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September 6, 2023

Meagan Jones
Community Development Department
Planning & Zoning Division
2100 Ridge Avenue
Evanston, Illinois 60201

**RE: Planned Development Application Ryan Field – 1501 Central Street
Response to August 31, 2023 Staff Review Letter**

Dear Ms. Jones,

We are receipt of your August 31, 2023 review letter regarding the captioned matter. Please see below and attached in response to the comments contained therein.

Planning & Zoning

1. The Updated Development Allowances:
 - A. Parking - 4,364 required for principal uses on the lot. 1,408 total (515 on-site, 893 in parking lot across Ashland Ave) are proposed. This also includes 99 parking spaces CoE leases from Northwestern.
RESPONSE: Acknowledged.
 - B. Landscape Strip - 35 ft. required abutting residential district. A landscape strip of 16 ft. 3 in. proposed at the closest point at the north-south and east-west property lines at the northeast corner of the lot.
RESPONSE: Acknowledged.
 - C. Open parking area near Central Street with a 6 ft. 10 in. setback where 15 ft. is required.
RESPONSE: Acknowledged.
2. In relation to the update on groundwater management strategies for groundwater withdrawal at the proposed stadium and general environmental assessment of the impact these strategies please provide the following:
 - A. Documentation of the geotechnical site exploration has been completed and the Subsurface Exploration and Geotechnical Engineering Report that was completed by GEI Consultants, Inc.



RESPONSE: There will not be any groundwater withdrawal at the new stadium. A passive underdrain system is incorporated into the design of the stadium. The underdrain will only collect the groundwater which has seeped into the below grade area of the building footprint. The system is not a pumped well, and it does not actively draw down groundwater from the surrounding area. The underdrain will not impact the groundwater of the surrounding neighborhood areas and will have no impact to the existing vegetation.

Please reference geotechnical study completed by GEI Consultants, Inc. dated November 14, 2022.

3. In addition to events in the plaza space, please clarify what other facilities on the site may be in use at the same time. Is it anticipated that this may be used prior to games within the athletic facilities on the site?

RESPONSE: Use of the facilities for sports will not change as part of the proposed Planned Development or Text Amendment. The latest draft Text Amendment includes a provision saying that concerts will not be held on the same date as other full-capacity events in the district. The plaza spaces have been designed to accommodate varying types of events, which may occur before, during or after game days or community-centered events which occur on non-game days, but would be subject to coordination meetings as contemplated by the MOU.

4. Please provide photometrics for the updated lighting layout.

RESPONSE: Photometrics of the proposed parking lots have been shared with the City. Coordination of the fixture types and spacing remain ongoing.

5. Staff will continue to work with you and provide suggestions for possible public benefits.

RESPONSE: Noted.

6. Traffic Management Plan will continue to be refined through the process.

RESPONSE: Noted.

Parking

1. Provide additional clarification and detail on the plan to bring more parkers into downtown garages. The response was very vague and didn't have any specifics.

RESPONSE:

- ***Parking is limited in the stadium vicinity: Ryan Field is limited to 1,408 spaces in two surface lots to the immediately east and west of the stadium. Parking for concert events will be prohibited in the surrounding neighborhoods. It appears that parking will not be available at Canal***

Shores. Approximately 200 spaces are available along Poplar Street near the Central Street Metra station. While some entrepreneurial parking will likely be offered in business parking lots in the area, additional off-site parking served by shuttles will be needed to accommodate expected demand. Northwestern University's campus and downtown Evanston collectively provide capacity to serve that demand in a way that can be efficiently accessed by shuttle service.

- ***Advance Purchase, Communications, and Promotion:***
When tickets are purchased, and again leading up to events, parking information (i.e., locations, routes, costs) will be communicated to ticket holders. Parking off-site can be purchased in advance of the event, which will help to route traffic to those locations. Custom routes can be provided that correspond with the ticket purchaser's address. Additionally, off-site parking locations will be promoted via multiple channels including event-related communications, event-related websites, the University's event transportation/parking website, and multiple social media platforms.
- ***Wayfinding Signage:***
Parking on-site will be pre-paid only. As traffic approaches the Central Street corridor and Ryan Field at several key decision-point intersections, signs will be posted (likely a combination of static and electronic variable message signs) indicating parking as pre-paid/coupon-only while directing traffic to designated off-site parking on campus and downtown. Signs and barricades prohibiting parking in the surrounding neighborhoods will also reinforce the limited parking options in the stadium vicinity.
- ***Downtown Business Partnerships:***
A common activity before concerts includes pre-show dinner. Downtown restaurants coupled with parking and shuttles (or use of CTA and Metra transit options) present a great option for this. Promotions and/or partnerships with downtown restaurants can provide an opportunity to further encourage and communicate downtown parking options.

2. Please provide additional details on anticipated traffic impact for Thursday, Friday, and Sunday night events.

RESPONSE: *The traffic study focused analysis on Thursday and Saturday evening peak periods to evaluate impacts on potential weekday and weekend concert dates. Saturday counts were selected to represent weekend dates as traffic volumes on Saturdays are typically higher than counts on Sundays.*

Counts were also collected at the Central/Green Bay Road and Central/Ridge Road



intersections on a Friday to gauge the difference between typical weekday counts on Thursday and weekend counts on Saturday. The table below summarizes a comparison of the total intersection volumes at each intersection during the pre-event and post-event peak hour for the Thursday, Friday, and Saturday counts.

	Central / Green Bay		Central / Ridge	
	Pre-Event Peak Hour	Post-Event Peak Hour	Pre-Event Peak Hour	Post-Event Peak Hour
Thursday	1,721	371	645	140
Friday	1,700	467	633	210
% Difference (FRIDAY VS. THURSDAY)	-1%	+26%	-2%	+50%
Saturday	1,148	468	443	203
% Difference (SATURDAY VS. THURSDAY)	-33%	+26%	-31%	+45%

As shown in the table, Thursday pre-event volumes are the highest among the three days and Friday pre-event counts are very similar to Thursday counts. For post-event conditions, Friday and Saturday counts are very similar and higher than the same period on Thursday.

Based on this, analysis of the Thursday pre-event and Saturday post-event peak hours as included in the traffic study would be representative of conditions for a Friday night concert. Also, these days of the week include higher levels of traffic than on Sundays which leads to a more conservative analysis than evaluating the impact of concerts with Sunday traffic counts.

Public Works/Engineering

1. Please show the ramp to the below grade area on the renderings.
RESPONSE: *Please reference additional rendering which includes a view of the ramp leading to the below grade level.*
2. Provide the wind analysis for the public sidewalks/pedestrian ground level areas surrounding the stadium.
RESPONSE: *RWDI, a global wind engineering firm, has been engaged to complete a wind analysis for the project. The final wind analysis report is in progress, and will be forwarded to the city upon completion.*

Sustainability

1. The City would like written confirmation from ComEd that an all-electric building would

not be feasible. The City expects increased collaboration between Northwestern and ComEd to find a path towards building electrification including available FINANCIAL INCENTIVES ComEd would provide for a project like this.

RESPONSE: To date, ComEd has not confirmed if service is available at the level necessary to accomplish a fully electric facility of this scale.

As part of its continuing climate leadership efforts, the University has partnered with Ameresco, a leading clean technology integrator specializing in energy efficiency and renewable energy. This initiative will help the University significantly reduce its carbon footprint across both the Evanston and Chicago campuses while also providing learning opportunities for students.

The University will continue to investigate green initiatives which align with their Sustainability Plan, and move further towards its sustainability goals of reducing its energy and utility usage.

2. Will Northwestern be offsetting 100% of the fossil fuel electricity and natural gas use with the purchase of RECs?

RESPONSE: The University will continue to investigate green initiatives which align with their Sustainability Plan, and move further towards its sustainability goals of reducing its energy and utility usage.

3. Is it possible to have the waste stations individuals be paid; volunteer run initiatives for these events tend to struggle to operate properly for “zero-waste” events; Is there any expected offerings of reusable container options for drinks or other offered concessions to help reduce the amount of waste being generated?

RESPONSE: For 2023, a program called “Zero Waste Ryan Field” is being piloted by sustainNU and the student Sustainability Committee. This program will involve the concessionaire using fully compostable service receptacles and having student volunteers stationed throughout the stadium to inform fans about properly disposing of compostables and recyclables in the proper bins.

4. The Sustainability Plan within the MOU should be broken out into two parts: “Construction” & “Operations.”

- “Construction”
 - Provide plan for deconstruction (not demolition) of the existing structure
 - Provide plan for onsite materials reuse
 - Use low-carbon steel and low-carbon concrete
 - Calculate embodied carbon
 - Conduct feasibility study of greywater digester for food prep waste in connection areas



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- Collaborate with ComEd on building electrification and EV charging
- Conduct new feasibility study of solar PV or solar parking canopies
- “Operations”
 - Plan a path towards net zero greenhouse gas emissions that primarily addresses emissions from the building’s energy usage
 - Include food waste diversion services within the Stadium Complex
 - Include reusable food and beverage wares and the needed infrastructure
 - Provide litter management plans for parking lot, neighboring areas
 - Restroom Utilization of hand dryers

RESPONSE: The Sustainability Plan within the MOU shall address both construction and operational components as applicable, with some aspects being addressed within the Construction Management Plan as well. Details of the plan will continue to be developed to align with the City of Evanston requirements and the University’s sustainability plan.

Please contact me with any questions or comments.

Very truly yours,

DLA Piper LLP (US)

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Katherine C. Jahnke Dale'.

Katherine C. Jahnke Dale

Enclosures