

September 16, 2014

Bryan K. Schafer
Community Development Director
City of Blaine
10801 Town Square Drive
Blaine, MN 55449

RE: City of Blaine Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) – Parkside North
Metropolitan Council Review No. 21275-1
Metropolitan Council District 10

Dear Mr. Schafer:

The Metropolitan Council received the EAW for the Parkside North project in Blaine on August 8, 2014. Parkside North is a mixed use neighborhood comprised of commercial, single-family detached, medium-density attached and multi-story apartments on 135 acres at Lexington Avenue and 125th Avenue North in the City of Blaine. Park trails, trees and sidewalks, wetlands, new water quality ponds and a new man-made open water pond of over 6 acres will provide additional drainage and recreational enhancements.

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. The staff offers the following comments for your consideration.

Item 8 – Permits and Approvals Required

In accordance with Minnesota Statute Section 473.513, at the time the City makes application to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) for a permit to construct the sanitary sewer for the proposed project, a copy of the plans, design data, and a location map of the project will also need to be submitted to the Metropolitan Council. The Council's Environmental Service Municipal Services staff will need to review, comment, and recommend issuance of the construction permit by the MPCA before connection can be made to the City's wastewater disposal system.

Item 9 a. i. - Land Use

Although not identified in Section 9.a.i, the planned Central Anoka County Regional Trail is adjacent to the northern boundary of the EAW project site. The Central Anoka County Regional Trail is a component of the Regional Parks System, which is governed by the Metropolitan Council's *Regional Parks Policy Plan*. The planned regional trail connects Mississippi West Regional Park in Ramsey, Bunker Hills Regional Park in Andover, Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve in Lino Lakes, to the border of Anoka and Washington Counties. The regional trail will be developed in the future by Anoka County within its right-of-way along 125th Avenue North. The EAW indicates that paved trails are planned through the development site. Council staff recommends that the City and developer coordinate with Anoka County to connect these local trails to the regional trail in appropriate locations.

Item 9 a. ii. - Land Use

If the proposed uses change what has been outlined in the comprehensive plan, it will require a comprehensive plan amendment.

Item 13a and d– Fish, Wildlife, Plant Communities, and Sensitive Ecological Resources

The EAW states that a 17.38-acre remnant woodland area on the site dominated by 12- to 24-inch diameter red and white oak trees is proposed to be cut down in its entirety. The document gives no

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indication of the habitat quality of this existing resource. Council staff questions the apparent lack of interest in preserving at least part if not all of the woodland as an amenity within the proposed development area by the City and the developer. The Council recommends that a tree/habitat survey be carried out on the woodland remnant to establish its current integrity and determine the feasibility and importance of preservation of part or the entire remnant, prior to advocating its total elimination.

The prevalence of wetlands, stormwater treatment and infiltration basins, and water bodies on this site raises the concern for wildlife impacts following completion of the proposed project. Additionally, the proposed project is located within one of 15 of the state's 'areas of statewide importance' to the Blanding's turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*), a state-listed threatened species. Indigenous fauna will likely attempt to remain in the area, in spite of its gradual conversion from a rural to an urban setting. Council staff requests the City utilize sloping, surmountable curbing throughout the project site. The use of standard, near-vertical B524 or similar curbing can be expected to result in nearly full mortality of the area's turtle population by entrapping them within roadways as they pass between and to nearby water basins for feeding and nesting. The simple change to a more gently sloping curb, consistent with DNR's recommendation and guidance contained in Appendix E will reduce the area fauna mortality risk without impacts to stormwater flow, driver and pedestrian safety, or maintenance activities. We suggest use of Minnesota Department of Transportation Curb and Gutter Design No. S524 or similar design profile.

This concludes the Council's review of the EAW. The Council will not take formal action on the EAW. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Annalee Garletz, Principal Reviewer, at 651-602-1330.

Sincerely,



LisaBeth Barajas, Manager
Local Planning Assistance

CC: Crystal Sheppeck, MHFA
Tod Sherman, Development Reviews Coordinator, MnDOT - Metro Division
Marie McCarthy, Metropolitan Council District 10
Annalee Garletz, Principal Reviewer
Raya Esmaeili, Reviews Coordinator