

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL.
FROM: Jon Radermacher, City Administrator
SUBJECT: Joint Work Session with City Council and Planning Commission to Discuss the Alternative Urban Area Review (AUAR)
MEETING DATE: February 18, 2024

BACKGROUND.

As the data center project continues to move through the process, an Alternative Urban Area Review (AUAR) is required by the State of Minnesota for certain proposed developments of a particular size or scale. An AUAR is a hybrid of the environmental assessment worksheet (EAW) and environmental impact statement (EIS) review processes.

The responsible governmental unit (RGU), the City of Cannon Falls in this case, will use the AUAR as a planning tool to understand how different development scenarios will affect the environment of the community before the development occurs. The process is designed to look at the cumulative impacts of anticipated development scenarios within a given geographic area. The AUAR document 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. Environmental analysis information from an AUAR can be used to inform local planning and zoning decisions.

The developer, Tract, has requested a joint work session of the City Staff, City Council and Planning Commission for Tuesday, March 4th at 5 p.m. in Council Chambers to talk through the aforementioned AUAR criteria, the process and also will be available with their team to answer any questions that they have up to this point in the process.

REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION.

Staff recommends that the Council set a Joint Work Session for the Council, Planning Commission and Staff on Tuesday, March 4th at 5 p.m. to learn more about the AUAR process.