

# Monticello Industrial AUAR Update

City Council-Planning Commission | Dec. 15, 2025

# WHAT IS AN AUAR?

- Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) is an environmental review document outlined by state statute
  - Hybrid of an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
  - “Uses a list of questions adapted from the EAW form, but provides a level of analysis of typical urban area impacts comparable to an EIS”
- AUAR process provides local governments with the opportunity to evaluate how different land uses may impact the community's environment
  - Used when there is no individual specific project; evaluate multiple scenarios
  - Environmental analysis before major development occurs, informing development decisions
- AUAR study and process is managed by a Responsible Government Unit (RGU)
  - RGU entity for an AUAR is the local unit of government



# WHAT IS AN AUAR?

- Evaluates impacts within a defined geographic study area for the identified development scenarios
- Valid for 5 years for the specific scenarios studied; must be updated every 5 years
- Must be updated if proposed development will be more intense than scenarios provided and studied in the AUAR
- Provides information useful to planning for the management and mitigation of impacts of the identified scenarios
  - Specifies of other studies required for development
- **An AUAR is NOT a project approval document. The AUAR is used to inform local planning and development decisions.**



# WHAT IS THE MONTICELLO INDUSTRIAL AUAR?

- Monticello Tech LLC is proposing to develop a technology campus, including data center uses, on 550 acres of land located in the Monticello Orderly Annexation Area
- Following an initial concept review workshop, the City determined an environmental review process would be the appropriate next step
- Monticello Tech has proposed a development concept rather than a specific project
- As RGU for this step of environmental review, the City has determined that an AUAR should be prepared in compliance with the State's requirements.
- Consultant preparation and review
  - Prepared by Kimley-Horn
  - Reviewed by City staff and WSB (City's environmental review consultant)



# WHAT IS THE MONTICELLO INDUSTRIAL AUAR?

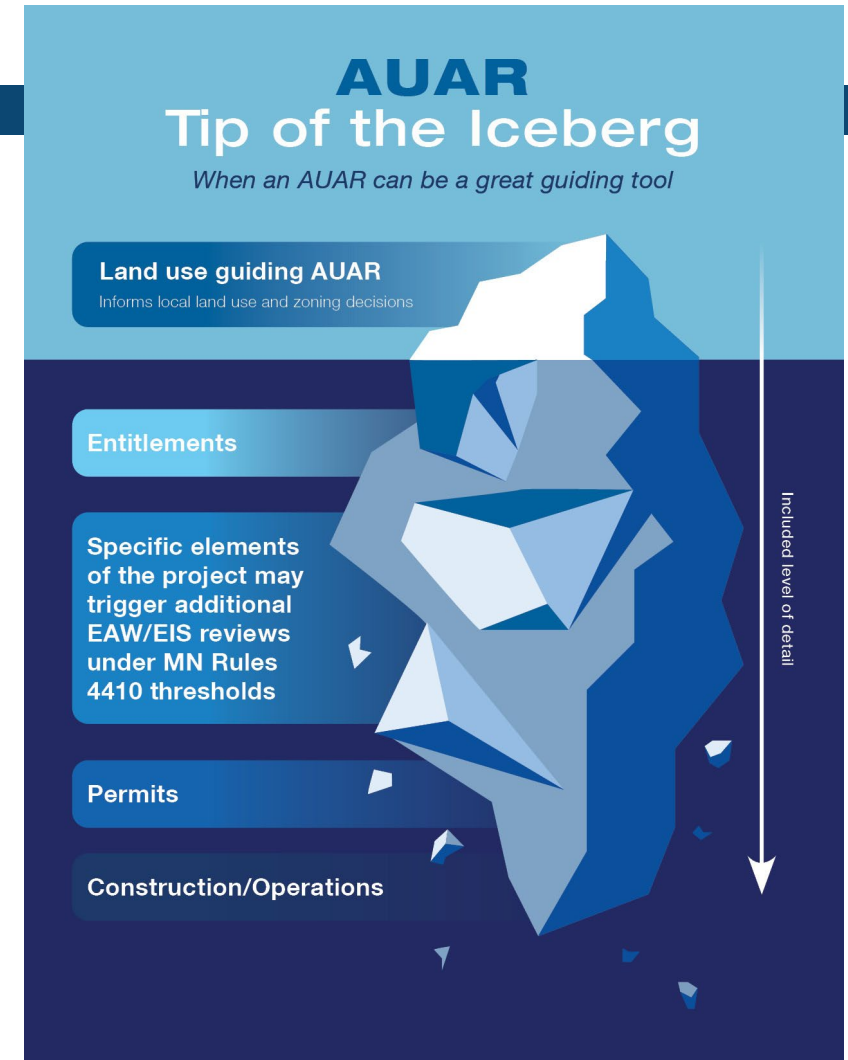
- The AUAR environmental review process provides the City with the data to inform planning decisions for two different development scenarios
  - Technology campus, including data center uses
  - Light industrial uses typical to Light Industrial Park land use designation, not including principal use data centers
- Scoping process to define scenarios and outline AUAR review information
  - Scoping Document accepted and Order to Authorize Preparation of AUAR on October 12, 2025
  - Scoping Document and comments informed the full AUAR
- AUAR evaluates maximum development capacity impacts for both scenarios and identifies mitigation measures to address impacts for both scenarios
  - Additional study when a known development project comes forward
  - Transition Area – NW Quadrant Land Use Plan and 2040 Plan





# HOW DOES THE AUAR INFORM DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS?

- **Valuable impact information used and applied by the City for either development scenario**
- Provides a Mitigation Plan outlining specific studies, plan requirements, and other strategies to address potential development impacts for the two scenarios
- Identifies additional studies that required prior to or as part of development applications
- Identifies permits and additional environmental review required for either/both scenarios
- Provides an outline for public improvement needed
- Information/requirements as part of development and construction



Graphic provided by Kimley Horn

# WHAT DOES THE MONTICELLO INDUSTRIAL AUAR REVIEW?

- Analysis and review of AUAR category areas:
  - Project Information & Scenarios
  - Land Use & Land Cover
  - Climate Adaptation and Resilience – including estimates of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Carbon Footprint
  - Permits Required
  - Geology & Soils
  - Water Resources
    - Surface, groundwater, water appropriations, wastewater, stormwater
  - Contamination
  - Wildlife & Habitat
  - Cultural Resources
  - Visual
  - Air
  - Noise
  - Transportation
  - Cumulative Potential Effects
  - Other – Power next steps, site security, Electromagnetic Field Radiation
  - **Mitigation Plan**



# ADDITIONAL STUDIES COMPLETED TO DATE

Several supplemental studies have been completed specific to this AUAR, including:

- **Wetlands** – Wetland Delineations (completed by Kimley-Horn)
- **Transportation** – Transportation Impact Assessment – for operations and construction (completed by Kimley-Horn)
- **Water and Aquifer** – Preliminary Water and Aquifer Assessments (completed by the city)
- **Wastewater** – Preliminary Sanitary Sewer Service Assessment (completed by the city)
- **Archeological Phase I Assessment** (completed by an archaeological consultant - In Situ)
- **Stormwater** – Initial drainage assessment (completed by Kimley-Horn)
- **Ongoing coordination with state agencies**



# ADDITIONAL FUTURE STUDIES

The AUAR mitigation plan identifies the following additional studies to be completed

- For both scenarios - once a specific project has been identified
  - Noise evaluation to confirm if specific noise mitigation measures are needed with site design
  - Project specific stormwater management plan
  - Phase I/II Environmental Site Assessment for potential contamination on site
  - Tree survey
  - Supplemental Archaeological Survey may be needed
- Specific to Scenario 1
  - A hydrogeological analysis to site the Rapid Infiltration Basin system within the study area, then MPCA review and permit (including an EAW) prior to construction
  - Completion of a well capacity and aquifer pumping plan (city to complete outside of the study area)
  - **Additional environmental reviews may be necessary for backup generators, sewer extensions, water appropriation and power needs**



# IMPACT AND MITIGATION SUMMARY

Resource	Mitigation	Responsible Party
<p><b>Climate Adaption</b> – trends in increased precipitation and heat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several site and building adaptations will be considered (green infrastructure, water reduction strategies, landscaping, etc.).</li> <li>• <b>Scenario 1:</b> Majority of technology park end users have sustainability goals around water, energy, carbon, recycling that would be implemented on this site.</li> </ul>	Developer
<p><b>Land Use</b> – changes from agricultural to light industrial uses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City will annex area and development would need to comply with city zoning, shoreland overlay, and land use requirements.</li> <li>• <b>Both scenarios:</b> would need to incorporate the conceptual future greenway corridor as site planning advances.</li> </ul>	Developer
<p><b>Geology/Soils</b> – changes to topography, 12 types of soils on site</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soils are suitable for buildings.</li> <li>• Earthwork can be generally balanced on the site to maintain the existing drainage patterns, some slope stabilization will be needed.</li> </ul>	Developer
<p><b>Water Resources</b> – <i>Surface Water</i> - 7 wetlands on site, including one DNR Public Water Wetland in the SE corner</p>	<p><b>Scenario 1:</b> anticipated to have more wetland impacts, no impact to the DNR Public Water Wetland anticipated for either scenario. Proposer to obtain appropriate permits and purchase wetland banking credits, if needed.</p>	Developer

# IMPACT AND MITIGATION SUMMARY

Resource	Mitigation	Responsible Party
<p><b>Water Resources – Groundwater</b> – 5 wells may be located within the study area, NW corner of study area is located within a DWSMA – low vulnerability</p>	<p><b>Both scenarios:</b> surface water runoff will be captured and treated in lined stormwater ponds prior to leaving the site to meet requirements from the City, MPCA, MDH, and the NPDES Construction Stormwater Permit. If unable to re-use, wells would be properly sealed by a licensed well contractor prior to redevelopment</p> <p><b>Scenario 1:</b> DWSMA would need to be re-evaluated with the increase in flows from the aquifer.</p>	<p>Developer and City</p>
<p><b>Water Resources - Wastewater</b></p>	<p><b>Scenario 1:</b> use of non-contact cooling water to remove heat from industrial systems without directly contacting materials. This would be discharged to Rapid Infiltration Basins (RIB) system that would be permitted by the MPCA and would filter before going back into the groundwater and recharge the aquifer over the next 10-20 years. MPCA’s guidance on RIBs: <a href="https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-wwtp5-64.pdf">https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/wq-wwtp5-64.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Scenario 2:</b> wastewater would discharge to municipal collection system.</p> <p><b>Both scenarios:</b> require new extensions to and through the site.</p>	<p>Developer and City</p>

# IMPACT AND MITIGATION SUMMARY

Resource	Mitigation	Responsible Party
<p><b>Water Resources – Stormwater</b> – minimal impervious surface area within the study area today, no existing permanent stormwater management features</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impervious surface will increase with development. On-site stormwater basins are proposed and will be sized to accommodate runoff from these impervious areas.</li> <li>• Infiltration basins will follow MPCA guidelines and the requirements of the NPDES Permit.</li> <li>• Additional detailed stormwater analysis will be provided at later stages of the design phase.</li> </ul>	<p>Developer</p>
<p><b>Water Resources – Water Appropriations</b></p>	<p><b>Both scenarios:</b> watermain extensions and potentially a water storage tank will need to be constructed to service the study area. Both scenarios would require additional water appropriations from MnDNR.</p> <p><b>Scenario 1:</b> water demand at full build is higher than Scenario 2 for water cooling purposes. An aquifer analysis has begun to understand water levels for any new potential wells. Water demands will be phased as the project is intended to be built over the next 10+ years to get to the full build out.</p>	<p>Developer and City</p>

# NEXT STEPS FOR WATER APPROPRIATIONS

*All numbers are in millions of gallons per year*

Scenario	City's Remaining Appropriation	Existing Use	Proposed Demand	RIB Recharge to Aquifer	New Net Demand
<b>1 – Technology Park</b>	149	76	250 - 300	75	<b>99-149</b>
<b>2 – Light Industrial</b>	149	76	113	0	<b>37</b>

- City conducted a preliminary aquifer analysis
- Scenario 1 and 2 Permits/ Approvals:
  - DNR Water Appropriations Permit to increase pumping capacity
  - MDH permit for new well(s)
  - MPCA EAW for sewer extension
- Scenario 1 Specific Permits/ Approvals:
  - MPCA Permit for RIB - including EAW and hydrogeological study
  - MDH permit for water storage tank



# IMPACT AND MITIGATION SUMMARY

Resource	Mitigation	Responsible Party
<p><b>Contamination</b> – 1 MPCA WIMN site identified within study area (inactive stormwater permit)</p>	<p><b>Scenario 1:</b> back-up generators may be needed for emergency use. Depending on specific end user needs, if 1 million gallons or more of fuel storage for backup generators are needed, separate EAW will be completed.</p> <p><b>Both scenarios:</b> developer to complete a Phase I/II ESA prior to construction.</p>	<p>Developer</p>
<p><b>Fish &amp; Wildlife</b> – within 1 mile of the study area Blanding’s Turtle, Monarch Butterfly, Whooping Crane, and Western Regal Fritillary habitat may be present</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tree removal may be needed, developer to comply with City’s Tree Protection Ordinance.</li> <li>• A conceptual greenway corridor is planned within the study area that could provide connections between and among natural open spaces and be a natural area for wildlife.</li> <li>• Comply with MnDNR’s recommendations for minimizing impacts to Blanding’s Turtle.</li> </ul>	<p>Developer</p>
<p><b>Cultural Resources</b> – known archeological records and 3 historic sites in the vicinity of the study area</p>	<p>Coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office and State Archeologist is ongoing.</p>	<p>Developer</p>

# IMPACT AND MITIGATION SUMMARY

Resource	Mitigation	Developer
Visual	<p><b>Both scenarios:</b> Conform with the city ordinances for building height, building form, landscape screening, outdoor storage areas, and lighting to avoid impacts to neighboring properties and species.</p> <p><b>Scenario 1:</b> is expected to have larger buffers and setback requirements between nearby uses around the perimeter of the buildings compared to Scenario 2.</p>	Developer
Air	<p><b>Both scenarios:</b> If any potential emission generation (e.g., from generators) from future development is above the threshold for an air quality permit/environmental review, then that specific project would be subject to additional environmental review beyond what is evaluated in this AUAR.</p>	Developer
Noise	<p><b>Scenario 1:</b> main source of noise, depending on the type of technology park use, could include computers and ventilation/cooling systems within the building, and the testing of generators up to once per month and operating in the case of emergency.</p> <p><b>Both scenarios:</b> additional noise evaluations will be completed to identify any noise mitigation measures and comply with MPCA and city noise ordinances.</p>	Developer



# IMPACT AND MITIGATION SUMMARY

Resource	Mitigation	Responsible Party
<b>Transportation</b>	<p><b>Scenario 1:</b> less traffic generated during operations. Additional turn lanes anticipated at access points to accommodate traffic to and from the site.</p> <p><b>Scenario 2:</b> more traffic during operations is anticipated compared to Scenario 1. Additional turn lanes anticipated at access points to accommodate traffic to and from the site.</p> <p><b>Both scenarios:</b> include a future road network within the study area. Both scenarios are expected to have a new road connection off 85<sup>th</sup> Street NE into the site with only private roads/private connections internal to the site. Scenario 2 is anticipated to have a grid system of internal public roads to facilitate traffic between various tenants.</p>	Developer and City
<b>Other Effects</b>	<p><b>Power Needs for Scenario 1:</b> project proposer would request the utility company complete a System Impact Study on the existing grid network to understand the existing capacity and future infrastructure power needs.</p> <p><b>EMF:</b> Both scenarios propose new electronics and utilities that would emit EMF levels. Scenario 1 would emit EMF levels typical of industrial and utility applications and Scenario 2 would emit EMF levels typical of office and warehouse applications. Project's design would include EMF mitigation strategies to ensure that the EMF radiation levels remain well within the safety thresholds.</p>	Developer and Utility Company



# DRAFT AUAR COMMENT PERIOD SUMMARY

- Public and agency comment period: Nov 18-Dec 18. 2025
- To date:
  - 2 agency comments
  - 5 public comments at time of preparation, more received in interim
- Open house during comment period on Nov 20
- 10-day objection period (state agencies) following Final AUAR and comment responses



# AGENCY COMMENTS

Agency	Agency Comment	Response
<b>Wright County</b>	<p>The County does not have any significant comments currently. Access location and design along CR 117 will be reviewed during the platting process.</p> <p>Additionally, as the area around CR 117 develops would the City be interested in discussing a turn back of the roadway similar to Edmonson Ave to the north.</p>	<p>The city can discuss changes in jurisdiction for CR 117 outside of the AUAR process.</p>
<b>MN Dept of Health</b>	<p>Staff in the Source Water Protection Unit at the Minnesota Department of Health have reviewed the Draft Monticello Industrial AUAR and have no comments. We appreciate that the AUAR includes the corrections and suggestions from MDH during the AUAR Scoping.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment and review.</p>



# PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment Theme	Response
<b>Concerns about data centers, additional alternatives</b>	<p>Comments for additional alternatives to scenarios was requested during the Scoping comment period.</p> <p>One of the scenarios is required to meet the City's Comprehensive Plan and the plan currently guides the area for Light Industrial Park, which allows several uses such as manufacturing, warehousing, research/development, and technology campus</p>
<b>Contamination on Site</b>	<p>AUAR includes a desktop analysis of potential contaminated materials on or near the site. Prior to development, the end-user would be required to complete a Phase I or Phase II Environmental Assessment and coordinate with the MPCA to ensure safe handling and disposal of hazardous materials.</p>
<b>Groundwater Impacts not addressed</b>	<p>City is currently drafting an aquifer analysis which will include a hydrogeological model of aquifer drawdown and cumulative groundwater demand impacts in combination with future city growth.</p> <p>Prior to construction, the end-user would conduct additional environmental review for siting the RIB, including an Environmental Assessment Worksheet.</p>

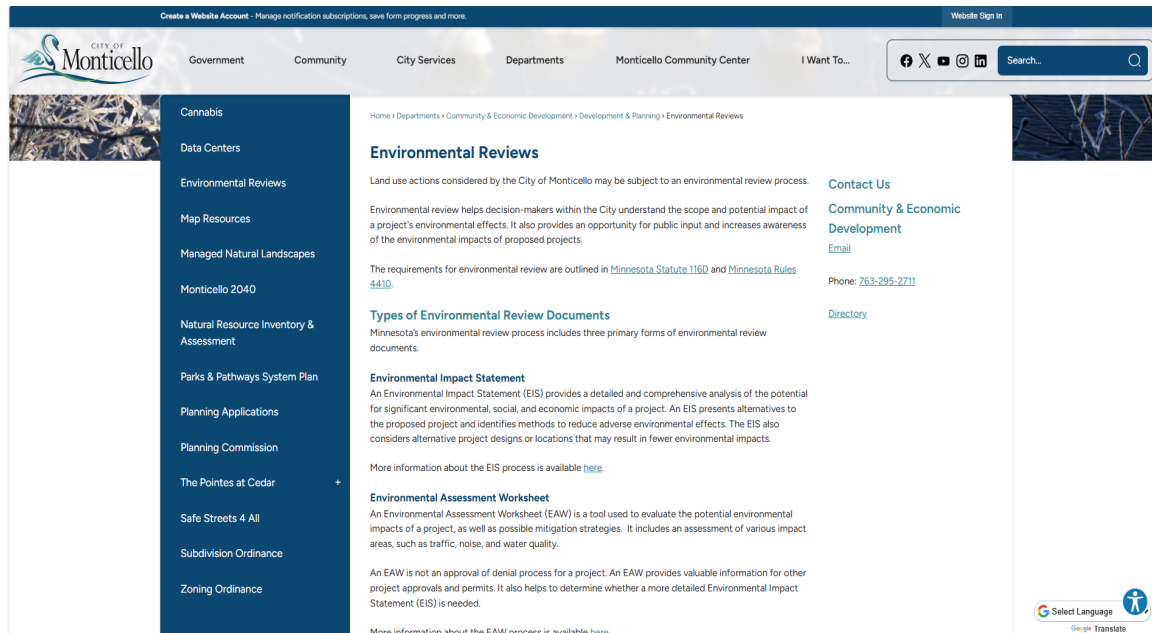
# PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment Theme	Response
<b>Surface water &amp; stormwater analyses use outdated data</b>	<p>Analysis in the AUAR used the most up to date version of NOAA Atlas 14 in the Hydrocad model.</p> <p>The AUAR includes stormwater modeling that is consistent with all city stormwater ordinances.</p>
<b>Traffic &amp; transportation impacts are underestimated</b>	<p>The AUAR includes analysis of Highway 25.</p> <p>CR 39 is over 2 miles away from the study area and is outside the scope of the Traffic Impact Assessment.</p> <p>EMS and school traffic would be coordinated during construction.</p>
<b>Preservation of agricultural land use</b>	<p>The city has not included agricultural preservation in a scenario because that would be inconsistent with the Monticello 2040 Comprehensive Plan.</p>

# PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comment Theme	Response
<b>Inadequate mitigation plan</b>	<p>Given the nature of an AUAR as a planning document, the city cannot provide exact timelines for mitigation at this time. The responsible parties have been added to the mitigation plan steps in the Final AUAR.</p> <p>The permitting matrix in Table 6 describes which agencies are responsible for enforcing permitting and approval prior to project completion.</p>
<b>Concerns related to nighttime lighting and noise</b>	<p>The city is currently conducting public feedback on a Data Center Planned-use Development District, which is where these specific requirements related to lighting and noise mitigation would be enforced from.</p>
<b>Health impacts</b>	<p>Site and building plans would be required to comply with all city, state, and federal permits and approvals related to noise, light, air, water related impacts</p>
<b>Utility impacts</b>	<p>This is outside the scope of an AUAR; however, if Scenario 1 advances, the end-user will be responsible for requesting a System Impact Study for the project through the utility company.</p> <p>The cost of any needed utility improvements would not affect current rate payers.</p>

# WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION & COMMENT?



[www.monticellomn.gov](http://www.monticellomn.gov)

Search: Environmental Reviews, Public Notices

**Comments are due by December 18, 2025**

Email: [angela.schumann@monticelloMN.gov](mailto:angela.schumann@monticelloMN.gov)

Mail: Angela Schumann  
505 Walnut Street, Suite 1  
Monticello, MN 55362

**All comments are public data and will be included in the AUAR document**



# ESTIMATED TIMELINE & NEXT STEPS FOR MONTICELLO INDUSTRIAL AUAR

- Scoping Document Review: July-October 2025
- Scoping Document Acceptance and Order to Prepare AUAR: October 13, 2025
- Review of AUAR: Currently on-going
- Council Authorizes AUAR for distribution: November 10, 2025
- Distribute Draft AUAR & Mitigation Plan for review: November 11, 2025
- Draft AUAR & Mitigation Plan available for 30-day comment period: November 18, 2025
- AUAR Open House: November 20, 2025
- **AUAR Review – Joint City Council & Planning Commission: December 15, 2025**
- Draft AUAR & Mitigation Plan revision: December 2025
- Final AUAR & Mitigation Plan distribution and 10-day objection period: December/January 2026
- **Adoption of Final AUAR and Mitigation Plan: January 2026**



# WHAT IS THE AUAR PROCESS?

- RGU adopts Order to Prepare AUAR
- RGU develops AUAR
- **RGU reviews and distributes Draft AUAR and Mitigation Plan for public and agency review**
- **Draft AUAR and Mitigation Plan available for 30-day public and agency review**
- RGU revises Draft AUAR and Mitigation Plan based on comments from public and agencies
- RGU distributes Final AUAR and Mitigation Plan to agencies for final 10-day review and objection period
- If no objections, RGU Adopts Final AUAR and Mitigation Plan
  - Objections can only be filed by a reviewing state agency (or Met Council)
  - If objections, work with agency to resolve
- AUAR process may include an additional step for an AUAR Scoping Document
  - Used when a project meets certain criteria under state rules
  - Precedes the full AUAR study; requires review of draft AUAR Order
  - May suggest additional development scenarios, study area, or other issues for analysis in full AUAR

