

January 10, 2019

Dear Mr. Gause

Re: Historic Designation for St. Andrews & MN Statute 462.357- Variances

My letter is to urge the St. Paul's Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) to recommend approval of the historic designation of the former St. Andrew's church for multiple reasons listed below:

1. **Historic Designation:** The Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concerning St Andrew's church concluded in their letter to HPC dated December 11, 2018,

"...We concur that St. Andrew's church is an ideal candidate for local designation..."

The MN SHPO has agreed about historic designation criteria concerning: Romanesque Revival elements, Charles Hausler, Hungarian immigrant community, local architectural significance etc. Therefore, the St. Paul HPC should be recommend that St. Andrew's be historically designated, despite owner's opposition.

One reason for historical designation is that TCGIS tried to have a partial, selective demolition of the St. Andrew's Bell Tower in October 2018, at a public cost of \$65,000 without any significant cost or time savings. Also, there was no public notice, discussion and/or input on this controversial project. St. Paul's Department of Safety and Inspections did not approve plans for partial demolition. The planned 'partial demolition of the church tower' of a major historical building is a key reason why local designation is needed as TCGIS has shown they will make major alterations to the building without input.

TCGIS and supporters argue the St. Paul has never designated a property without owner's consent. My understanding of the National Historical building designation process is that if the owner objects to historical designation, then the property can be listed as historically designated, but with the owner's objection. HPC could verify this. The Federal method of designating historical properties could be used as argumentation for the city council as justification for precedence, that properties are designated at the national level and listed as without owner's consent. Also, the City has no written policy stating that a property can't be listed without owners' consent.

2. **Variances** – As known, TCGIS will need to have three variances (parking, height and area) in order to build a new school and demolish St. Andrew's. Minnesota State Statute 462.357 governs the municipal variances and conditions to grant a variance, Subd. 6., (2) states the following:

".... Practical difficulties," as used in connection with the granting of a variance, means zoning ordinance; the plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner; and the variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality...."

Here is the link to the Minnesota State Statute which governs city zoning and variances:
<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/462.357>

In December, I called the State Attorney's Office, to verify that this is a statute. Also, I asked the attorney that since this is a State Statute would their Office be required to investigate and enforce it. The attorney verified the Statute and said that 'Yes, their office would be required to enforce the Statute'.

In my letter to the Zoning Commission (12/13/18) and my two-minute presentation to their Committee stated the approval of TCGISs requested variances would violate MN Statute because of the following two reasons:

1. The plight of the landowner is created by the landowner and not the property,
2. Variances to allow the TCGIS expansion will alter 'the essential character of the locality' by the demolition of St. Andrews and will increase traffic safety problems, parking problems and increased noise.

The State Statute 462.357 governing variances is critical, now that the MN SHPO has evaluated St. Andrew's church stating in their letter (12/11/19):

"...St. Andrew's is also architecturally significant at the local level as a distinctive and well-conserved example of the Romanesque Revival style...We concur that St. Andrew's church is an ideal candidate for local designation..."

Recommendation to approve the variances allowing the demolition of St. Andrew's would be in violation of MN State Statute 462.357, as demolition will alter an 'essential characteristic' of the Warrendale community, as SHPO has stated "St. Andrew's is also architecturally significant at the local level"

St. Paul has other competing policies in its Comprehensive Plan (economics, education etc.), which need to be noted in HPCs final report. However, State Statute 462.357 on variance approval takes precedence over St. Paul's other policies. HPC should recommend to City Council, to comply with State Statute 462.357 and not approve the variances which will alter the 'essential character of the locality' by the demolition of St. Andrew's.

3. **Maintenance Costs** - TCGIS has stated their Aula needs: new water heaters, boiler, tuck-pointing, windows, roof, insulation etc. at a cost of up to \$1.1 Million.

First, these items are normal, routine maintenance costs, not historical maintenance costs. There are hundreds of buildings and churches, which are 90+ years old which have new water heaters, boilers, insulations, roof etc. For TCGIS to all of these maintenance items indicates to me, that maintenance could have been intentionally delayed or stopped, in order to self-justify a new building. When TCGIS was presenting photos of cracked roof tiles and cracked brickwork to the Zoning Committee on December 20, they were showing to the City Officials that they are not doing the routine maintenance. If TCGIS is not doing

the required maintenance, then TCGIS management could be in violation of City Code 34.36, which states,

“All required equipment and all building space and parts in every structure shall be constructed and maintained to properly and safely perform their intended function accordance with the provisions of the applicable code.”

Secondly, the demolition costs for St. Andrews to my understanding will be on the order of \$2+ million and thus exceed the repair/upgrade costs of about \$1 million. TCGIS presentations typically state the repair costs, but never the demolition cost. The bid cost was \$65,000 for just the partial demolition of the church bell tower last October, which documents that demolition will be very expensive. St. Paul officials should ask TCGIS for the church demolition cost estimate, which needs to be signed by a registered engineer for a project of this magnitude. It would be bad public policy allow to demolition of historically eligible structure, when it could be maintained at a lower cost, and when buildings are required to be properly and safely maintained, according to City Code 34.36.

Third, TCGIS was given a \$2 million loan upgrade the school and church, when they moved in. It appears that no money was spent on the ‘Nuts & Bolts’ mechanical items of the Aula (i.e. water heater, boiler, roof etc.). Given the public expenditure for remodeling the church, only to request demolition of the church 5 years later is BAD public policy and documents TCGIS’s poor planning.

Fourth, Saint Andrews had a church capital improvement project in 1992-1994, with a total cost of \$240,000 for repair of roof, chimney, concrete steps, windows, wood floors, tuck-pointing etc. This repair project was paid entirely by the parish. St. Andrews parish did not ask the public or the Como neighborhood for one penny to fund the repairs. Following the major roof repair, starting in 1997, annual roof maintenance repair of replacing broken tiles was done and the annual costs are tabulated in the attached spreadsheet. The average annual roof repair cost was \$1,478.54 for the years 1997 thru 2009. Father Patrick Ryan would say the ‘We need to be good stewards of the building’.

Good neighbors take care of their property.

In May 2018, I asked TCGIS for their annual roof repair costs and roofing inspection report, but never received a response from TCGIS. St. Paul City officials should ask TCGIS to document how much they have spent on:

1. Yearly roof maintenance
2. Yearly cement work and tuck-pointing.

The main point is St. Andrews paid for and maintained the property. The average annual roof repair cost was a nominal \$1,500 per year for 12 years, after the major roof repair. If TCGIS is not maintaining their property, it is due to their own negligence.

When TCGIS bought the property, they had full knowledge of: the building age, construction, condition, materials, roof construction, fuel use, dimensions, mechanical equipment, windows, insulation, limitations, maintenance needs & costs, etc. of the church. TCGIS could have even asked the church who the architect was. All of St. Andrews records, Catholic Bulletin’s etc. document that Charles Hausler is the architect. All TCGIS complaints about Aula maintenance costs, gym size, poor acoustics, no padding, columns etc. should be considered irrelevant. TCGIS

knew they were buying a church and a school with 2 sections per grade, not 3 sections. In my opinion, TCGIS made bad planning mistakes in their decision to expand from 2 to 3 sections per grade, which results in the demolition of St. Andrews; along with increased traffic safety issues, lack of parking space for staff and increased noise. The fact is the St. Andrews school was fine with 2 sections per grade for 30 years. When St. Andrew's needed to be expanded, then the churches of Maternity of Mary, St. Rose of Lima and Holy Childhood were created. This is why St. Andrews is considered the 'Mother' church for the other three churches. TCGIS's expansion requirements from 2 to 3 sections per grade is creating the need for variance requests; which are not caused by 'circumstances unique to the property'; therefore, any variances should not be recommended as they would violate State Statute 462.357.

Thank you for consideration of my comments

Steven Greenwood

1111 Argyle
St. Paul, MN

City Council of Saint
15 Kellogg Blvd West
Saint Paul, MN 55102
Contact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Petition for City Council: <https://www.gopetition.com/petitions/save-historic-st-andrews-in-como-park.html>

To the City Council of Saint Paul:

I am a 35 plus year resident of the South Como area and of the Warrendale Neighborhood.

I have been on the district council 6 board, as well have been involved in many neighborhood improvement projects and collaborative efforts to make Como Park and its attractions available to all.

Save Historic St Andrews group is a true grassroots movement with a mission to save a historic building in St Paul from what could very well be unnecessary demolition. The removal of this South Como neighborhood architectural and historic icon and the TCGIS plan to replace it with a boilerplate school building with an expected 30 year lifespan is shortsighted and an insult to the character and beauty of one of St Paul's beautiful and historic neighborhoods.

I oppose the expansion of the Twin Cities German Immersion Charter School (TCGIS), and specifically the demolition of the former St. Andrew's church, a historically significant building in the Warrendale neighborhood of St. Paul that contributes to the architectural richness and charm of our city. I am not against TCGIS educating children. I am rallying against a bad plan which I find disrespectful and harmful to the health and history of a neighborhood.

- Saint Paul's comprehensive plan states that the greenest building is the one left standing. In Saint Paul, there are examples of former churches reused for performance spaces, homes, and a charter school. If demolished, embodied energy calculators shared by HPC estimate it will send over 2,000 tons to the landfill and have a huge impact on the neighborhood. Demolition is not consistent with Mayor Carter's initiative to be carbon-neutral by 2050.
- According to the National Historic Preservation Act, "A place's owner, a preservation organization, or a member of the community who values the resource usually initiates the application for historic designation"-that's the law
- In the AIA Guide to Twin Cities Architecture, retired Pioneer Press writer Larry Millet called out St Andrew's as one of the best local examples of period revival churches in Saint Paul.
- Designed in 1927 by St. Paul's first city architect, author of St. Paul's first building code, and noted progressive, Charles A. Hausler. The neighborhood is small, so any plan to raze the historic St. Andrew's church would have an outsized effect on the area.
- It's worth reading the article (<https://progressive.org/magazine>) "*The Charter School Next Door, What Happens When Public Education Becomes a Market place?*" that discusses the negative impacts charter schools have on neighborhoods and traditional public schools nationwide. Minnesota is the only state that allows charter schools to be exempt from anti-segregation laws.
- The St. Paul Chapter of NAACP and St. Paul Federation of Educators agree object to the expansion of a charter school that is nearly 90% white and far more affluent than other St. Paul schools. The TCGIS expansion plan does not align with Mayor Carter's initiative to combat inequity.
- Please consider placing a moratorium on any approval of variances or site plans for the TCGIS expansion project until such time as historic status for the St Andrew's church building can be certified by local, state, and national historic preservation organizations. Please place a moratorium on the site plan approval and zoning variance requests of TCGIS until such time as the concerns of the zoning committee and the neighborhood can be adequately addressed by TCGIS.
- Please review the zoning committee review and comments from January 17, 2019 about the proposed variances and site plan before you vote on this issue.
- I appreciate your time and attention to this correspondence.

Maren Swenson
 1039 Van Slyke Avenue
 Saint Paul, MN 55103

Jeffery M Thole
810 Idaho Ave. West
St. Paul, MN 55117
February 20, 2019

Council Member Dia Thao
320-A City Hall
15 Kellogg Blvd. West
Saint Paul, MN 55101

RECEIVED

FEB 21 2019

COUNCILMEMBER
DAI THAO

Council Member Dia Thao;

As a life long St. Paul District 10 resident, I am writing to OPPOSE expansion of the Twin Cities German Immersion School at its current location. I also specifically OPPOSE demolition of the former St. Andrew's Catholic Church building at 1031 Como Ave. Saint Paul.

According to the Twin Cities German Immersion School website, TCGIS currently has 585 students on less than 1/2 city block of land. And according to stats put out by the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools, TCGIS is already the most densely populated primary school in the City of St. Paul. Lets not make a bad situation worse.

The TCGIS plan was developed with minimal community input. I myself did not even hear of the plan until after it was approved by the TCGIS Board. The proposed plan creates additional noise, safety, parking, and traffic issues. The proposed plan also adversely affects the historic character of the Como Warrendale neighborhood.

Perhaps even more alarming, is the lack of diversity at TCGIS and other local charter schools. This particular charter school is 87% white, while the surrounding community is only 29 % white. This is an upsetting trend, basically reversing years of purposeful integration within the St Paul Public School system. The St. Paul Federation of Teachers and the St. Paul Chapter of NAACP both OPPOSE the TCGIS expansion plans.

With all due respect, TCGIS has better options such as limiting enrollment (like several other great St. Paul schools), adaptive reuse of the church building to better use the existing space, and /or the possibility of moving to a larger site. There are two recently vacated schools just blocks away from TCGIS, it would make no sense to build additional classrooms in the very same neighborhood.

Most Sincerely,

Jeffery M Thole

Saint Paul City Council
C/O Amy Brendmoen, City Council President
15 Kellogg, Blvd. West 310 City Hall
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Ms. Brendmoen & City Council Members,

As your constituent, and Saint Paul resident of the Como area (half a block from TCGIS) and taxpayer for more than 35 years, I oppose the expansion of the charter school and specifically the demolition of the former St. Andrew's Church, the iconic building of our neighborhood, a building of immense architectural and historical value.

I moved to this neighborhood attracted by the charm, quietness and beauty of the narrow winding streets, which were crowned by the lovely structure of Saint Andrews Church, an architectural jewel in the Como neighborhood. After years of witnessing the positive involvement of the Church with the community, my husband and I decided to become members of Saint Andrews Church.

Throughout the years, parishioners of Saint Andrews were very good stewards of the neighborhood and the Church, until TCGIS took possession of the Church and school and severed all connections with the neighbors who live around the school.

There are so many unresolved issues with the neighborhood that TCGIS has created and are not resolved yet.

My family, and so many neighbors around me are opposed to one of the largest parking variances ever requested because we have to live with the daily traffic nightmares. Unfairly, TCGIS has hired a PR firm lobbying the city council on their behalf, against us neighbors who are trying to protect the identity and residential character of this neighborhood. There have also been some related irregularities at the Planning Commission recently that caught the attention of the city attorney's office. I feel it is like a battle between David and Goliath. However, we have faith that a good solution will arrive as we want TCGIS success and also respect to the values and residential character of this neighborhood.

Concerned about global warming, pollution and energy waste, we must consider that if the former Church is demolished, over 2,000 tons of debris would be dumped to the landfill and have a huge impact on the neighborhood. This is unacceptable!

It's worth reading the article in the Progressive magazine, "The Charter School Next Door, What Happens When Public Education Becomes a Market place?" by Sarah Lahm that discusses the negative impacts public charters have on neighborhoods and traditional public schools. It's worth noting that in Minnesota, public charter schools are exempt from anti-segregation laws. TCGIS' plan creates safety and traffic issues, adversely changes the character of the neighborhood, doesn't promote diversity (the school is 87% white vs. 29% for neighborhood schools), is opposed by the St. Paul Federation of Teachers and NAACP, and out of lack of empathy – destroys the symbolic heart of Warrendale, the former St. Andrew's church.

Designed in 1927 by St. Paul's first city architect, author of St. Paul's first building code, and noted progressive, Charles A. Hausler. The neighborhood is small, so their plan to destroy the historic St. Andrew's church would have an outsized affect. This does not align with Mayor Carter's initiatives of inclusivity & equity.

TCGIS is not a neighborhood school, it does not offer enrollment preference to those who live in Saint Paul, essentially, it's a commuter school where most students are driven to school by parents.

We hope our elected officials will take seriously the commitment to equity that's at the forefront of Mayor Carter's initiative to reduce citywide disparities – and not bow to pressure exerted by TCGIS or its controversial Ten Square

Your constituent,
Rosario Greenwood-Sánchez

From: nicole bechtold [<mailto:ntmartens@gmail.com>]

Sent: Thursday, February 21, 2019 9:58 AM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward5 <Ward5@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: My concerns regarding the efforts of Save Historic St. Andrew's ("SHSA") to defeat the Twin Cities German Immersion School's ("TCGIS") campus improvement plans

Nicole Bechtold
981 Hoyt Ave. W.
St. Paul, MN 55117

Dear Councilmember Brendmoen,

I write to express my concerns regarding the efforts of Save Historic St. Andrew's ("SHSA") to defeat the Twin Cities German Immersion School's ("TCGIS") campus improvement plans.

In early 2017 TCGIS, a free public charter school in the Como Warrendale neighborhood, began considering in earnest how it could improve its campus to accommodate the educational needs of its 550+ students, over half of whom reside in Saint Paul. TCGIS's goal is to provide its students with an enhanced educational experience by taking them out of an aging, expensive, and functionally obsolete former church, which has served as a makeshift gym, cafeteria, and performing arts space for nearly 6 years, and putting them into a modern structure that is suited to the needs of a 21st century education. It's nothing fancy, but it would include a regulation gym, a cafeteria with natural light, more classrooms, and additional small group spaces that would allow students to receive interventional assistance in private, and not in a hallway. These are basic amenities that any parent would want their child to receive as part of a modern K-8 program.

In 2018 a small group of citizens formed SHSA to oppose TCGIS's campus improvement plans, which include the demolition of the former St. Andrew's Church that TCGIS's affiliated building company owns. SHSA's sole goal is to save the former church at any cost, without regard for how its actions impact TCGIS's students. SHSA has sent a clear message to TCGIS and its students that they are not welcome in the neighborhood. It has encouraged adjacent homeowners to display lawn signs opposing

the demolition of the former church. Thus, each day at drop off, pickup, recess, or any time a student or teacher looks out the window, they are reminded that some in the neighborhood don't want them there. As if the message were not clear enough, in the Fall, SHSA and its supporters staged several protests across the street from student pickup. SHSA has also demonstrated that it is content to sacrifice TCGIS students' education in pursuit of its goal. In seeking historic designation of a former church that it does not own over the objections of the owner, SHSA would force TCGIS to use money intended for education to instead finance the preservation a building that provides no educational benefits whatsoever.

Recently, things reached a fever pitch when on February 19, 2019, SHSA's Facebook page posted (and then deleted) a message that included the following statements:

- "Because if you prevail, your kids' future school will be located in a neighborhood where you are no longer welcome."
- "You will be resented for all the reasons that any conquering 'force' is resented, and your kids will not escape that resentment."
- "Neighbors will report every traffic violation, monitor every illegally parked vehicle, and blast the school at every chance on social media."

This is blatant online bullying that no children, parents or school should have to tolerate.

SHSA's President has since contacted TCGIS to apologize, and has asserted that although the post stated that it represented "The SHSA Team," it did not. SHSA also stated that the person responsible for the post is not a member of the leadership of SHSA, and has been reprimanded. The obvious implication, however, is that the person responsible was and remains a member of SHSA.

As a constituent, it is upsetting enough that a small group of outspoken neighbors can create so much trouble in an effort force a public school to spend its scarce resources on preserving a former church instead of on educating its students. But a line is crossed when a member of that same group resorts to what amounts to an open threat to TCGIS and its staff and students-and by extension the City Council itself-in furtherance of that goal. Ominous warnings about hostile resentments and vigilante behavior have no place in public schools, or in any civic matter. Such threats are against the law.

Throughout this process, TCGIS's primary focus has been and remains on providing its students with the best educational opportunities possible. TCGIS understands that this will require change, and that change can be upsetting. But TCGIS is committed to achieving its goals respectfully, peacefully, and through the appropriate civic processes. It is my hope that when you have the opportunity to weigh in on these issues, you will side with TCGIS and the future it wants to provide for its students, and reject the fear, threats and divisiveness that SHSA has injected into this debate.

Sincerely yours,
Nicole Bechtold

Amy Brendmoen, Council President
City Council of Saint Paul
15 Kellogg Blvd West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

To the City Council of Saint Paul:

I oppose the expansion of the Twin Cities German Immersion charter School (TCGIS), and specifically the demolition of the former St. Andrew's church, a historically significant building in the Warrendale neighborhood of St. Paul that contributes to the architectural richness and charm of our city. If demolished, embodied energy calculators shared by HPC estimate it will send over 2,000 tons to the landfill and have a huge impact on the neighborhood.

Many of us in the neighborhood are opposed to the required variances—including one of the largest parking variances ever requested—but the school has a PR firm lobbying the city council on their behalf. There have also been some related irregularities at the Planning Commission recently that caught the attention of the city attorney's office.

It's worth reading the article in the Progressive magazine, "The Charter School Next Door, What Happens When Public Education Becomes a Market place?" by Sarah Lahm that discusses the negative impacts public charters have on neighborhoods and traditional public schools. It's worth noting that in Minnesota, public charter schools are exempt from anti-segregation laws.

TCGIS' plan creates safety and traffic issues, adversely changes the character of the neighborhood, doesn't promote diversity (the school is 87% white vs. 29% for neighborhood schools), is opposed by the St. Paul Federation of Teachers and NAACP, and—out of lack of empathy—destroys the symbolic heart of Warrendale, the former St. Andrew's church. Designed in 1927 by St. Paul's first city architect, author of St. Paul's first building code, and noted progressive, Charles A. Hausler. The neighborhood is small, so their plan to destroy the historic St. Andrew's church would have an outsized affect. This does not align with Mayor Carter's initiatives of inclusivity and equity.

TCGIS is not a neighborhood school, it does not offer enrollment preference to those who live in Saint Paul, essentially, and it's a commuter school where most students are driven to school by parents.

We hope our elected officials will take seriously the commitment to equity that's at the forefront of Mayor Carter's initiative to reduce citywide disparities—and not bow to pressure exerted by TCGIS or its controversial TenSquare consultants.

Sincerely

Barbara Erickson
1137 Churchill St
St. Paul, MN 55103

From: Bryan Lloyd [<mailto:bjameslloyd@gmail.com>]
Sent: Thursday, February 21, 2019 4:21 PM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward6 <Ward6@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: In support of TCGIS

February 21, 2019

City of St. Paul City Council Members
Via Email

Dear City Council Members:

I am writing to request support for the site plan and variance applications for the Twin Cities German Immersion School (TCGIS) that will allow my kids and their fellow students, teachers and staff to be educated in a newly remodeled building that meets their needs and the needs of students joining our ranks in the next year. TCGIS is one of the most successful public charter schools in the state, but it needs an appropriate place to educate these kids!

I urge you to support the variances, which include a 3.1-foot variance on height, a 1 percent variance on lot coverage, and a 37-space parking variance, all of which city staff recommended for approval. Additionally, the site plan was recommended for approval by city planners with some conditions that the school will collaborate with the city to meet. Notably, the District 10 Como Community Council Land Use committee, with about 200 people in attendance, overwhelmingly supported the TCGIS variances in December.

The current school property includes a former 91-year-old church, which was purchased by TCGIS in 2013. Because we've been so successful at providing a best-in-class German Immersion experience, our middle school students are choosing to stay at TCGIS at rates much higher than other charter schools. This has caused the student body to grow more than we expected. While the total student population will not exceed 630 kids, our unanticipated growth increases the need for classrooms and a real cafeteria, bona fide gym space and additional offices for private mentoring with students who need extra help. The School has tried adaptive reuse of the old church space without success. Currently, all these functions practically take place on top of one another in the antiquated building the kids and teachers are in.

Please support our public school's right to remodel its property in the face of the overwhelming space needs at TCGIS. As City Planner Tia Anderson reiterated to the Zoning Committee recently, the school is in an R4 zone, where schools are an "allowed use" in such zones. Moreover, a St Paul City statute underscores that there is no proper differentiation between traditional public, public charter or private schools – a school is a school is a school.

Thank you for your consideration and time.

Bryan Lloyd

689 Nebraska Avenue E

St. Paul, MN 55106

City Council of Saint Paul
15 Kellogg Blvd West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

RECEIVED
FEB 22 2019
CITY CLERK

To the City Council of Saint Paul:

I oppose the expansion of the Twin Cities German Immersion charter School (TCGIS), and specifically, the demolition of the former St. Andrew's church, a historically significant building in the Warrendale neighborhood of St. Paul that contributes to the architectural richness and charm of our city. If demolished, embodied energy calculators shared by HPC estimate it will send over 2,000 tons to the landfill and have a huge impact on the neighborhood.

Many of us are opposed to the required variances—including one of the largest parking variances ever requested—but the school has a PR firm lobbying the city council on their behalf. There have also been some related irregularities at the Planning Commission recently that caught the attention of the city attorney's office.

TCGIS is not a neighborhood school, as it does not offer enrollment preference to those who live in Saint Paul. Essentially, it's a commuter school where most students are driven to school by parents. In fact, almost half of students are not residents of Saint Paul.

It's worth reading the article (<https://progressive.org/magazine>) "*The Charter School Next Door, What Happens When Public Education Becomes a Marketplace?*" that discusses the negative impacts public charters have on neighborhoods and traditional public schools. It's worth noting that in Minnesota, public charter schools are exempt from anti-segregation laws.

TCGIS's plan creates safety and traffic issues, adversely changes the character of the neighborhood, doesn't promote diversity (the school is 87% white vs. 29% for neighborhood schools), is opposed by the St. Paul Federation of Educators and NAACP, and—out of lack of empathy—destroys the symbolic heart of Warrendale, the former St. Andrew's church. Designed in 1927 by St. Paul's first city architect, author of St. Paul's first building code, and noted progressive, Charles A. Hausler. The neighborhood is small, so TCGIS's plan to destroy the historic St. Andrew's church would have an outsized affect. This does not align with Mayor Carter's initiatives of inclusivity and equity.

We hope our elected officials will take seriously the commitment to equity that's at the forefront of Mayor Carter's initiative to reduce citywide disparities—and not bow to pressure exerted by TCGIS or its controversial TenSquare consultants.

Respectfully,


419 Centennial Drive
Roseville, MN 55113

To the City Council of Saint Paul:

I am writing to you in opposition to the expansion of the Twin Cities German Immersion charter School (TCGIS) located in the Como /Warrendale neighborhood. The demolition of the former St. Andrew's church, a historically significant building that contributes to the architectural richness and charm of our city. I am not against TCGIS educating children. I am rallying against a bad plan which I find disrespectful and harmful to the health and history of a neighborhood. The school now smartly uses the building as a cafeteria and gymnasium, of which the purchase and renovation of the building was paid for by public funds in 2013. I urge you to approve the request for local historic designation of the former St. Andrew's church building.

Saint Paul's comprehensive plan states that the greenest building is the one left standing. In Saint Paul, there are many examples of former churches reused for performance spaces, homes, and a charter school. If demolished, embodied energy calculators shared by HPC estimate it will send over 2,000 tons to the landfill and have a huge impact on the neighborhood character. Demolition is not consistent with Mayor Carter's initiative to be carbon-neutral by 2050.

According to the National Historic Preservation Act, "A place's owner, a preservation organization, or a member of the community who values the resource usually initiates the application for historic designation"—that's the law.

In the AIA Guide to Twin Cities Architecture, retired Pioneer Press writer Larry Millet called out St Andrew's as one of the best local examples of period revival churches in Saint Paul.

St. Andrew's former church building is irreplaceable and should be respected for it's architecture, historical and cultural history. I strongly urge you to oppose the 3 variances and the site plan that TCGIS is requesting. The traffic and parking situation that TCGIS has created have had a huge negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood will even get worse with any expansion. This situation is contradictory to the City's slogan – The Most Livable City in America.

Thank you,
Michael Connolly
993 Chatsworth St. N
St. Paul, MN 55103

Hello City Council members and President Brendmoen,
Attached is my letter expressing my dissatisfaction with not only the process, but the nature of the variances requested by the applicant and the destruction an eligible historic designation site in the Warrendale neighborhood. I've also attached an article in a national publication that among other things, points out the disconnect that public charter schools have on the neighborhoods they reside in – by design.

Thank you for your consideration

February 22, 2018

City Council of Saint Paul
15 Kellogg Blvd West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Saint Paul City Council,

The Warrendale neighborhood has supported education at St Andrew's since its inception, peacefully. However, this has not been the case with the Twin Cities German Immersion School (TCGIS). Time after time, problems created by TCGIS's impact on MTC transit, pedestrian, and bicycle safety have been brought to the attention of the District 10 Council. Improvements to neighborhood safety have been marginal at best. Approval of these variances will, in effect, create a mandate for TCGIS, reinforcing the existing impression that the safe and effective circulation of all modes of transportation is a marginal concern among leadership of the city of Saint Paul. The Planning Commission's own Zoning Committee voted 5-1 against the variances sought by TCGIS—agreeing that the TCGIS site is not feasible for the added student enrollment and greater traffic and parking congestion that will result. Commissioners agreed that the residential character of the neighborhood would be altered.

Approved variances will also spell destruction of a historic building designed by renowned St. Paul architect Charles Hausler--and open the door for developers to make similar encroachments on St. Paul neighborhoods, leading to more turmoil at district councils and more politicization of the Planning Commission. In the AIA Guide to Twin Cities Architecture, Larry Millet called out St Andrew's as "*one of the best local examples of period revival churches in Saint Paul*". I'm not alone in my objection, a digital petition has over 360 digital signatures, <https://www.gopetition.com/petitions/save-historic-st-andrews-in-como-park.html>

The core chapters of the City's current 2010 Comprehensive Plan have 436 policies. Of those, 71 policies focus on historic preservation. By contrast, city staff recommendations on the variances could only find one actual policy, suggesting a bias.

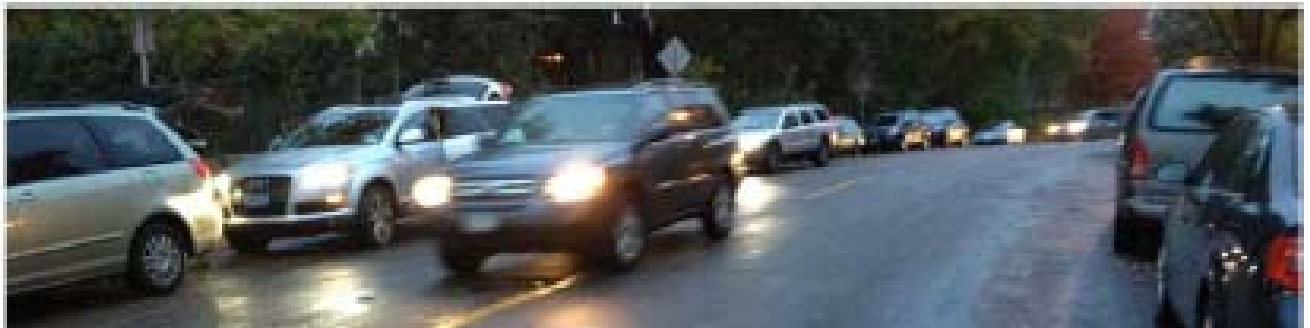
The excessive size of TCGIS enrollment is due to choices made by its leadership. In comparison to other schools, TCGIS supports significantly more students on a significantly smaller site. Once completed, the expanded school intends to support roughly four times the median number of students per unit area of any elementary or middle school located in any R1 through R4 zoned neighborhood in Saint Paul. Also significant is the fact that this site is directly adjacent to thirteen residences. This is overcrowding and undue congestion.

Demolition is not needed for TCGIS to serve its kids. School design experts and architects from the U of MN stated that TCGIS' plan is old school and not aligned with current learning space design concepts. They provided examples last fall and offered to meet with TCGIS to explain in detail. TCGIS said no emphatically. Or the school could cap its enrollment as other schools do.

The term forced designation has been used extensively by TCGIS leadership, staff and parents—that term doesn't exist in St. Paul's ordinance. The public can lawfully designate property for an eligibility determination. It's established law, not dangerous new ground, as some have suggested.

The article "The Charter School Next Door, What Happens When Public Education Becomes a Marketplace?" discusses the disconnect that charter schools have with neighborhoods they reside in. The article also states that Minnesota is the only state that exempts public charter schools from anti-segregation laws that traditional public schools are held to. Data provided by the St. Paul Federation of Educators and the St. Paul Chapter of NAACP are stark in this regard. This is not in alignment with current administration vision of equality and inclusion.

The plan proposed by leadership is a bad one. The school proposes to spend millions of taxpayer funds on a new building project just five years after investing millions of city HRA bond money to help renovate a historic structure that it now intends to demolish.



Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Youngquist
1170 Churchill Street
Saint Paul, MN 55103
Across the alley from St. Andrew's



Charter School Next
Door.pdf

Amy Brendmoen, Council President
City Council of Saint Paul
15 Kellogg Blvd West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

I oppose the expansion of the Twin Cities German Immersion charter School (TCGIS), and specifically the demolition of the former St. Andrew's church, a historically significant building in the Warrendale neighborhood of St. Paul that contributes to the architectural richness and charm of our city.

I am not against Twin Cities German Immersion School (TCGIS) educating children. I am rallying to oppose the school administration's choice to expand and demolish Saint Andrew's, which I find disrespectful and harmful to the health and history of a storied St. Paul neighborhood. Saint Paul's own comprehensive plan states that the greenest building is the one left standing. Demolition is not consistent with Mayor Carter's initiative to become a carbon-neutral community by 2050.

- According to the National Historic Preservation Act, "A place's owner, a preservation organization, or a member of the community who values the resource usually initiates the application for historic designation". Citizens can nominate important buildings for historic designation—that's the law.
- One of Mayor Carter's initiatives is to combat inequity. Both the St. Paul Chapter of NAACP and St. Paul Federation of Educators submitted letters in opposition to the variances and site plan, objecting to the expansion of a charter school that is nearly 90% white and far more affluent than other St. Paul schools.

The Saint Paul chapter of the NAACP states "expansion of such a predominantly white and relatively wealthy charter school in the heart of the city would frustrate efforts to desegregate St. Paul schools and contribute to further racial and socioeconomic segregation".

- Demolition of St. Andrew's would forever alter the character of a small, historic neighborhood and destroys a significant St. Paul historic landmark.
- The TCGIS choice to expand its enrollment is opposed by the St. Paul Federation of Teachers and NAACP. Public charter schools are exempt from the same anti-segregation laws that public schools such as SPPS must follow.
- In Saint Paul, there are examples of former churches reused for performance spaces, homes, and a charter school. There is a better plan. The environmental rewards of adaptive reuse are significant. The greenest building is the one already standing.

Sincerely,
3-- Mary Shalhoub
~~3--~~ Maple Lane Ct
SP

TCGIS should look into
a larger + more affordable
site. Parking is a
major issue!

- St. Andrew's deserves to be valued, not leveled. In the AIA Guide to Twin Cities Architecture, retired Pioneer Press writer Larry Millet called out St Andrew's as one of the best local examples of period revival.
- The demolition of St. Andrew's violates the city and neighborhood comprehensive plans.

The legacy of the demolition of an eligible historic site would be permanent and sets a terrible precedent. St. Andrew's is irreplaceable. If St. Andrew's is needlessly lost, so is opportunity for collaboration and compromise.

Cc: St. Paul City Council Members

Mary Thalhauer

Amy Brendmoen, Council President
City Council of Saint Paul
15 Kellogg Blvd West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

To the City Council of Saint Paul:

I oppose the expansion of the Twin Cities German Immersion charter School (TCGIS), and specifically the demolition of the former St. Andrew's church, a historically significant building in the Warrendale neighborhood of St. Paul that contributes to the architectural richness and charm of our city. If demolished, embodied energy calculators shared by HPC estimate it will send over 2,000 tons to the landfill and have a huge impact on the neighborhood.

Many of us in the neighborhood are opposed to the required variances—including one of the largest parking variances ever requested—but the school has a PR firm lobbying the city council on their behalf. There have also been some related irregularities at the Planning Commission recently that caught the attention of the city attorney's office.

It's worth reading the article in the Progressive magazine, "The Charter School Next Door, What Happens When Public Education Becomes a Market place?" by Sarah Lahm that discusses the negative impacts public charters have on neighborhoods and traditional public schools. It's worth noting that in Minnesota, public charter schools are exempt from anti-segregation laws.

TCGIS' plan creates safety and traffic issues, adversely changes the character of the neighborhood, doesn't promote diversity (the school is 87% white vs. 29% for neighborhood schools), is opposed by the St. Paul Federation of Teachers and NAACP, and—out of lack of empathy—destroys the symbolic heart of Warrendale, the former St. Andrew's church. Designed in 1927 by St. Paul's first city architect, author of St. Paul's first building code, and noted progressive, Charles A. Hausler. The neighborhood is small, so their plan to destroy the historic St. Andrew's church would have an outsized affect. This does not align with Mayor Carter's initiatives of inclusivity and equity.

TCGIS is not a neighborhood school, it does not offer enrollment preference to those who live in Saint Paul, essentially, and it's a commuter school where most students are driven to school by parents.

We hope our elected officials will take seriously the commitment to equity that's at the forefront of Mayor Carter's initiative to reduce citywide disparities—and not bow to pressure exerted by TCGIS or its controversial TenSquare consultants.

Sincerely,

Mary Shalhoub
3-1 Maple Lane Ct
SP

The parking variance is a major concern to me. The neighborhood is flooded with cars, both teachers + staff at the school + parents racing up + down side streets to pick up their children. This winter snow has narrowed the streets →

such that two cars cannot pass. My elderly parents time their shopping + appointments so as not to coincide with morning dropoff + afternoon pickup. It is just too difficult to get in + out of their driveway.