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September 19, 2023

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

**RE: Planned Development & Text Amendment Applications
Ryan Field – 1501 Central Street
Written Response to Comments Made at the September 6 Land Use Commission**

Dear Ms. Jones,

In preparation for the September 27, 2023 Plan Commission hearing, the Northwestern University project team would like to provide responses to certain comments that were made by the Land Use Commission members and public at the September 6, 2023 hearing. Additional information or follow-up can be provided at the next Land Use Commission meeting.

As a preliminary matter, it was stated several times during the September 6 meeting that there is “significant opposition” to the requested approvals. We would like to note that this characterization appears to ignore the fact that there is significant *support* for the project and requested text amendment in the community as well. This is evidenced by the petition signed by almost 3,000 Evanston residents that was previously submitted as well as third party grassroots organizations, such as the Field of Opportunities, with more than 800 supporters.

We have also enclosed the police incident reports that Mr. Dave Davis submitted for the public record at the September 6 meeting.

Additionally, given the limited time provided to Northwestern to make its presentation and the technical issues on September 6, we feel that we were unable to fully introduce our team of subject matter experts and their qualifications. Northwestern has assembled a team of experts from across the country for this project and a summary of their qualifications is attached.

Finally, we noted in the public comments posted prior to the September 6 meeting that some residents had commissioned a land valuation analysis from CohnReznick. We have asked Mary Linberger, a certified MAI appraiser, to review and provide her opinion on the analysis. A summary of her review is enclosed.

Comment: Provide a response to the Arup report provided in the submitted public



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comments.

Response: Please see the enclosed detailed response to the Arup report.

Comment: Provide information on hospital shift changes and the timing. How will those interact with event traffic patterns and parking availability?

Response: Hospital activity, both associated with physicians/employees and patients/visitors is heavily focused during weekdays before 5 PM. Hospital parking needs are at their peak between late morning (11 AM) and mid-afternoon (3 PM).

According to its leadership, NorthShore Evanston Hospital's daily shift changes fall in the following windows:

- 6:30am-8am
- 2:30pm-4pm
- 6:30pm-7:30pm
- 10:30pm-midnight

While various shift-oriented employees maintain different shift times, the main shift change at hospitals occurs around 3 PM. Non-clinical and other non-shift-oriented employees typically end their work day between 5 and 6 PM. Overall hospital parking demands over the course of a weekday consistently show steady reduction in parking after 3 PM. The day (main) shift at most hospitals typically accounts for 60-70 percent of physicians and employees while the evening and night shifts are collectively comprised of the balance. Similar to evenings, weekends also have lower levels of employees and patient activity compared to weekdays.

Given that concert events would be typically planned for evenings on weekdays or weekends, the pre-event arrival and post-event departure periods do not align with the main employee shift and higher periods of hospital activity (up until 3 PM and to a lesser extent until 5 PM).

Northwestern has not been aware of any issues or concerns related to activities on the Athletics Central Street campus related to hospital shift changes.

Question: What, if any, is the change in the amount of green space as a result of the changes to the parking lots?

Response: The existing green space in the U2 District is 226,300 sf and the proposed green space is 208,900 sf. Areas outside of stadium which have artificial turf are excluded from the calculations. Although the total square footage in the proposed plan is reduced by 7.7%, the landscape buffer will provide new trees and vegetation along the eastern property line, as shown on the submitted landscape plans.

Comment: Provide more details regarding the amount and availability of parking.

Response: Capacity concert events are estimated to generate a need for approximately 5,400-6,000 parking spaces. Parking is planned collectively between on site, off site (walkable) and off site (shuttle). Approximately 1,400 spaces are available on site, 200 spaces are available along Poplar Avenue (near Central Street Metra), 1,600+ spaces on campus, and 2,800 spaces in downtown Evanston garages. This does not include entrepreneurial private lots that may sell



spaces in the general area approaching the stadium area nor does it include all parking options on the University's campus.

With respect to availability of off-site parking options, the University controls campus parking and can ensure spaces are available as needed while also considering concerts would largely occur when most students are away on summer break. For downtown parking, we coordinated with SP+, who manages the City's off-street parking facilities, as well as other privately-owned parking garages, to review utilization data and outline the typical parking availability downtown (including non-City-owned public off-street parking) on weekday and weekend evenings during Late Spring-Late Summer months when outdoor concerts would be expected to occur. The availability of parking is outlined below:

Location	Typical Available Spaces	
	Weekday Evening	Weekend Evening
E2 Self-Park (1890 N Maple)	100 (28%)	100 (28%)
1629 Orrington	250 (71%)	250 (71%)
1800 Maple Self-Park	840 (70%)	840 (70%)
Sherman Plaza (821 Davis)	840 (70%)	840 (70%)
Church Street Self-Park (525 Church)	450 (75%)	420 (70%)
500 Davis	50 (67%)	50 (67%)
One Rotary Center (1560 Sherman)	315 (65%)	320 (66%)
TOTAL	2,845 (67%)	2,820 (66%)

As outlined above, approximately 2,800-2,850 spaces are typically available within publicly available off-street parking in downtown Evanston during late Spring-late Summer months on weekday and weekend evenings.

Additionally, the University has also entered into an agreement with NorthShore Evanston Hospital that allows for the NU use of up to 700 excess capacity parking spaces in NorthShore's parking garages on evenings where capacity events are hosted at Ryan Field – football games and concerts.

Our estimate for a need for approximately 5,400-6,000 parking spaces is based on eliminating football parking in the surrounding neighborhoods on streets, on front and side lawns (sold by residents), and in residential private parking spaces/garages (sold by residents). In response to neighbor input, concert event parking is proposed to be prohibited in the surrounding neighborhoods. This will result in less traffic generated in the stadium area overall and removal of traffic circulating through residential neighborhoods in search of parking. We also note that capacity concert events are 39% smaller than the current football capacity.

Question: How will truck loading/staging work for concerts? How do we ensure they will not be staging on the area streets?

Response: The load in and load out procedure for an event shall be carefully coordinated to



result in an efficient set up and removal of equipment needed for an event. The coordination efforts will involve the careful planning of an offsite location for truck marshalling in conjunction with a sequenced delivery cadence to the underground loading dock area. This type of sequenced operation would apply to both the initial set up and removal of the event equipment. Sequencing of the truck traffic will be organized by the event operator, who will notify the offsite marshalling location when a truck may leave the marshalling location to being routing to the stadium in order to provide a “just in time” delivery to the underground loading dock. The underground loading dock is currently designed to accommodate 3 separate truck loading bays with 5 additional bays for bus parking. Members of the community will observe trucks and buses entering and leaving the underground loading area, not idling on the surrounding streets.

It should be noted that this is a significant upgrade from the current loading operations at the existing stadium. Currently, there is no loading dock area at Ryan Field. Deliveries are accepted in multiple areas, including spaces adjacent to residential neighbors and, in some cases, on Ashland Avenue. The current concession operations take deliveries near Gate M (south tower) in an area that will become green space in the new stadium. Additionally, trucks regularly unload on the east side of Ryan Field adjacent to neighboring homes. Compared to the comprehensive loading plan for concerts and game days outlined above, this is a significant improvement.

Question: Are there other comparable universities having concerts in their athletic facilities? Of those, are any with residential nearby?

Response: While each specific situation is unique, we have identified a list of 36 other Power 5 schools that have had at least one concert in their football stadium since 2016. Of those, 17 are located adjacent to or in relatively close proximity to single-family residential areas. In addition to the Power 5 universities that have hosted concerts, we have identified another 12 “Group of Five” schools that have hosted at least one stadium concert during the same period. It should be noted that all such schools are not-for-profit universities.

It should also be noted that many comments were made comparing the proposed concert use to other venues, such as the United Center, Allstate Arena and Wrigley Field. While the capacity of the stadium may be comparable to some of these venues, it should be noted that such comparisons are inaccurate when considering (1) the frequency of events at these locations and (2) the availability of both Metra and CTA rail transit at Ryan Field compared to these other venues.

For example, Wrigley Field has 81 home baseball games and up to 14 concerts in a given year in addition to extensive large-scale community events and is only serviced by CTA rail. In addition to 36 Chicago Wolves games and many other sports events, Allstate Arena will host approximately 55 concerts in 2023 and is not easily accessed via CTA rail or Metra. Similarly, in addition to 41 Bulls games and 41 Blackhawks games, the United Center will host 69 concerts in 2023 and hosted 72 concerts in 2022, while also not being easily served by either rail provider. Finally, McCormick place has hundreds of events per year, some of which with attendance of over 100,000 people.

As clearly demonstrated by these differences in event frequency and rail transit availability, these



comparisons are inaccurate and misleading notwithstanding similarities in capacity of some of these venues.

Comment: Provide copies of the Traffic Management and Concert Operations Plans and Memorandum of Understanding.

Response: As noted in all submission to date, these documents will be completed and submitted to staff for review at a later date. The MOU will be finalized and signed prior to building permit. The other plans will be finalized prior to certificate of occupancy and updated at least annually thereafter. Summaries of what will be included in the MOU and Transportation Management Plan have been provided in previously submitted materials. A summary of what would be included in the Concert Operations Plan is enclosed. Northwestern has decades of experience dealing with traffic management for football, and that knowledge will help to develop concert operation plans that protect the needs of the neighborhood balanced with the needs of concert patrons.

Question: Will City staff conduct a peer review of Northwestern's geotechnical report?

Response: Northwestern submitted its geotechnical report to the City on September 6. No comments have been received to date. Note that the report reconfirms that there will be no impact on adjacent properties. Additionally, all permits for the proposed stadium will go through typical City review processes and meet applicable codes.

Comment: What is the status of the City economic impact study?

Response: The City released its economic impact study on Friday, September 15 and is available on the City's Community Development Department's "Proposed Projects" website.

Comment: Various clarifying questions regarding the text amendment language and intent.

Response: As previously stated by counsel on the record at the September 6 meeting, Northwestern is amenable to the various modifications to the text amendment that were discussed, if the Commission desired to include such changes as a condition of approval. Those changes include:

- Confirm in the approval ordinance that the text amendment is only effective if the stadium is built;
- Providing in the text amendment that the Transportation Management Plan (TMP) would be submitted to the City Manager or its designee for approval and in the approval ordinance that the TMP would apply to both concerts and football games; and
- Clarifying that any use of the bandshell/music outside of the public-facing concerts would be in conjunction with community events.

The University is open to considering further refinement of its proposed text amendment language if the Land Use Commission or members of the community believe that it would be helpful to have clearer confirmation of the University's intent with respect to the proposed uses.

Comment: Did the University consider wrapping the south façade of the stadium with additional limestone?



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Response: The University has prepared the attached alternate south façade design, which mirrors the current north façade, for the City and Commission's review and consideration.

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