

**Jon Larsen**

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**From:** Angie Knish [angie.knish@co.waseca.mn.us]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 09, 2006 3:51 PM  
**To:** Jon Larsen  
**Cc:** Bruce Boyce; Paul Dressler  
**Subject:** RE: notice of intent materials

Dear Mr. Larsen,

Unfortunately Waseca County does not have GIS mapping at this time to make this a simple map in which I can create layers, but I am making some maps by hand that may assist the board in some decision making. I will provide these to the board but will fax you a copy so you can include them in their packets.

I am awaiting word from Matt Sederstrom, Fagen, Inc. as to their siting criteria. As soon as I have that I will pass that on.

In earlier, undocumented discussions I had mentioned to Mr. Fagen that there may be a site that would work for them just south of the City of New Richland. Approximately 1 mile south of the City of New Richland is an Industrial Zoned area that contains a very narrow wedge of land between State Hwy 13 and the DM & E rail line; it is a metal recycling plant. There is a little larger wedge of land just north of this industrial site. It has rail line to the west and State Highway 13 to the east, immediately south of the City of New Richland. At the half-way point this parcel of land it is severed by 220<sup>th</sup> Avenue, a township gravel road. I have no information about the proximity of a gas line to this property.

I was told by Mr. Sederstrom, Fagen Inc., that this site would not meet their siting criteria because they were not really looking to locate on this north-south route and that they would need spur line areas that would accommodate 1-mile of track in length. Being that 220<sup>th</sup> Avenue was crossing this site at approximately the ½-way point it would only provide them with ½ mile of spur line or they would have to consider closing the road. There is at least one residence that uses 220<sup>th</sup> Avenue as an access to their residential property.

In addition, the North/South junction of the DM & E rail line ends at the City of Waseca. From that point the rail cars would have to then be switched to operate on the east-west line. At the current time, the switching station is located in the heart of downtown Waseca. The City of Waseca is proposing to relocate this switching station outside of the City because there have been 10 violations in the past 12 months for blocking road intersections for more than ten minutes. This poses a safety hazard to the community and any addition to the congestion would only aggravate matters more. (Refer MN Statute 219.383 Subd. 3).

Also on that note, it is my understanding the DM & E railroad line ends near the City of Hartland (to the South of the City of New Richland) and then turns into a Union Pacific Line. It is my understanding that this would require the ethanol plant to negotiate with Union Pacific Railroad for any transportation resulting on their line. As well.

Thus, it was my understanding that the ethanol company was focusing on the DM & E rail line running east-west. The City of Waseca lies approximately 4-5 miles from the east county line; lying west of Steele County. The area south of the DM & E rail line starting from the City of Waseca to the Steele County line includes a rural residential area where there are 3 large-lot residential subdivisions, identified as, The Highlands, Woodville Estates, and Goose Landing.

East of this residential area is a smattering of wetlands from the National Wetland Inventory taken in the early 1970's. This is not a complete inventory of wetlands for this particular area, there are other wetlands as determined by the Natural Resource Conservation Service that are not included on this map. Identification of all wetlands in this area would require a wetland delineation, which has not, to the best of my knowledge, ever been done. What I can tell you is that MN Dot avoided these wetlands as a part of their newly proposed road alignment. Lying easterly of this smattering of small wetlands is a wildlife area running for approximately 1 mile just about to the Steele County line.

2/10/2006

Areas lying north of the DME rail line starting from the City of Waseca and working easterly include wetland areas, Goose Lake and dense wetland areas all the way to the Steele County line. **(I have maps supporting this information and have colored them for easy viewing. I will provide this on Thursday).**

The next area I would like to talk about is located between the Cities of Janesville and Waseca. Janesville is located approximately 3 miles from the West County line bound by Blue Earth County. Starting at the City of Janesville, new highway 14 is located south of the City and then it proceeds in an easterly direction until approximately 1.5-2 miles east of the City of Janesville where the rail line runs diagonally southward towards the City of Waseca. From a point 2 miles east of Janesville to a point approximately 1.5 west of the City of Waseca there is very little land, if any, that would accommodate an industrial use because old highway 14 and new highway 14 run parallel to each other with the rail line sandwiched in-between. There are two locations in between that could support and industry. The first site is the Trahms site, which as you know is the proposed site of the ethanol plant. The limiting factor for its proposed use is the agricultural preserve covenant.

The second site is located in Section 11, St. Mary Township. This area is currently zoned industrial and is bound to the north by DM & E rail road and it bordered to the South by a concrete road identified as 360<sup>th</sup> Avenue, also known as County Road 2. This area is owned by two individual land owners and does not contain an agricultural preserve covenant. However, this parcel lies directly north of the Waseca Municipal Airport. The land use on this parcel is limited by height restrictions due to the airport conical zone, no-build areas adjacent to the existing and proposed runway, and uses located in this area can not have lights or equipment that interfere with airplane/airport equipment or activities. Waseca County and the City of Waseca have had other interest parties to this site prior, but due to these limiting factors, has not had success in locating a business or industry at this site. Furthermore, this area is being proposed now as a site where the City of Waseca may be able to relocate the DM & E switching yard to alleviate the congestion and problems associated with having it located immediately within the city.

That leaves one further area for review. There is an area approximately 2 miles west of the City of Janesville; from the Blue Earth County line to apx. 1.5 miles west of the City of Janesville where the old and new highway are located north of the DM & E rail line. South of the rail line at the county line lies an unincorporated village called Smiths Mill. Beyond Smiths Mill south of the rail line lays farmland. This area includes parcels of land that are also encumbered by agricultural preserve covenant. In addition in this area the rail line runs at an angle running from north to south. There is no major highway located in this area to support the industrial use and traffic would have to somehow access highway 14 at a junction south of Janesville, approximately 2 miles.

This is my review and description of some of the land issues for the County of Waseca in locating this ethanol plant. I will be bringing maps to your board meeting to depict these issues to the board. It is also my understanding that Matt Sederstrom from Fagen will be providing the criteria for siting the ethanol plant sometime tomorrow in detail.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me. I look forward to meeting with you on Thursday.

Sincerely,

Angela M. Knish  
Waseca County Planning and Zoning Administrator

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Jon Larsen [mailto:Jon.Larsen@state.mn.us]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 09, 2006 10:33 AM  
**To:** Angie Knish  
**Subject:** notice of intent materials

Angie,

It was good to talk with you about the ethanol plant project and the Ag Preserve notice of intent. Through that conversation I have a greater understanding of the constraints in Waseca County for finding any industrial site that meets the needs of having rail access, highway access, and natural gas available, in addition to being a generally suitable site otherwise.

You indicated to me that there really isn't written documentation extant to outline the selection process/criteria that resulted in the Janesville Township site being chosen, compared to other sites – the New Richland site, for instance. However you did explain to me in much more detail what some of those considerations are, and how the New Richland site didn't meet the basic requirements; and had some other problems of its own.

As you explained to me, it is easier for you to show our Board in a map the factors involved; wetlands, wildlife refuge, highway access, rail access, gas pipeline, level site, etc. We would very much appreciate any presentation from Waseca County to our Board at the next meeting.

In the meantime, we also send out an advance packet of materials to our Board members, which we are assembling now.

Based on the questions that we have had so far from Board members and their Technical Representatives, it would be really useful if you could put into a memo to me, even as a response to this email, the sort of factors that we discussed about the evaluation of the New Richland site. You recall that Paul Dressler sent a supplementary letter on January 19 explaining how the Janesville site was chosen. However, he didn't provide as much detail there as you did when we talked about the evaluation of other sites.

If you could provide a written response (even email) for our packet it would be greatly appreciated.

The elements we talked about included that:

1. The New Richland site is not Ag Preserve. It was evaluated and found lacking.
2. The railway alignment is north/south rather than east/west and is not really suitable in that regard.
3. It would require relocating a county road, as too near the rail right of way.
4. It would cause segmentation of property and interference to additional property – need to relocate a farm.
5. Distance/access to gas pipeline a disadvantage compared to the Janesville site.

You also gave me a better understanding of the constraints to the search area for any industrial site in the Waseca – Janesville corridor; wetlands, wildlife refuge, lakes, preexisting and future residential development, realignment of U.S. Hwy 14, etc. if you could briefly summarize those factor as they relate to your selection process, it would be very useful if we can include that with our packet.

Thanks again for your effort to respond to our information needs. I look forward to seeing you again at our next meeting.

Jon Larsen, Principal Planner  
Environmental Quality Board  
a division of the Department of Administration  
651-201-2477

