

From: Robert Jacobel
To: [Mikayla Schmidt](#)
Subject: St. Olaf Ave Project
Date: Wednesday, November 18, 2020 5:29:07 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization.

Hi Mikayla,

I'm a retired St. Olaf faculty member, so I am generally sympathetic to plans that improve the quality of things on the hill. That said, I am also a resident of Manitou St. and for about 8 years now we have been plagued by a student rental house here in the neighborhood. Parties, too many cars, trash all over, house in bad repair, ... It's the same thing that happens elsewhere, so it's not unique to the one on our street. One of the points that the Dean of Students Office has made is that the college is trying to bring more students back to campus.

However, I am very skeptical of the argument that this project is going to reduce the number of senior students living off campus in the future. According to the plan information, the number of new beds quoted for the project is nearly equal to those in the honor houses now plus the number of triples reduced to doubles elsewhere on campus. I don't see a net gain to allow for any students living in rental units in the community now, to move back to campus.

I really hope someone that the Planning Commission can pursue this point and pin down those numbers with the college or debunk the argument and let's be honest about what this will and will-not do.

Thanks,

Bob Jacobel
Professor of Physics Emeritus

First Name	Greg
Last Name	Kneser
Reply Email	gkneser@gmail.com
Subject:	St. Olaf Avenue

(Section Break)

Comments: Hello from Northwest Ohio! Just for reference, I'm doing a long-term interim role at a university in Toledo, Ohio, but I still very much consider myself to be a resident on St. Olaf Avenue in Northfield. I'm still married to Sandy Kimmes, who I believe has been in touch with Mayor Pownell about the proposed housing and parking project for St. Olaf College on St. Olaf Avenue.

Sandy and I have significant concerns about the project, primarily because of the plan to put 300 additional students and their cars at the end of what is arguably the busiest residential street in Northfield. We have lived there since 1993, and know it to be a vibrant street, with a significant number of families with young children, and with significant bicycle and pedestrian traffic, from both students and residents. To illustrate, we AVERAGE 300 trick-or-treaters at our house every Halloween! Further, we were supportive of the Ole Store when they wanted to add a liquor license and for their efforts to expand hours, and communicated this to the City, fully knowing it would have a moderate increase in traffic and noise, directly across the street from our house. We are not averse to vibrancy on St. Olaf Avenue! When the Ole Store proposed these changes, they personally approached neighbors to explain their plans and requested support. They engaged honestly in what they were doing. It was impressive for that to come from a small business, and to my knowledge, they gained unanimous support.

So, it causes significant concern that to add additional housing, and more importantly, the cars that inevitably go with them, to this street brings not just noise and traffic, but real risks. In a community meeting on Sept. 21, I understand that the only traffic analysis that was done was on Lincoln Street, and not St. Olaf Avenue. Further, only the first few houses were invited to the meeting, and not those families all the way down St. Olaf Avenue who will have to deal with the impact.

St. Olaf has many other options for siting this project, including open tracts of land on top of the hill, as well as hundreds of acres to the

North, West and South. If they wish to lessen residential density on the top of the hill, or to move parking off of the hill, they have many options that don't put neighbors at risk for more traffic on a very busy residential street where lots of kids live. The fact that they did not choose to study this is, at best, disappointing.

Further, they did not mention improving the road they built from Skoglund Center to North Avenue but have not paved. This could serve as an easy access to both Cedar Avenue and HWY 19 for student parking and those needing to go to the Cities for internships, which apparently is what they said at the meeting was the reason for increasing parking on St. Olaf Avenue.

This is all very awkward for me, as I am a proud St. Olaf retiree, who spent 29 years there. I was not at the meeting on Monday but heard second hand explanations of the presentations. I will leave it to those who were there, including Sandy, to address some statements made that should be followed up with more questions. I fully support the right of St. Olaf to build housing and parking that meets the needs of their students. I simply ask that they consider how their siting choices impact their neighbors, particularly the increase of cars over current circumstances. When it comes to the health and safety of children and families, I think that is fair to ask. With the number of options they have to decrease density on top of the hill, I would hope they work with the neighbors and City to come up with a more thoughtful plan.

To be clear though, my concern is for the residents of St. Olaf Avenue all the way down to HWY 3, including the elementary school at the other end. I would hope that the City could find a way to give those families a voice in this and fully explore all options that meet everyone's needs.

My best to you....I miss my Town!

Greg Kneser

ps. I do not know the City Planner Mikayla Schmidt, so please pass this along to her with an introduction, if appropriate. Again, my thanks!

From: Karen Saxe
To: [Mikayla Schmidt](#)
Cc: [Peter Webb](#)
Subject: Public Hearing Comment
Date: Monday, November 16, 2020 5:12:46 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization.

Dear Ms Schmidt,

We are writing to comment on the Conditional Use Permit and Rezoning Application for the proposed St. Olaf College Student Housing Project on the West of Lincoln St N. The Northfield Planning Commission is scheduled to meet about this at 6pm on November 19, 2020.

We have two central concerns:

- 1. Zoning of the “Old Main field.”** This has to do with the proposed rezoning of the field at the bottom of Old Main, between 1st and 2nd Streets, West of Lincoln. We favor not rezoning that field and terminating the area to be re-zoned at the line extending 1st St W, so that only land to the north of 1st St W is rezoned. We see no reason to rezone the field. We have heard from St Olaf (at their open neighborhood meetings, and repeatedly) the assurance that St Olaf has no plans to develop this field. This being the case, it is no disadvantage to St Olaf to remove the field from the rezoning plan. To leave that field as it is and not re-zone would lessen the perception that St Olaf is gradually encroaching into residential areas to the east. We urge the City Council to reject the request to rezone the field at the bottom of Old Main and to rezone only to the north of 1st Street.
- 2. Traffic on 1st St W on the section west of Lincoln.** We are very concerned about increased traffic along 1st St W as a result of the new plan, especially by service vehicles coming to the delivery area at the back of the new dorm. The effect of this would be to take one more step destroying that peaceful neighborhood that the area has been. We can see ways to avoid this change in the traffic pattern, and we urge St. Olaf to consider these.

To put our concerns in context, we bought our home on 2nd St, West of Lincoln, in 1989. Subsequent to this, St Olaf began buying more and more homes around us, converting many of them to student housing and in reality occupied in many cases by students. This is in spite of the fact that, in the past, we have been told that they would not use these homes for student housing. The effect is that, over these years, we have lost the “neighborhood” around us—no more families with kids, no more gardens, no more people with commitment to the place where they live. At the same time, there has been an increase in factors associated with higher density living, including light pollution at night and traffic. This has degraded the quality of life for us and our children, and has been sad for us. More quantifiably, we worry that the value of our home has been devalued. In fact, we wonder if the City Council has done a study of the impact of “St Olaf encroachment” on home values in our neighborhood.

Thank you for considering neighbors’ input as St Olaf proceeds with its plans,

Karen Saxe and Peter Webb

1113 West Second Street, Northfield

From: Paul Jackson
To: [Mikayla Schmidt](#)
Subject: Comments on CUP and Rezoning Request from St. Olaf College
Date: Wednesday, November 18, 2020 8:41:38 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization.

Dear City Planner Schmidt and the Planning Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment on the request from St. Olaf College for rezoning and for a Conditional Use Permit associated with the St. Olaf Avenue housing project.

Overall, I am generally supportive of the rezoning and CUP for the project. The needs the college has articulated appear reasonable. I think the project will refresh this area of the city. I do have two concerns as I look at the project moving forward.

First, I would like to know from the college how this redevelopment plan meets or substantively contributes to the goals of the recently adopted Climate Action Plan. The expansion of parking on the campus speaks directly in opposition of the CAP in its efforts to promote more public transit and decrease fossil fueled vehicles. Furthermore, the plans to date do not show hookups for electric vehicles, which in the years moving forward are only projected to increase rather than decrease. Shouldn't some subset of parking locations be designated for possible EV connectivity, including the potential for electrical storage down the line. In addition, I do not see any renewable energy features put forward by the institution as part of their construction plans. Is there PV anticipated for some of those flat roof expanses, that would supply energy to those structures rather than drawing from the other facets of the college or community or even supplying the energy to a set of EV charging stations!

Second, the design of the parking concepts, especially to the north of St. Olaf Avenue, look to make use of typical retention basins for rate and volume control. As insurers and others are looking at more intensive and frequent precipitation events, how is the college addressing the climate question associated with stormwater management moving forward over the next 50 years? I would like to see much more infiltration and rain gardens proposed here as a compliment to the traditional basins. Moreover, I have concerns over the potential for localized heat island effects with the expanse of parking (and likely removal of substantive trees).

For these reasons, I have concerns about approval of the CUP without the college more strongly aligning its proposal with the city's Climate Action Plan.

Thank you all for this opportunity and for doing this valuable work for the community.

Kind regards,
Paul Jackson

101 Saint Olaf Avenue, unit 206
507 301 4422

From: robertcox195341@gmail.com
To: [Mikayla Schmidt](#)
Subject: CUP/Rezoning
Date: Wednesday, November 18, 2020 12:21:33 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization.

I live on the corner of Madison [St.South](#) and 2nd st West. I'm sure it's almost impossible for any of us to change ,let alone stop the progress of this project but I have just a couple questions.

1. Why is the parcel of land at the bottom of old main being reasoned to CD-5? As far as I can tell from the microscopic project diagrams there will be no building on that parcel. Wouldn't this then allow for much easier additions of more dorms at a later date? I would hate to see that happen.

2. Traffic on 2nd St. has increased dramatically over the years to a point where it's become unsafe. It is,in effect, a speedway to Lincoln St. with a large percentage of traffic to and from St.Olaf. With the addition of your new buildings and the addition of many more student cars this situation would become even worse. Our neighborhood is filled with small children and dogs making this a huge concern. My request would be for St.Olaf to become an advocate for a 4 way stop and four way crosswalk at 2nd and Madison . This small request would help all of us in the St.Olaf neighborhood be more at ease with your request. I do not want one of my grandchildren hit by a bus on the way to Buntrock that is driving too fast to remain on time. This is a serious problem right now that would only get worse with this project. Please help us with this reasonable request that in the long run would cost nothing to the college and would help,in a big way, to set our minds at ease. I know t h e college can't insist on this but please help us.

Robert Cox

118 Madison St.S.

[952-913-5266](tel:952-913-5266)

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE device

From: Sandy Kimmes
To: [Mikayla Schmidt](#)
Cc: [Greg Kneser](#)
Subject: Public Hearing Comment - November 19, 2020
Date: Wednesday, November 18, 2020 11:38:47 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization.

Members of the Planning Commission:

I would like to bring forth my concerns regarding the Rezoning Application for the proposed St. Olaf College Ole Avenue Student Housing project.

As a long time resident and family of St. Olaf Avenue, I am seriously concerned about how this request for rezoning particularly the addition of 200 parking stalls will increase traffic on St. Olaf Avenue bringing along with it worries for the safety of many including the children crossing the street, bike and skateboard riders, families frequenting the parks to play or ice skate, impromptu concert goers gatherings along St. Olaf Avenue, children gathering to board the bus to go to school repeating itself in reverse every afternoon, readers of all ages checking out Little Libraries, walkers admiring the lush and ever blooming gardens, hundreds of costumed children and their parents on Halloween Night and residents walking their pets frequently throughout the day.

In September St Olaf College invited home owners with 350 feet of the project to an Neighborhood Open House. When asked questions about concerns for safety, increased traffic and noise, the ISG consultants answered in generalities based upon consultation with the city and county officials. Per the information presented by ISG, traffic was projected to primarily travel on Lincoln Street. ISG acknowledged that a formal traffic study was not done nor was there any intention to complete one in relation to this project. St. Olaf Avenue is a busy street as it connects directly to the campus and that the lack of a comprehensive traffic study is alarming given the potential impact on the neighborhood. It was acknowledged by the college staff that an additional intent of this project was to make St. Olaf Avenue's approach a more visible and utilized entrance to the college which in turn would significantly increase the traffic on St. Olaf Avenue.

Per the zoning requirements, St. Olaf College invited property owners within 350 feet of the edge of the project to an Open House and described it as a "Neighborhood Meeting." However I find their definition of "neighborhood" to be very limited to the point of it almost being non-existent as they are not truly sharing this information nor the potential impact with the "neighborhood" that extends the entire length of St. Olaf Avenue nor with residents on other nearby streets that will be impacted by these changes as well.

St. Olaf Avenue is a thriving family Neighborhood. Often we comment about how it takes a Village as we raise our children but truly it is that way on St. Olaf Avenue. Neighbors look out for one another and take pride in keeping their Neighborhood safe for all.

Thank you for allowing me to express my concerns and for your careful consideration of this matter!

Sandy Kimmes
1008 St. Olaf Avenue, Northfield MN 55057 (since 1993)

