

ZONING COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

FILES # 14-094970

1. **APPLICANT:** Metropolitan State University **HEARING DATE:** 3/13/14
 2. **TYPE OF APPLICATION:** Site Plan Review
 3. **LOCATION:** 690 East 7th Street
 4. **PIN & LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** See survey
 5. **PLANNING DISTRICT:** District 4 (Dayton's Bluff) **PRESENT ZONING:** B2
 6. **ZONING CODE REFERENCE:** 61.402.c
 7. **STAFF REPORT DATE:** 3/6/14 **BY:** Tom Beach
 8. **DATE RECEIVED:** 1/28/14 **DEADLINE FOR ACTION:** 3/27/14
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- A. **PURPOSE:** Site plan review for a new student center for Metropolitan State University
- B. **PARCEL SIZE:** 40,000 square feet
- C. **EXISTING LAND USE:** Surface parking lot
- D. **SURROUNDING LAND USE:**
 - North: Commercial (T2 and B3)
 - East: Metro State parking lot (B2)
 - South: Metro State parking lot (B2)
 - West: Commercial (B2)
- E. **ZONING CODE CITATION:** Findings for site plan review are listed in Section 61.402.c. (See Section H of the staff report.)
- F. **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Plan call for a 27,000 square-foot, two-story student center with meeting rooms, lounge, offices, event space, café and fitness room. The building would have two main entrances: one on the north side facing East 7th Street and one on the south side facing the campus. The building would have large windows on the north and south sides. Brick used for the facades would match the brick of the existing campus buildings.
- G. **DISTRICT COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE:** No correspondence was received.
- H. **FINDINGS:** Section 62.108(c) of the Zoning Code says that in "order to approve the site plan, the planning commission shall consider and find that the site plan is consistent with" the findings listed below.

1. *Applicable ordinances of the City of Saint Paul.*

The site plan is consistent with this finding. The site plan meets all applicable ordinances, including height and setbacks. The building complies with design standards in the Zoning Code.

2. *The city's adopted comprehensive plan and development or project plans for sub-areas of the city.*

The site plan is consistent with this finding. East 7th is designated as a Mixed-Use Corridor in the Comprehensive Plan (2010). The Plan supports a mix of uses on Mixed-Use Corridors (LU Policy 1.24).

Mixed-Use Corridors may be either predominately residential or predominately commercial. Predominately residential corridors will have smaller scale commercial uses, while predominately commercial corridors will have housing interspersed with commercial office uses and retail goods and services. The ramp and student center are examples of a mix of uses along the East 7th Street corridor. It promotes conditions that support those who live and work along Mixed-Use Corridors, including frequent transit services (LU Policy 1.28). The ramp and student center, "Provide connections by bicycle and pedestrian facilities to adjacent areas," as stated in LU Policy 1.27.

The work conducted by the University on the ramp and student center are also prime examples of working with anchors, business and property owners to "develop and maintain placemaking elements and c community gathering spaces at visible places along the East 7th Street Corridor." Metropolitan State University has worked closely with the community to identify open space on East 7th and to provide for public space in the development. This goal was highlighted in the Near East Side Roadmap (2012) as part of Real Estate Objective RE2.4.

3. *Preservation of unique geologic, geographic or historically significant characteristics of the city and environmentally sensitive areas.*

The site plan is consistent with this finding. The site is currently a parking lot with no unique geologic, geographic characteristics. It is not in an environmentally sensitive area.

4. *Protection of adjacent and neighboring properties through reasonable provision for such matters as surface water drainage, sound and sight buffers, preservation of views, light and air, and those aspects of design which may have substantial effects on neighboring land uses.*

The site plan is consistent with this finding.

- Stormwater will be directed to City storm sewers.
- The building will not affect views, light and air for neighboring land uses.
- The building façade facing East 7th Street will have large windows and brick and will enhance the character of the area.

5. *The arrangement of buildings, uses and facilities of the proposed development in order to assure abutting property and/or its occupants will not be unreasonably affected.*

The site plan is consistent with this finding. The building will be located along East 7th Street with a main entrance facing the street. This will enhance the vitality of the area.

6. *Creation of energy-conserving design through landscaping and location, orientation and elevation of structures.*

The site plan is consistent with this finding.

7. *Safety and convenience of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic both within the site and in relation to access streets, including traffic circulation features, the locations and design of entrances and exits and parking areas within the site.*

The site plan is consistent with this finding. No new parking is proposed as part of the student center. A new parking ramp is proposed just south of the student center and this is going through its own site plan review.

Traffic calming measures will be implemented on Maria as part of the site plan for the parking ramp.

8. *The satisfactory availability and capacity of storm and sanitary sewers, including solutions to any drainage problems in the area of the development.*

The site plan meets this finding. The sewer and stormwater system for the student center has been designed to also handle stormwater from the parking ramp that is proposed to be built next to the student center. (The ramp is going through its own site plan review.)

The stormsewer system includes a large stormwater infiltration system under a plaza to be built south of the student center. This system is intended to meet standards for stormwater rate control and water quality.

Public Work Sewer Division has reviewed the site plan and recommends approval subject to some minor revisions.

Capitol Region Watershed must approve the plans. They will be meeting about the project in the near future. Based on their review so far, it is anticipated that the plans will meet the Watershed's standards subject to some possible minor revisions.

The site plan is consistent with this finding for sewers and stormwater if it is approved by Saint Paul Public Works and the Capitol Region Watershed District.

9. *Sufficient landscaping, fences, walls and parking necessary to meet the above objectives.*

The site plan meets this finding. The south half of the site will be a new landscaped plaza for the campus. Parking is being provided by a new ramp which is going through a separate site plan review.

10. *Site accessibility in accordance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including parking spaces, passenger loading zones and accessible routes.*

The site plan will meet this finding. ADA compliant accessible routes are provided. No parking spaces or passenger loading zones are proposed as part of the project.

11. *Provision for erosion and sediment control as specified in the Ramsey Erosion Sediment and Control Handbook.*

The site plan meets this finding. The site plan shows erosion/sediment control measures such as silt fences and inlet protect and complies with these standards.

- I. **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Based on the findings above, the staff recommends approval of the site plan subject of final approval of plans for stormwater and erosion/sediment control measures by the Capitol Region Watershed District and Saint Paul Public Works Sewer Division.



Minnesota
STATE COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES
METROPOLITAN
STATE UNIVERSITY
STUDENT CENTER

BWBIR

340 E. River Street, 5th Floor
St. Paul, MN 55102
651.272.3131
www.bwbir.com



2221 Hennepin Ave
St. Paul, MN 55102
651.272.3131
www.stantec.com

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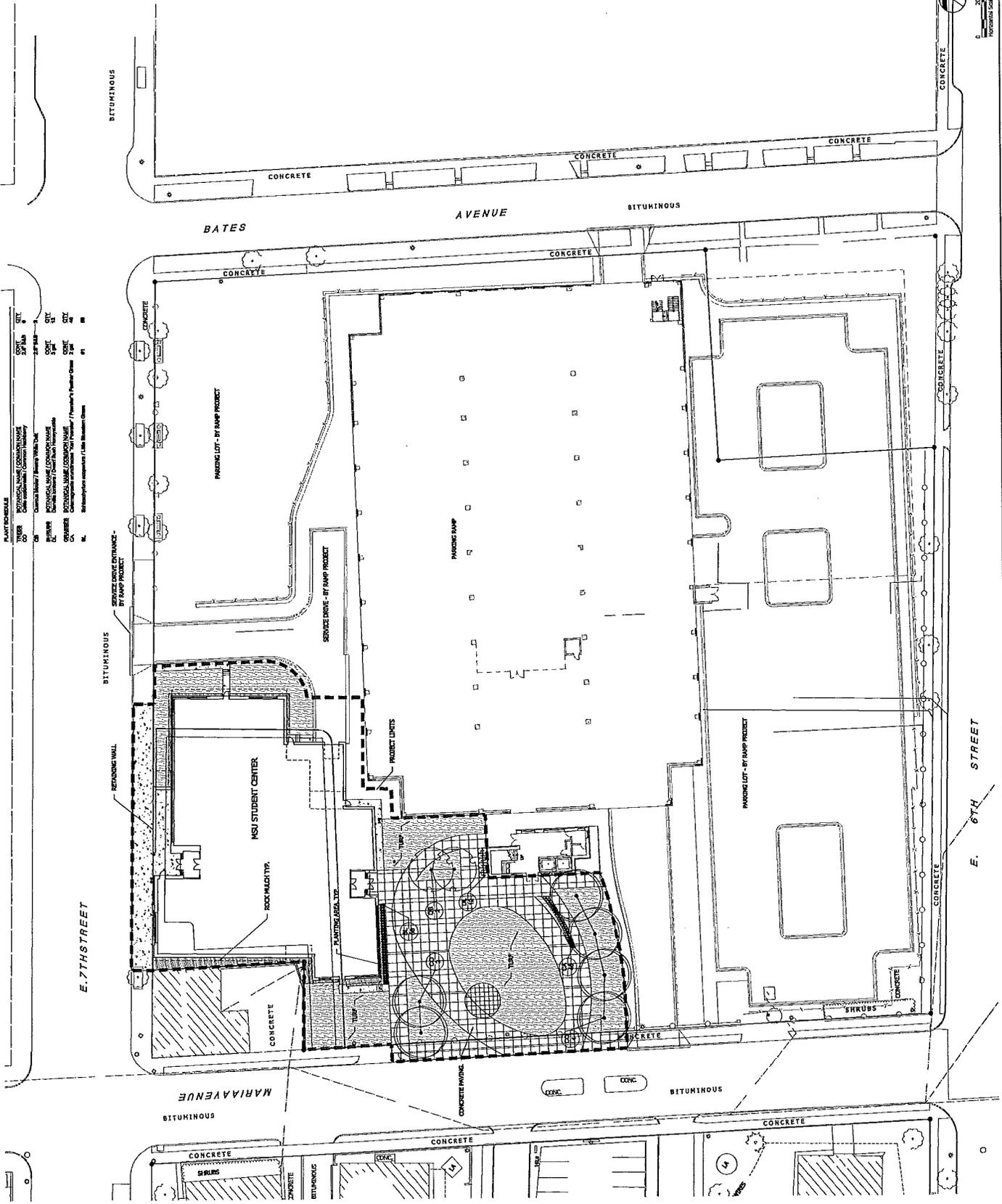
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