide telephone service that is commensurate with market

demands. The impact of the proposed development on local property values was discussed briefly in the FEIS (pg. 23). Ultimately, property values are based on market demands.

#4 Dan, Kathy and Andrea Bonicatto, November 1, 2000

Concerns include traffic along 84th Street and the potential to overbuild office space. The comment assumes that the project is located at the corner of 84th and Normandale.

Response: The proposed project site is located between Green Valley Drive and Norman Center Drive, in the southwest quadrant of the I-494/Normandale Boulevard interchange. The DEIS provides a detailed evaluation of expected traffic patterns and recommends specific roadway improvements for each phase of project construction (see also response to comment #2). . Construction of any new buildings on the site will be dependent on market conditions and available office space in the area. Construction of a building is a large financial commitment and would not be undertaken by the project sponsor without sufficient justification in the market place.

#5 Russ Burnison, November 1, 2000

Concerns include traffic delays and pedestrian safety.

Response: The DEIS provides a detailed evaluation of expected traffic patterns. Nine Mile Creek Parkway would be expected to have a 1% increase in traffic levels (approximately) based on the traffic modeling. Roadway improvements would be required for project construction, as detailed in the DEIS and described in the response to comment #2. Pedestrian safety would likely be improved at intersections when roadway improvements are implemented, such as signalization and adding turn lanes. Additional trails would be incorporated into the site plan, for improved pedestrian access/movement within the project site.

#6 David Chatfield, November 6, 2000

Concerned with public notification.

Response: Project notification followed the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board rules using the approved EQB distribution list. Public meetings were held during the scoping EAW, DEIS and FEIS. Additional meetings were held at the request of concerned residents. The City's consideration of the rezoning, preliminary planned development and final development plan requests, as listed on pg. 9 (Permits and Approvals) of the FEIS, will require additional notification to adjacent property owners.

#7 Gene Cross, October 30, 2000

Concerned with traffic congestion, specifically related to Bush Lake Road.

Response: The DEIS provides a detailed evaluation of expected traffic patterns. Table 1-1 in the FEIS provides level of service information for the intersections of East Bush Lake Road (EBLR)/78th Street, EBLR/84th Street, EBLR/West Bound I-494 Ramp, EBLR/East Bound I-494 Ramp and EBLR/Green Valley Drive.

The traffic analysis indicates that increases in background traffic growth (unrelated to project development) would reduce the level of service at several of these intersections by year 2003. Construction of Buildings II and III would not further reduce these levels of service. The study recommends that roadway improvements be made at each of these intersections to accommodate background traffic growth. Since the reduced level of service is not a direct result of project construction, the improvements would need to be implemented by the appropriate roadway authority.

#8 Cheryl Hillsdale, October 31, 2000

Concerns include property values, traffic noise and congestion, environmental impacts on Normandale Lake and Hyland Park Reserve, and city sewer and water services.

Response: See response to Comment #3.

#9 Tania Kurtz Ishaug, November 1, 2000

Concerns include traffic congestion, neighborhoods, wildlife, and property values.

Response: See response to Comment #3.

#10 John B. Knowland and Susan K. Cromwell, October 31, 2000

Concerns include the size of the development, public notification, traffic and environmental impacts.

Response: See responses to Comments #2 and #3.

#11 Michael and Rebecca Maddox, October 31, 2000

Concerns include the size of the development, public notification, traffic and environmental impacts.

Response: See responses to Comments #2 and #3.

#12 Sandy McWilliams, October 30, 2000

Concerns include traffic, greenspace and growth impacts.

Response: See responses to Comments #2 and #3.

#13 Vicki L. Sinha, October 29, 2000

Requested information regarding the project. The City directed Ms. Sinha to the project documents available on the City's web site.

#14 Sue Schadow, November 1, 2000

Concerns include traffic congestion, pedestrian safety, water runoff, sewer capacity, police services, air and noise pollution, green space, wildlife and environment and general quality of life.

Response: See response to Comments #2 and #3.

The City is responsible for providing adequate police and emergency services to its residents and businesses. The proposed project would provide additional tax base that would help finance any additional services needed. The amount of development proposed will be 3.5% of Bloomington's existing property value. The additional increment of police and fire service required is well within the City's capacity to handle.

#15 Bruce Schmiedlin, October 29, 2000

Concerned about potential development along 84th Street. The City responded with clarification that there is no proposal to develop the southwest corner of the intersection of West 84th Street and Normandale Boulevard.

#16 Judith Somers, October 30, 2000

Concerned with traffic and quality of life.

Response: See responses to Comments #2, and #3.

#17 Carla Stevenson, October 30, 2000

Concerned about traffic, quality of life and property values. Requested clarification regarding amount of traffic that would use 84th Street (Figure 15 in the DEIS).

Response: See responses to Comments #2, and #3.

The DEIS figures showed the expected distribution of traffic going to and from the project site, based on the existing roadway network with no improvements. The actual amount of traffic traveling to the project site via 84th Street (from the east) would be approximately 5%: approximately 1% would enter 84th Street at Stanley Road, 1% would enter 84th from the south at France, 2% would enter 84th from the north at France and 1% would come from further east on 84th. The afternoon traffic flow distribution would be the same, but in the opposite direction.

#18 Catherine A. Taylor and undersigned, October 28, 2000

Concerned about the traffic distribution, particularly the 1% on 84th Street and low amounts of local residents that would be employed within the project site, concerned with site users using local streets to bypass meters, concerned with traffic safety at elementary schools.

Response: See responses to Comments #2, #3 and #17.

The traffic distribution illustrated on DEIS Figure 15 shows where trips will be generated at each significant roadway. The study indicates that approximately 9% of the trips would be from south of the project site (via Hwy. 100), 3% would be from southeast or east of the project site (via Stanley Road and France Avenue), and 7% would be from west or southwest of the project site (via East Bush Lake Road, Highwood Drive and Chalet Drive). It is possible that many of these trips could be Bloomington residents.

The traffic model is not able to directly incorporate the effects of ramp metering on traffic movement. However, the model is based on actual traffic counts and patterns that reflect the ramp meter considerations of drivers. Thus, the ramp meter choices of drivers should be, indirectly, reflected in the model.

Speed zones within school zones are posted and policed by local patrols. The proposed project would increase traffic on 84th street east of Normandale Boulevard by approximately 78 vehicles in the a.m. peak hour and 75 vehicles in the p.m. peak hour, based on the existing roadway network with no improvements. These correspond to one additional vehicle every 46 seconds in the peak hours. Future roadway improvements would be designed to meet current safety design standards for both drivers and pedestrians.

- #19 Mark A. Thorson, November 1, 2000
Concerns include neighborhood notification, traffic congestion, environmental impacts and public utilities/services.

Response: See responses to Comments #2, #3, #14 and #17.

- #20 Michelle Thorson, October 30, 2000
Question regarding use of e-mail for comments. The City responded that e-mailed comments would be considered official and would be addressed.

- #21 Paul Wilson, November 1, 2000
Concerned with traffic congestion, specifically on East Bush Lake Road and 84th Street.

Response: See responses to Comments #2, #3 and #17.

- #22 Trudi Woodard, October 29, 2000
Concerns include impacts to the Nine Mile Creek Watershed, flooding, fish and wildlife, potential impact to red tailed hawk, air quality, traffic noise near a school and in the neighborhood with a free-way style interchange, water pressure, phone system, electrical system, pedestrian/school children and vehicular safety with higher speeds on 84th Street and access to Normandale Lake.

Response: See responses to Comments #2 and #3.

The comment specifically mentions the observation of a red-tailed hawk. According to the National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds – Eastern Region (Revised Edition, 1998), the red-tailed hawk is the most common and widespread American member of the genus *Buteo*. The hawk is found in open country and urban areas. Red-tailed hawks nest throughout Minnesota. Some red-tailed hawks migrate to southern states during the winter months while some are non-migratory. The red-tailed hawk is not listed as endangered, threatened or a special concern species. The project would not have a direct impact on red-tailed hawks.

The concept of the 84th Street and Normandale “interchange” is a single point interchange, with Normandale Boulevard raised above 84th Street. The 84th Street intersection would continue to be signalized. This design would facilitate through traffic on Normandale Boulevard/TH 100 and improve the operation of the existing intersection of 84th Street and Normandale Boulevard. The speed limit on 84th Street would not increase. Thus, vehicle/pedestrian safety along 84th street and in the vicinity of the school would be improved. The potential impacts of intersection reconstruction would require environmental analysis, depending on the proposed design and funding sources. All roadway improvements will need to consider pedestrian access and safety. Generally, roadway reconstruction projects provide an opportunity for improving the pedestrian facilities in association with the reconstruction.

#23 Joan Edstrom, November 2, 2000

Concerns include the 1% distribution of traffic along 84th Street, east of Normandale Boulevard.

Response: See response to comment #18

#24 Sue Wollschlager, November 3, 2000

Concerned with public notification process.

Response: See response to comment #6.

#25 Al and Mary Jo Holmstrand, November 6, 2000

Concerned about traffic and people congestion.

Response: See responses to Comments #2 and 3.

#26 Eric, Jeanette, Elizabeth, Keegan and Jackson Lahm, November 6, 2000

Concerned about traffic, pollution, utilities and public services.

Response: See responses to Comments #2 and 3.

#27 James W. De Young, November 7, 2000

Concerned with traffic, quality of life, property values and the natural environment.

Response: See responses to Comments #2 and 3.

#28 Bruce Silver, November 7, 2000
Concerned with traffic and environmental impacts.

Response: See responses to Comments #2 and 3.

#29 Mike Wallerus, November 7, 2000
Opposes development.

#30 Michelle Thorson, November 8, 2000
Concerned with traffic, specifically along 84th Street.

Response: See response to Comment #18.

All comment letters received are included in the appendix.

ADEQUACY DETERMINATION

Project Description

The proposed project will be located at 5501, 5503 and 5701 Green Valley Drive in Bloomington, Minnesota. The redevelopment project site is located in the southwest quadrant of Normandale Boulevard and Interstate 494, between Green Valley Drive and Norman Center Drive.

The proposed Norman Pointe Office Development is a redevelopment of the existing office area to a use that is consistent with Metropolitan Council redevelopment policies and City land use plans for higher intensity development. The building space proposed is based on a 1.2 Floor Area Ratio (FAR). Construction of this project would require an approved Travel Demand Management Plan and development agreement.

The project consists of demolition of the existing office buildings and removal of the surface parking area. The project scope, phasing and schedule are described in Table 1 on the following page.

The new buildings will be constructed with steel structure, architectural precast and glass curtainwall. The design of the buildings will be similar to the Norman Center Redevelopment project currently under construction. Buildings II and III will be connected by a common entry element one or two stories in height. All buildings will be constructed on top of 5 to 7 level structured parking, with one level below grade. Parking structures associated with the hotel and Building IV will have fill placed adjacent to the

structure, giving the appearance of more than one level below grade.

Access to Office Buildings II and III will be from Normandale Lake Boulevard extended, which will become a private road through the middle of the site. Access to Office Building IV will be from Norman Center Drive. Access to the hotel will be from Green Valley Drive (Frontage Road) or from the adjacent parking structure. The proposed access to the new buildings is separated to distribute traffic circulation into and out of the site.

Demolition of the existing buildings will commence upon final approval of the planned development for the project, site and building plans and environmental documents. Demolition is expected to take approximately six to nine months. This phasing schedule for the project is dependent upon market analysis and coordination with related highway facility improvements.

Table 1 Proposed Project, Description and Phasing

Building	Building Size (sq. ft.)	Parking Spaces	Building/Parking Height¹	Construction Schedule²
II	282,800	1083	9-story office over 5-level parking (158 ft)	Fall 2000 – Fall 2002
III	282,800	1083	9-story office over 5-level parking (158 ft)	Fall 2000 – Fall 2002
IV	423,646	1610	14-story office over 7-level parking (242 ft)	Fall 2003 – Fall 2005
Hotel	95,500 (150 rooms)	Shared with Building II	5-story hotel over 5-level parking (117 ft)	Fall 2002 – Fall 2004
Surface Parking	NA	38	NA	W/building construction
Total	989,246 sq. ft. office 95,500 sq. ft. hotel (1,084,746 sq. ft. total)	3814 spaces	NA	Fall 2000 – Fall 2005
Existing Development (Removed)	95,936 sq. ft.	710 spaces	2-story	NA
Net New Development	988,810 sq. ft.	3104 spaces	NA	NA

¹All parking facilities will be constructed with one level below the existing grade.

²Approximate schedule is provided, with actual dates to be determined based on market analysis and highway and street improvement project completion.

Criteria to determine the Adequacy of the EIS

Based on the Scoping Environmental Assessment Worksheet, Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Final Environmental Impact Statement, the comments from the public and regulatory agencies and responses thereto, and the procedures followed for the documentation of environmental impacts, the City Council finds that:

A. The EIS addresses the potentially significant issues and alternatives raised in scoping so that all significant issues for which information can be reasonably obtained have been analyzed in conformance with part 4410.2300, items and

B. The EIS provides responses to the substantive comments received during the draft EIS review concerning issues raised in scoping; and

C. The EIS was prepared in compliance with the procedures of the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act, Minnesota Statute Chapter 116D and parts 4410.0200 to 4410.6500 of Minnesota Rules.