

Appendix I: Response to Comments

UPDATE Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) Albertville Business Park Project

October 2, 2017

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Prepared for the City of Albertville, MN



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INTRODUCTION

Distribution and Publication of the AUAR Update

The Albertville City Council approved the Draft Update of the Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) for the Albertville Business Park for distribution at its August 7th, 2017 meeting. The document was immediately distributed to the Environmental Quality Board's (EQB) Agency and Organization Distribution List, and to ten additional local agencies and officials (including Wright County, adjacent cities and townships, and affected school districts.)

A Notice of Availability of the AUAR Update was published in the EQB Monitor on August 21st, 2017. A ten-day comment period followed, expiring on September 1st, 2017.

Comments Received

Five comment letters were received. Copies of the following letters and emails are included in this document. They are listed in the order received:

#	Comment	Date
1	Anna Bohanon, Health Promotion Coordinator Wright County, Minnesota Health & Human Services	Email, August 21, 2017
2	Karen Kromar, Planner Principal Environmental Review Unit Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	Letter, August 28, 2017
3	Virgil G. Hawkins, P.E., County Highway Engineer Wright County	Letter, August 30, 2017
4	Jon Mason, Senior Planner Minnesota Department of Transportation	Letter, September 1, 2017
5	Ronald J. Wagner, Hakanson Anderson on Behalf of City of Otsego	Letter, September 8, 2017
6	Sarah J. Beimers, Manager, Government Programs and Compliance Minnesota Historical Society	Letter, September 8, 2017
7	Brian Yagle, Project Manager, Army Corps of Engineers	Letter, August 18, 2017

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

Comments are summarized and responded to in the order that the issues appear in the AUAR document, in *italicized text*. The source(s) of each comment are indicated after the comment. Any resulting changes to the AUAR document including the Mitigation Plan are noted.

Water Resources (Item 11)

Summary of Comment

NURP ponds mentioned in the AUAR may not meet current stormwater requirements. Stormwater management facilities must meet requirements of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System/ State Disposal System (NPDES/SDS) Construction Stormwater Permit (CSW Permit.) Because over 50 acres of land would be disturbed and the site discharges to impaired waters, the Stormwater Pollution Prevention

*Plan will need to be submitted to the MPCA 30 days prior to obtaining the NPDES/SDS permit.
(Comment Letter #2)*

Response

The stormwater plan included in the AUAR is a preliminary conceptual plan. Detailed design of the will be provided as development occurs across the site (see page 18 of AUAR document). The AUAR acknowledges (see Table 3, page 8) that the NPDES permit will be required. The Mitigation Plan states that the developer will design all stormwater management facilities to meet water quality requirements stipulated in the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit and City standards (see page 44, item 11 b.) The Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan is required as part of the NPDES permit.

Changes to AUAR Document

None.

Summary of Comment

*The AUAR mentioned expanding wetland W1 in the West delineation, but details were not provided.
(Comment Letter #2)*

Response

As described in the AUAR (see page 22) under both Concept Plans A and B, wetland 1W would be protected and expanded through mitigation except for a small area at the east end of the basin. Exhibit 15 provides some additional information; however, the surface water plan is conceptual at this time. The Mitigation Plan (page 44) states that the developer will minimize wetland impacts as detailed site plans are prepared for each phase of development. The sequencing requirements of the Wetlands Conservation Act (WCA) and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act will be followed. Permits required by the WCA and Clean Water Act will be applied.

Changes to AUAR Document

None.

Summary of Comment

A Department of the Army permit may be required for development in the AUAR area. (Comment Letter #7)

Response

The Army Corps of Engineers has asserted their jurisdiction over the project. The AUAR acknowledges (see Table 3, page 8) that a Section 404 permit is required.

Changes to the AUAR Document

None.

Historic Properties (Item 14)

Summary of Comment

The Minnesota Historical Society concluded that there are no properties listed in the National or State Registers of Historic Places, and no known suspected archaeological properties in the area that will be affected by this project. (Comment Letter #6)

Response

This is consistent with findings of the 2003 AUAR and the 2017 AUAR Update.

Changes to AUAR Document

None.

Noise (Item 17)

Summary of Comment

The SRF noise analysis modeled only traffic noise, which is only one aspect of noise that can affect a development. The monitoring was conducted for only 30 minutes which can be useful for planning, but state standards require a full hour (60 minutes) for comparison to state standards. Considering that Concept Plan A would include residential development, the MPCA strongly recommends that the City conduct further noise monitoring prior to finalizing the project, even though traffic noise may be within compliance before reaching the residential area of the development. Once further monitoring is conducted, the City should consider what additional mitigation methods could be used to ensure that new residences would not be affected negatively by the collective noise in the area. (Comment Letter #2)

Response

The noise analysis modeled traffic noise because no other significant noise-generating uses exist in the area. Noise was monitored for 30 minutes as this is a planning-level study and site plans and uses will change. The AUAR identified mitigation measures addressed at influencing detailed site plans. The Mitigation Plan (see page 46) says to maximize the distance from I-94 for planned residential uses, and to locate outdoor uses toward the interior or north sides of buildings, away from I-94, to increase the setback distance and to allow buildings to shield outdoor use areas from traffic noise from vehicles traveling on I-94. Additional noise monitoring may be required by the City of Albertville when development plans are submitted, if the planning-level modeling indicates that noise-sensitive uses may be negatively affected by noise in the area.

Changes to AUAR Document

The following additional mitigation measure has been added to the AUAR (see page 46): **“The City of Albertville may require additional noise monitoring and modeling prior to development approval. The City will work with the developer to identify reasonable mitigation measures if needed to ensure that noise-sensitive uses will not be affected negatively by noise and that state noise standards will be met.”**

Summary of Comment

During construction, all equipment should be fitted with the appropriate mufflers to ensure compliance with state noise standards. (Comment Letter #2)

Response

The AUAR (page 28) addresses construction noise impacts, but did not specifically mention mufflers on construction equipment. Language should be added.

Changes to AUAR Document

Add the following language to the AUAR on page 28 and to the Mitigation Plan (Section 17, page 46): **“All equipment used during construction should be fitted with the appropriate mufflers to ensure compliance with state noise standards.”**

Transportation (Item 18)

Summary of Comment

There is an apparent lack of pedestrian and bicycle accommodations in the development concept plans. This development presents a prime opportunity to make an inviting environment for not only cars, but also bicyclists (commuters and recreational) and pedestrians. (Comment Letter #1)

Response

The development plans do include sidewalks along all streets, and also shows a trail to be constructed on the south side of 70th Street. This may not be apparent because of the scale of the plans. The AUAR document notes that pedestrian facilities do not currently exist, but that as development occurs, sidewalks or internal trails may be constructed where they would promote walking and biking within the AUAR area (see page 35.) The Mitigation Plan also notes that The City will require construction of a trail on the south side of 70th Street as the area develops, consistent with the City's adopted Trail Plan and Park Dedication requirements, and that development plans will include sidewalks or internal trails where they would promote walking and biking within the AUAR area (see page 47.)

Changes to AUAR Document

None.

Summary of Comment

The first paragraphs of page 3 of the Traffic Study (Appendix H) indicates that County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 19 is functionally classified as a "major collector north of 70th Street (CSAH 38). This is incorrect, as this segment is functionally classified as a "minor arterial" in the MnDOT online database." (Comment Letter 3, Item 1.)

Response

The functional classification of CSAH 19 north of 70th Street has been verified with MnDOT.

Changes to AUAR Document

Paragraph 1, Page 3 of Appendix H (SRF Traffic Study) has been edited to correct the error.

Summary of Comment

The "2019 Build Conditions" identify the need for a traffic control signal at the CSAH19/I94 EB ramp (Intersection E.) The improvement should be completed prior to the opening of any phase of the proposed development. Wright County will not participate in the cost. (Comment Letter 3, Item 2.)

Response

Concurrently with the development of the MOE (Mall of Entertainment) the City will work with the developer and its partner jurisdictions to install a traffic signal at the CSAH 19-/I-94 Eastbound Ramps (Intersection E.)

Changes to AUAR Document

Mitigation measure 18 b) on page 47 of the AUAR document has been edited to match the response, above.

Summary of Comment

Wright County has completed improvements to CSAH 37 and CR137 affecting several intersections (H, I & J) included in the traffic study. (Comment Letter 3, Item 2.)

Response

The Traffic Study (Appendix H) identified these projects as Planned Transportation Improvements (see page 6) and assumed that they were completed in the traffic and intersection modeling of all development scenarios (2019 Build/No-Build, 2040 Build/No-Build.)

Changes to AUAR Document

None.

Summary of Comment

Funding for any improvements affecting County Highways will be subject to Wright County's Cost Participation Policy. (Comment Letter #3.) Funding for any improvements affecting I-94 will be subject to the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Cost Participation Policy (Comment Letter #4).

Response

The AUAR recognizes the need for the City of Albertville to work with the developer and its partner jurisdictions (including MnDOT and Wright County) to program highway and intersection improvements when traffic demand warrants and when funding is available. (See page 47, Mitigation Plan.) The cost and funding mechanism for highway and intersection improvements is beyond the scope of an AUAR.

Changes to AUAR Document

None

Summary of Comment

The traffic study (Appendix H, Page 27) indicates to install a traffic signal at CSAH 19/67th Street NE (Intersection B) as part of the Year "2040 No Build" recommendations. An intersection control evaluation will determine the appropriate control (signal system, roundabout, etc.) at this intersection so it may not be a traffic signal. (Comment Letter 3, Item 4.)

Response

The Mitigation Plan states, "To address the 2040 No Build and 2040 Build scenarios, the City will continue to monitor the growth of traffic and the operations of the affected intersections. The need for transportation improvements will be reevaluated when the AUAR is updated approximately every five years." (See page 47.) This evaluation would include what type of improvement would be necessary. A roundabout would be another option.

Changes to AUAR Document

None.

Summary of Comment

The traffic study identifies under "2040 Build Conditions" the need for dual left-turn lanes for CSAH 19 NB and SB at I-94 (intersections D and E) to mitigate the impacts from the development, which would otherwise not be needed. Wright County would not participate in the cost of this or the corresponding widening of the I-94 bridges that would be required. The bridge widening could be included in MnDOT's current planning for a construction project as soon as 2018. All other "2040 Build" recommendations

that would not be needed under “2040 No Build” conditions would follow the county’s Cost Participation Policy (no count cost). (Comment Letter 3, Items 5 & 6) According to MnDOT’s Cost Participation Policy, the additional bridge length needed to accommodate CSAH 19 improvements requires local cost participation. (Comment Letter 4.)

Response

The “2040 Build” scenario assumes development of a much larger area surrounding the site in Albertville and neighboring Otsego. Depending upon how and when the entire area develops, the dual left-turn lanes may be needed sooner or later than shown by the study. Development of the AUAR area today would require only a single southbound left turn lane at the interchange to access the new/future ramp. It is premature to determine what development will trigger the need for the dual left-turn lanes or any of the other “2040 Build” recommendations.

The Mitigation Plan states, “To address the 2040 No Build and 2040 Build scenarios, the City will continue to monitor the growth of traffic and the operations of the affected intersections. The need for transportation improvements will be reevaluated when the AUAR is updated approximately every five years.” (See page 47.)

Because the CSAH 19 turn lanes will likely be needed in the future based on the full development of the area, the city will encourage MnDOT to widen the bridges to provide for the turn lanes when they design any improvements to the I-94 bridges. The bridge improvements would have a useful life far beyond the horizon of the traffic study and it would be prudent to plan for CSAH 19 expansion in the future.

Changes to AUAR Document

None.

Summary of Comment

Wright County will endeavor to proceed with the signal timing optimization/coordination that is identified /recommended throughout the study—working with both MnDOT and the City of Albertville. (Comment Letter 3, Item 8.)

Response

The City appreciates its cooperative relationships with the Wright County Department of Highways and MnDOT to manage and improve the transportation infrastructure in and around the City of Albertville.

Changes to AUAR Document

None.

Summary of Comment

The 2004 Northeast Wright County Transportation Study designates 70th Street as a future minor arterial street. (Comment Letter 5)

- *Existing pavement condition is poor;*
- *Figure 22 of the Northeast Wright County Transportation Study recommends intersection spacing of ½ mile for full access and ¼ mile for right-in/right-out access for minor arterial streets;*
- *Direct Private driveway access to 70th Street should be prohibited;*
- *70th Street must be upgraded between CSAH 19 and Kadler Avenue to MSA street standards.*

Response

The AUAR recognizes the existing condition of the pavement on 70th Street, and the need to review access locations during the city's development review process. The Mitigation Plan states that turn lanes will be constructed at proposed key access points to improve public safety. The city will determine the timing and type of improvements required for 70th Street, and how costs may be shared by the benefitted property owners. (See page 48.) The cities of Albertville and Otsego and the developer will work cooperatively on any project or improvement involving 70th Street.

Changes to AUAR Document

None.

Summary of Comment

The 2004 Northeast Wright County Transportation Study designates Kadler Avenue as a future minor arterial street. (Comment Letter 5)

- *Kadler Avenue is to be realigned south of 70th Street for a future I-94 crossing/interchange;*
- *Kadler Avenue must be improved on an interim basis as a local commercial/industrial street.*
- *Improvement of Kadler Avenue south of 70th Street needs to align with City of Otsego plans to improve Kadler Avenue north of 70th Street in 2018. (Comment Letter 5)*

Response

The AUAR recognizes the Northeast Wright County Sub-Area Study designation of Kadler Avenue and the potential for a future overpass and/or full-interchange access onto I-94. Based on the traffic operations analysis under year 2040 build conditions, neither the Kadler Avenue overpass nor the interchange are needed from a traffic operations perspective to accommodate year 2040 traffic forecasts. However, this improvement may be needed beyond year 2040 or if development patterns/intensity changes occur in the future. (See page 37.) The development concept plans show that Kadler, which is currently unpaved, would be improved along the west side of the AUAR area and provide access from 67th Street to 70th Street. Prior to approval of development plans near Kadler Avenue, the City of Albertville will consider the status of the proposed I-94/Kadler Avenue interchange. Design requirements for Kadler will be determined as part of the development approval process. (See page 47.)

Otsego's plans to improve Kadler Avenue north of 70th Street include shifting its alignment to the west. Kadler Avenue in this area is Albertville's western boundary and the land west of Kadler Avenue is in Otsego. Albertville's ability to cooperate in Kadler Avenue improvements will depend on Otsego providing additional right-of way to allow the current street to be shifted west to align with Otsego's proposed intersection location. Absent the availability of this additional right of way, Albertville will be limited to working within the current Kadler Avenue right of way south of 70th Street.

Changes to AUAR Document

None.

Summary of Comment

A second access to the Albertville Outlet Mall should be provided from 67th Street or Keystone Avenue to better distribute area traffic and to provide additional emergency access. (Comment Letter 5)

Response

The traffic study identified planned improvements to the CSAH 19/Premium Outlets Access intersection and other recommendations for the 2019 No-Build and Build scenarios that would improve traffic access to the Outlet Mall and reduce congestion in the area. The City recognizes that an additional access to the Outlet Mall would be desirable and has worked with the developer of the Albertville Business Park to determine if including such an access would be possible. It was found to be impractical because of the possible need to demolish buildings on the mall property, relocate ponds and wetlands, and to acquire land for right of way. These issues make establishing a second access to the mall unlikely at this time.

Changes to AUAR Document

None.