

**WEST SUMMIT NEIGHBORHOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE
OFF-CAMPUS AND ON-CAMPUS STUDENT HOUSING STUDY**

December 14, 2011

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study is an attempt by the West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Committee (WSNAC) to compile factual background information related to concerns of University of St. Thomas neighbors about maintaining the livability of their neighborhood, which surrounds the St. Paul campus. Many residents are concerned about the future of those characteristics that support livability stemming from the number of students who choose to live off, but still near, campus.

The intent of this paper is to contribute objective information to the dialogue, which will continue with St. Thomas, WSNAC and the two community council districts – Macalester-Groveland and Union Park – in which the university is located.

WSNAC was created in 2004 by a mandate of the St. Paul City Council in approving a new Conditional Use Permit for St. Thomas. The 13-member committee includes representatives from the university and four neighborhood organizations (the two community councils, the Summit Avenue Residential Preservation Association and Neighbors United). WSNAC’s mission statement says, in part, that the committee will seek “to collaborate on issues of mutual interest, provide a forum for communications, and create a stronger and more vibrant community.” In doing so, the committee’s statement of purpose says it will “provide a channel for communication on campus master planning and development, and address traffic, parking, housing, student behavior and other related issues.”

St. Thomas is just one of many colleges and universities that help to anchor the local economy. A recent McKnight Foundation study determined there are 111,500 students at 10 higher education institutions within two miles of the Central Corridor light-rail transit line between downtown St. Paul and downtown Minneapolis. The 10 institutions employ 32,000 people.

(WSNAC thanks neighborhood residents and St. Thomas students for consenting to interviews and St. Thomas administrators for providing information for this report.)

CHAPTER II: ST. THOMAS PERSPECTIVES

St. Thomas believes the strength and vitality of the Macalester-Groveland and Union Park neighborhoods, which the university helped to create, have long been factors in its ability to enroll and retain students. St. Thomas views the neighborhood as an important asset and is committed to working closely with the city, community organizations, WSNAC and individual neighbors to maintain that strength and vitality and to improve neighborhood livability.

The university also believes that it brings a vibrancy to the neighborhood, reflected in increasing property values, the energy created by youth-oriented businesses and in a stable employment base for the 444 St. Thomas employees, 3,450 alumni and 2,006 other constituents (donors and parents) who live in the immediate area (ZIP Codes 55104, 55105 and 55116).

University of St. Thomas History

Archbishop John Ireland founded St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary in 1885 on farmland near the Mississippi River to provide an opportunity for immigrants to pursue higher education and become more valued members of society. The institution evolved into three entities – the College (and then University) of St. Thomas, the St. Paul Seminary and St. Thomas Academy – with distinctive identities and separate campuses.

For its first 92 years, St. Thomas was largely an undergraduate liberal arts men's college with one graduate program (in teacher's education). St. Thomas accepted women as undergraduate students in 1977, and in the 1970s and 1980s established a series of graduate programs that resulted in the quadrupling of enrollment (to more than 10,000 in 1991) in a 15-year period. The St. Paul campus grew as well; a 1987 affiliation with the St. Paul Seminary allowed St. Thomas to take over most of the seminary superblock, and that property has slowly been redeveloped over the last two decades.

St. Paul campus enrollment grew to 8,712 in 1991 but then dropped markedly over the next decade and fell below 7,000 in 2003 as a result of the opening of a downtown Minneapolis campus and the transfer of graduate programs in business, education and professional psychology. University-wide enrollment has remained stable over the last 20 years – 10,156 in 1991 and 10,534 in 2011 – with St. Paul campus enrollment fluctuating over the last 10 years to a high of 7,686 in 2010 before falling to 7,348 in 2011.

Most of the St. Paul campus enrollment growth in the last decade has been on the undergraduate side, from 5,189 in 2001 to 5,961 in 2011, making up for graduate enrollment declines that occurred because of the 9/11 tragedy and two recessions. St. Thomas has no plans today for significant undergraduate St. Paul campus enrollment growth because of the declining number of high school graduates and a finite number of classrooms, laboratories and residence halls.

(See pages 6-7 for more information about enrollment.)

Mission, Convictions and Vision

In 2004, the St. Thomas Board of Trustees approved a revision of the university's Mission, Convictions and Vision Statements:

Mission Statement

“Inspired by Catholic intellectual tradition, the University of St. Thomas educates students to be morally responsible leaders who think critically, act wisely and work skillfully to advance the common good.”

Convictions

- Pursuit of truth
- Academic excellence
- Faith and reason
- Dignity
- Diversity
- Personal attention
- Gratitude

Vision Statement

“We seek to be a recognized leader in Catholic higher education that excels in effective teaching, active learning, scholarly research and responsible engagement with the local community as well as with the national and global communities in which we live.”

Condensed even further, the mission of St. Thomas rests on four pillars: faith, liberal arts, professional education and community engagement. Or, as the university states in its tagline: “Challenge Yourself, Change Our World.”

By prioritizing this kind of “responsible engagement with the local community,” St. Thomas understands the concerns of neighbors related to the undergraduate student presence in the neighborhood immediately surrounding the St. Paul campus.

Special Condition Use Permit (1990) and Conditional Use Permit (2004)

In the late 1980s, the City of St. Paul, concerned about the growth and future plans of its colleges and universities, required each to undergo a “Special Condition Use Permit” (SCUP) process to clearly define institutional boundaries, enrollment caps, parking requirements and building standards such as the maximum height and minimum setbacks for future construction.

The City Council approved the St. Thomas SCUP in 1990 and made minor amendments in 1995 to both the university and St. Paul Seminary SCUPs to allow for construction of a retired priests' residence on South Mississippi River Boulevard. Among the conditions of the 1990 SCUP was that St. Paul campus enrollment could not exceed 10,000 students.

At the time, a portion of the “east block” bounded by Summit, Cleveland, Grand and Finn was

included in the campus boundary because St. Thomas owned a majority of the property, and thus it was governed by the SCUP precepts. The adjacent “west block,” bounded by Summit, Finn, Grand and Cretin,” was not in the campus boundary even though the university owned a large share of the properties on that block.

In 1999, St. Thomas informed the city and the neighborhood that it wanted to begin redevelopment of the east block, starting with a new business education building on the site of Christ Child Hall on the southwest corner of Summit and Cleveland. St. Thomas sought to add both blocks to the campus, necessitating zoning changes that would need St. Paul Planning Commission approval and design standards that would need St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission approval because the northern half of the property was in the West Summit Avenue Historic District.

After nearly five years of studies, debates and negotiations involving St. Thomas and neighborhood organizations, the City Council approved a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) in August 2004 to govern redevelopment of both blocks, including sizes, heights and setbacks for two academic buildings on the east block and the maximum number of residential beds and underground parking spaces on both blocks. The 2004 CUP also superseded several portions of the 1990/1995 SCUP, as related to campus boundaries and the enrollment cap; required the university to purchase 30 student rental houses in the neighborhood over a 12-year period and convert them into owner-occupied housing; and mandated an advisory council (WSNAC). For CUP details, see <http://wsnac.net/committee.documents/conditional.use.permit/default.html>.

The 2004 CUP limits student population as follows:

“Enrollment Growth Increases. St. Thomas agrees that total enrollment at the Saint Paul campus shall not exceed 8,750 students, including full-time, part-time, and audit students. Upon such time enrollment exceeds 8,000 students, St. Thomas shall report to the Planning Commission for additional review and conditions. The review shall consist of analyzing the impact of the additional enrollment on areas such as parking, traffic, student housing, and other related impacts on the surrounding residential area. St. Thomas shall propose a plan to mitigate negative impacts resulting from the additional enrollment, and the Planning Commission may impose additional conditions on this permit to address those impacts. Any additional conditions imposed by the Planning Commission may be appealed to the City Council.”

As noted above, the St. Paul campus enrollment in 2011 is 7,348, or 16 percent under the 2004 CUP enrollment cap of 8,750. The number has been relatively stable, fluctuating by 5 percent since 1999, when the education and professional psychology programs moved to Minneapolis, the number of evening classes dropped and St. Paul graduate enrollment fell by 800 students.

The 2004 CUP defines development guidelines as follows:

“Number of Residential Beds. The total number of residential beds on the east and west blocks shall not exceed 450, unless 2133 Grand Ave. is acquired, in which case the total shall not exceed 475 beds. In no event shall there be more than 100 beds in residences on Summit Avenue. Those persons living on the east and west blocks shall include a mix of undergraduate juniors and seniors and graduate students, with resident advisors, faculty and staff.

“West Block Development. No new academic buildings shall be constructed on the west block. New construction shall be for residential uses only. St. Thomas shall agree to preserve six of the existing single-family houses on the Summit Ave. frontage not including the garages. Any residential structures built to replace any single-family homes which are moved or demolished shall be designed to look like single-family or "mansion" style homes of diverse designs, such that the Summit Ave. side of the west block shall always appear to be a single-family residential block. For demolition and construction work within the historic district, St. Thomas shall follow the established review procedures of the Heritage Preservation Commission.”

Thus, there is potential to house additional undergraduate students on campus, and the 2004 CUP cap also would allow for an increase in the overall population, to 8,750 students. If that occurred, there also would be the potential for the number of off-campus students living in adjoining neighborhoods (now around 1,700 within a mile of campus) to grow by half the current population. Of course, such increases would have to take into account demographics and declining numbers of college-eligible students as well as the need for additional faculty and facilities (classrooms, laboratories and offices in addition to residence hall beds).

St. Paul Campus Enrollment: On and Off Campus

Here is a snapshot of St. Paul campus population over the last 35 years:

	1976	1984	1991	1997	2004	2011
Undergraduate	2,392	4,271	5,132	4,943	5,085	5,961 *
Graduate	1,258	1,907	3,580	3,018	1,740	1,382
Total	3,650	6,178	8,712	7,961	6,825	7,348

* The fall 2011 undergraduate enrollment is 6,176 students, but only 5,961 are considered St. Paul campus students; the others are studying overseas or have courses only in Minneapolis.

The addition of two apartment-style residence halls (Morrison in 1998 and Flynn in 2005) as well as the conversion of the 2085 and 2151 Grand Avenue apartment buildings has allowed the university to add 1,000 beds over the last 13 years – an increase of 70 percent. Consequently, St. Thomas has increased the number of undergraduate students living on campus from 33 percent to 43 percent and enticed more juniors and seniors to live on campus.

Here is a snapshot of residential enrollment since 1997, the year before Morrison opened:

	1997 *	2004 **	2010	2011
Undergraduate	1,684	2,080	2,636	2,568
	(34.1%)	(40.9%)	(43.4%)	(43.1%)

* Before the opening of Morrison Hall (1998)

** Before the opening of Flynn Hall (2005)

Here is another way to look at St. Paul campus enrollment over the last 20 years:

Fall 2011

St. Paul undergraduate enrollment	5,961
Campus residents	2,568 (43.1%)
Off-campus enrollment (within 1 mile of campus)	1,697 (28.5%; estimate)
Off-campus enrollment (beyond 1 mile of campus)	1,696 (28.5%; estimate)

Fall 2001 (after Morrison Hall; before Flynn Hall)

St. Paul undergraduate enrollment:	5,189
Campus residents	2,098 (40.4%)
Off-campus enrollment (within 1 mile of campus)	1,546 (29.8%; estimate)
Off-campus enrollment (beyond 1 mile of campus)	1,545 (29.8%; estimate)

Fall 1991 (before Morrison and Flynn Halls)

St. Paul undergraduate enrollment:	5,132
Campus residents	1,591 (31%)
Off-campus enrollment (within 1 mile of campus)	1,771 (34.5%; estimate)
Off-campus enrollment (beyond 1 mile of campus)	1,770 (34.5%; estimate)

Thus, the number of St. Paul undergraduate students living off campus has fluctuated but remained stable – 3,393 in 2011, 3,091 in 2001 and 3,541 in 1991 – over 20 years, with half of them living within a mile of campus and the other half further out. Enrollment has increased 1,000 students in the last decade, but those students have been accommodated on campus because of the additional beds; consequently, the percentage of students living on campus has gone up and the percentage of those off campus has gone down.

Of the students living off campus, many express preference for living close to campus. A May 2010 St. Thomas analysis of the number of off-campus students who lived in the area bounded by Snelling, St. Clair, the Mississippi River and Interstate 94 showed that between 1,500 and 1,750 students lived in that area between 2000 and 2010, with 1,684 students in 2010:

• Single-Family Rentals, 2000-present (564 students):

No appreciable change in housing stock. Consistently worked with 140-150 single-family rental units. There are 564 student renters in 141 houses (based on four occupants per unit).

• Duplex Rentals, 2000-present (616 students):

No appreciable change in housing stock. Consistently worked with 80-90 duplex rental units, seven of which are owner-occupied on one side. There are 616 student renters in 91 duplex units (based on 7 rental occupants per unit, with four tenants in seven owner-occupied duplexes).

• Apartment Complex Renters, 2000-present (340 students):

No appreciable change in housing stock. Consistently monitored 300-350 student apartment renters. There are 340 students in apartments.

• **Converted Student/Family Owned Rentals, 2004-2009 (164 students):**

Consistently monitored 35-45 student-family owned “rental” units. There are 164 students in 41 houses.

As noted immediately above, a new category of off-campus student housing has appeared over the past decade: family-purchased properties intended as housing for their St. Thomas student-children. In May 2010, these numbered about 40 properties. The housing market crisis has dampened enthusiasm by parents to purchase houses, as some come to realize they may not be able to get a return out of this kind of “investment” depending on what happens with the market in the short term. However, St. Thomas has observed an upswing of parent purchasing activity – six houses – since May 2011. Measures of property status based on the “non-homesteaded” classification (such as those illustrated later in this paper) would not capture these units.

Potential to Add Housing on Campus

WSNAC has encouraged St. Thomas to add on-campus housing in the belief that fewer students would live in the neighborhood and fewer disturbances would occur.

St. Thomas, however, says that finances limit its ability to construct additional on-campus student housing. The university is completing a series of three major construction projects over the last three years: Anderson Parking Facility (\$15 million, 2009), Anderson Athletic and Recreation Complex (\$52 million, 2010) and Anderson Student Center (\$66 million, January 2012). These facilities were constructed to make the campus more attractive to students and to keep more students on campus – and not in the neighborhood – in the evenings and on weekends.

The bottom line, St. Thomas says, is that it has no debt capacity to borrow additional funds to construct housing for the foreseeable future. In addition, the current demand for on-campus housing – lack of a waiting list and some open beds (61 in fall 2011, or 2.3 percent of capacity) – does not support the notion that additional capacity could be filled.

The university has examined alternate financing options, such as “off balance sheet financing,” to determine if it could entice private investment in off-campus housing. But it chose to finance one project (Flynn Hall in 2005) on its own after hearing from Moody’s that the costs still likely would be counted on St. Thomas’ balance sheet – and against its debt capacity – because the university would be filling and operating the hall.

CHAPTER III:

PERSPECTIVES FROM THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

To gain knowledge of student perspectives, three WSNAC members met with St. Thomas campus life officials and also conducted interviews with three students. Neither exercise was rigorously designed nor scientifically valid, but both produced points that seem either to properly contextualize our observations or provide interesting challenges to our assumptions.

Dr. Mary Ann Ryan, executive director of campus and residential life, and Dr. Aaron Macke, director of residence life, periodically survey on-campus students and refer to the standard residential assessment survey from the Association of College and University Housing Officers International and Educational Benchmarking, Inc. The survey shows that students who choose to live on campus are influenced by considerations of:

- Safety and security
- Community
- Convenience

The perceived challenges with on-campus living among students are:

- Meal plans
- Regulations of student life

WSNAC representatives, Ryan and Macke discussed the role of financial considerations and agreed that students evaluating the on-campus vs. off-campus decision sometimes compare the university's charges for overall support of on-campus living against the simple per-month rent of private, off-campus housing. The extra charges of upkeep, utilities, transportation and other categories are likely to be taken for granted and overlooked.

Ryan and Macke said St. Thomas offers programs for students who are thinking about moving off campus. During these programs, the actual cost of living off campus is outlined and those misperceptions are pointed out.

Ryan and Macke said they question whether, at this time, more students would choose to live on campus if more residential spaces were constructed. "You cannot say, 'If we build it, they will come,' Ryan said. Filling campus housing depends on variables such as enrollment, cost and type of housing, and a market study would be necessary.

The unstructured interviews of three students about their on- and off-campus living experiences was hardly a broad-based survey. But the small number was partially mitigated by the

thoughtfulness of their responses and the opportunity to go in depth into the issues.

The standard progression of questions was:

- In general, what do you most like and least like about living on-campus and off-campus?
- What were the important factors you considered when making your decision of where to live?
- What ideas do you recommend to improve relations between neighbors and off-campus students?

A summary of all the points covered in the interviews would be far too long. If, however, one makes the assumption that the objectives are to encourage students to live on campus and to improve relations with neighbors among those who live off-campus, the following list of attitudes and ideas emerges:

- Some students feel supervised and stifled in the dorms.
- Some students find traditional dormitory rooms too institutional; apartments are “homey.” (*See St. Thomas response on Page 11*)
- Off-campus apartments appear cheaper, especially when looking only at the monthly rental.
- Landlords vary significantly with regard to accessibility, responsibility and response to behavioral issues.
- Students and neighbors often remain strangers; inherited perceptions of each other block the effectiveness of simple gestures, like introductions.
- Many students are unaware of communal neighborhood venues, such as community councils.
- Many UST and WSNAC efforts regarding behavior are post-problem, but there is a need to head off issues. (*Some recent progress has been made in this area; St. Thomas, in cooperation with WSNAC and the St. Paul Police Department, developed Neighborhood Initiative Action Plans for the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years.*)
- Some students claim the city’s social host ordinance is arbitrary, capriciously enforced and leads to fight-or-flight response.
- More immediate, personal follow-up could occur after initial behavior problems to educate student renters on acceptable boundaries.

To report further on some of these points:

- *Some students feel overly supervised and stifled in the dorms*

St. Thomas has the reputation among some students as a strict enforcer of behavioral rules on campus in contrast to the perception that there is near-complete freedom by moving off campus. “Behavioral rules” refers primarily to alcohol use and visitation hours. Having to choose a meal plan vs. the apparent freedom of cooking for one's self is in the same category. When looked at in these simple terms, the motivation to favor a nearby apartment off campus over on-campus housing can be strong.

The importance of escaping rules that are perceived as overbearing resonates with research. From the Assessment of Student Learning and Development (see next section for description):

Popovics (1989) used a somewhat different approach to defining the nature of satisfaction. He identified two samples, one living on campus (N=238) and one living off campus consisting of members who had previously lived on-campus. The on-campus group was asked to identify two things they liked about living in the residence halls. The off-campus group was asked to identify two disadvantages to living on campus. The on-campus students most often identified socialization, friendship, convenience, independence, security and privacy as the advantages. The off-campus students most often identified the disadvantages as visitation restrictions, curfews, rules in general and noise. It is important to note that Popovics' study was performed at a Catholic college's undergraduate school for women.

In response, St. Thomas says it is in the small minority of schools that take an active interest in off-campus student misbehavior ranging from noise disturbances to breaking the law, using the Neighborhood Initiatives Action Plan to carry out a series of proactive and reactive efforts. The St. Thomas neighborhood liaison works closely with landlords as well as parents and students in encouraging good behavior, and the Dean of Students Office will discipline students who misbehave. The Public Safety Office works closely with St. Paul police, including the hiring of off-duty officers to patrol the neighborhood on Friday and Saturday nights, to keep the peace.

- *Some students find traditional dormitory rooms too institutional; apartments are “homey.”*

This comes as a surprise to older adults who too often think of student life as a mix of studying and an active social life, which can include drinking. The transition from life in the family home to the inevitably more institutional environment of a university is quite abrupt. The trend in college residence construction, as at St. Thomas in recent years with the opening of apartment-style residences such as Morrison and Flynn halls, helps in addressing this perception. But the current inventory of “double-loaded corridor” dorms will remain at St. Thomas for a long time, absent major investment.

St. Thomas points out that it regularly invests in new carpeting, furniture (including new beds and mattresses), lounge space and new kitchens to enhance a sense of “home” in the residence halls.

- *Off-campus apartments appear cheaper, especially when looking only at the monthly rental.*

As previously discussed, little hard information is available to students and families comparing costs of on- vs. off-campus living, other than an apples-to-oranges comparison. That is the comparison of the all-included room and board charges for on-campus living vs. the monthly rent for an off-campus apartment. As one student sketched out for the interviewer, however, even after adjusting for the unexpected, it is cheaper to live off-campus. The difference is less than he expected, but still significant in his eyes. St. Thomas, in an attempt to make on-campus housing more financially attractive, will raise room rates by only 1 percent in 2012-13.

Research on On-Campus and Off-Campus Living

The professional literature seems to support the idea that students and thus the university benefit from on-campus living. As pointed out by Ryan, evidence is best researched and strongest for first-year students. About 90 percent of first-year St. Thomas students live on campus.

An excursion through the research seems to show that the positive effects of on-campus living are discernible among all classes of students (though, possibly, with diminishing strength as students get older). Further, it seems unreasonable to assume that the effects would suddenly disappear with the transition to sophomore status.

The most thorough literature review available seems to be:

Assessment of Student Learning and Development in Residence Halls. Commissioned Research by the Association of College and University Housing Officers – International. Marcia M. Dickman, project Director. Oklahoma State University, [2006].

The assessment summarized research in 160 studies published through 2005 on the social, psychological and academic development and success of college students, related to their housing and related circumstances.

Here are selected quotes from the literature review and their sources.

Selections from Assessment of Student Learning and Development in Residence Halls

“Students who live on campus have higher levels of social integration, degree aspirations, and general college experience satisfaction.”

Pascarella, E.T. (1984). Reassessing the effects of living on-campus versus commuting to college: A causal modeling approach. *The Review of*

“Students who live on campus have more involvement with the institution and achieve a higher level of developmental growth during college.”

ibid and

Pascarella, E.T. (1985a). The influence of on-campus living versus commuting to college on intellectual and interpersonal self-concept. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 26, 292-299.

“Students who are involved with and connected to the university tend to have more positive educational and social experiences. These studies appear to support the idea that the more the student is integrated into the academic and social system, the higher the level of development on several dimensions.” [Must be read in combination with studies showing higher involvement and integration among on-campus students.]

Cooper, D.L., Healy, M.A., & Simpson, J. (1994). Student development through involvement: Specific changes over time. *Journal of College Student Development*, 35,98-102.

“Academic success is positively related to living in college-owned facilities.”

Levin, B.H., & Clowes, D.A. (1982). The effect of residence hall living at college on attainment of the baccalaureate degree. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 23,99-104.

“Students who live in residence life are more likely to stay in school and to graduate.”

Blimling, G.S. (1993). The influence of college residence hall on students. In J.C. Smart (ed.), *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, 9, 248-307. New York: Agathon Press

“The work of Feldman and Newcomb (1969), Williams and Reilley (1972, 1974), Chickering (1974), Astin (1977), and Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) have laid the foundation that residence halls make a

Blimling, G.S. (1993). The influence of college residence hall on students. In J.C. Smart (ed.), *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, 9, 248-307. New York: Agathon Press

contribution to students' education.”

“Campus residence is positively related to persistence and graduation. They also observed some support for students in residence halls having higher grades.”

Johnson, W.G., & Cavins, K.M. (1996). Strategies for enhancing student learning in residence halls. *New Directions for Student Services*, 75, 69-82.

“Students have more opportunity to integrate their experiences when they live in residence halls.”

Hernandez, K., Hogan, S., Hathaway, C., & Lovell, C.D. (1999). Analysis of the literature on the impact of student involvement on student development and learning: More questions than answers? *NASPA Journal*, 35, 184-197.

“There are certain advantages in terms of positive involvement not only for students who live on campus, but also for those who previously lived on campus relative to the group of students who never lived on campus.”

Ballou, R.A., Reavill, L.K., & Schultz, B.L. (1995). Assessing the immediate and residual effects of the residence hall experience: Validating Pace's 1990 analysis of on-campus and off-campus students. *Journal of College and University Student Housing*, 25, 16-21.

“Freshmen living in residence halls had significantly higher GPA's than freshmen living off-campus. They also had significantly less academic difficulty (defined as the relative percentage of freshmen placed on academic probation at any time during the academic year).” (*UST note: More than 90 percent of its freshmen live on campus.*)

Nowack, K.M., & Hanson, A.L. (1985). Academic achievement of freshmen as a function of residence hall housing. *NASPA Journal*, 22, 22-28.

“Students living on-campus scored significantly higher on both academic progress and retention than off-campus students, and

Thompson, J., Samiratedu, V., & Rafter, J. (1993). The effects of on-campus residence on first-time college students. *NASPA Journal*, 31, 41-47.

these differences occurred regardless of race, gender, or admission type.”

“There seems to be mounting evidence that living on campus does have a broad positive impact.”

Conclusion of the authors of the literature review

In response, St. Thomas points out that some of the research noted above is dated (e.g., Pascarella has written more recently than the mid-1980s about these topics), and many articles describe a correlative relationship as opposed to a causal relationship. The university’s own research indicates students who live for a longer period of time on campus will have slightly higher GPAs, retention and graduation rates.

This literature review uncovered no research directly demonstrating superiority of academic or developmental experience with living off campus. That may be a demonstration of the truth of the matter or perhaps recognition that there is subtle bias among the student life professionals who are most likely to sponsor and conduct such research.

Finally, it should be recognized that the research depends on aggregated averages and by no means implies that each individual living on campus or off campus demonstrates the characteristics ascribed to the group.

CHAPTER IV

CRIMES AND QUALITY OF LIFE DISTURBANCES

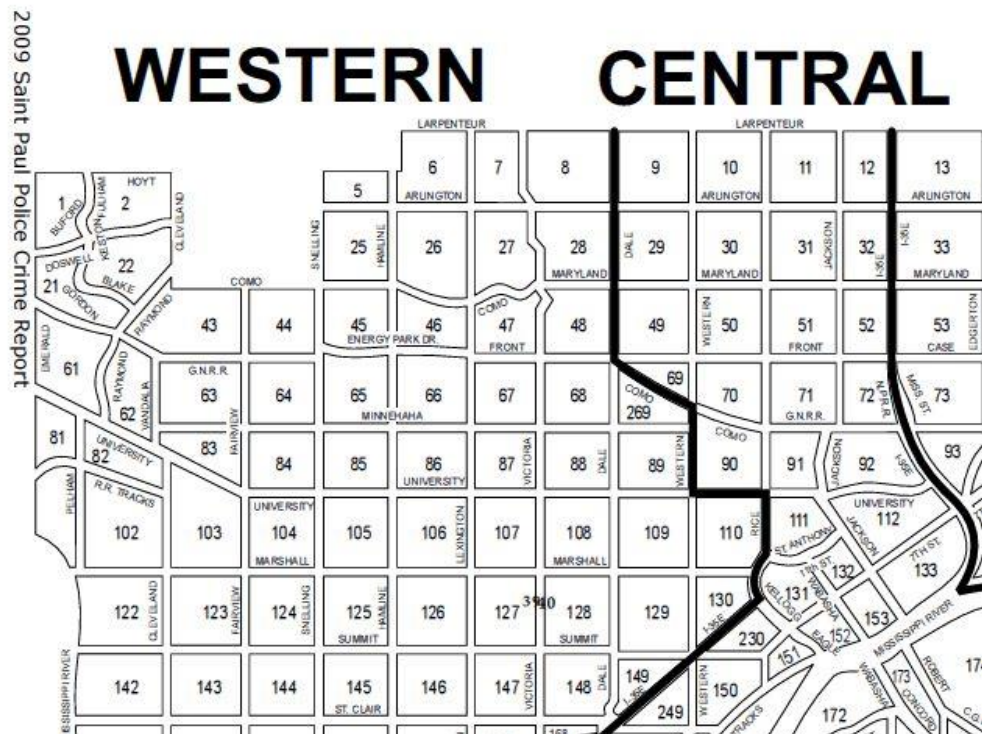
St. Thomas neighbors generally express a desire to live in a well-ordered, peaceful and stable neighborhood. Neighbors fear that increases in the proportion of rental properties, particularly those inhabited by students, could lead to an increase in crimes and quality of life disturbances.

A central goal of this report is to bring objective information to these concerns. We owe thanks to the St. Paul Police Department for providing statistics over a four-year period on crimes and quality of life disturbances, which are noted below.

Crime and Quality of Life Disturbance Reports

St. Paul Police statistics on crimes against people and property show that our neighborhood continues to be safe relative to the rest of St. Paul. The Police Department collects statistics by grid, district and citywide.

Here is its depiction of our neighborhood (it is worth noting that St. Thomas is in grids 122 and 142, and that about 1,684 students lived in grids 102, 103, 104, 122, 123, 124, 142, 143 and 144 according to 2010 research conducted by the St. Thomas neighborhood liaison.



Crimes Against Persons and Properties

If we focus on crimes against persons and properties (“Part 1 crimes”) over a recent multi-year period in the grids immediately surrounding the St. Thomas campus with a significant student population, we find that the following crimes were reported:

Part 1 Crimes by Grid: 2007-2009

Grid	Part 1*			Crimes Against Persons**			Crimes Against Property***			Change ‘07-‘09
	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009	
122	108	81	70	4	0	4	104	81	66	
123	69	56	50	0	0	0	69	56	50	
142	43	42	28	0	3	1	43	39	27	
143	57	64	51	2	1	2	55	63	49	
Avg. 4 grids	69	61	50	1.5	1.5	2	68	60	48	-27.6%
City Avg.	67.3	68.8	67.9	7.6	7.1	7.2	59.7	61.7	60.7	-0.1%

During the same period, the city averages (as noted in the tables above and below) were:

Total	13,600	13,895	13,715	1,541	1,434	1,445	12,059	12,461	12,270
Average	67.3	68.8	67.9	7.6	7.1	7.2	59.7	61.7	60.7

*Part 1 Crimes: Homicide, Rape, Robbery, Aggravated Assault, Residential Burglary, Commercial Burglary, Theft, Motor Vehicle Theft, and Arson.

**Crimes Against Persons: Homicide, Rape, Aggravated Assault

***Crimes Against Property: Robbery, Residential Burglary, Commercial Burglary, Theft, Motor Vehicle Theft, and Arson.

Thus, crimes against persons and property in the grids of the St. Thomas neighborhood generally are trending below the citywide averages during this period. Findings indicate that:

- Generally, the average of Part I crimes in the four St. Thomas grids is less than the citywide average. This is especially the case with crimes against persons, whereas crimes against property in the St. Thomas grids are closer to citywide averages.
- When looking at trend lines, the overall Part I crimes in St. Thomas grids are falling at a significantly more rapid rate (-27.6 percent from 2007 to 2009) for a four-grid average) than citywide (-.01 percent). Crimes against persons are up slightly in the St. Thomas grids and down slightly citywide over the three years; crimes against property are down 29.4 percent in the St. Thomas grids and up 1.7 percent citywide.

One could conclude that these sections of the Macalester-Groveland and Union Park districts continue to be safe places to live – or certainly safer than other neighborhoods in the city.

“Quality of Life” Disturbances

Quality of life in the St. Thomas neighborhood depends on peacefulness and quiet, as well as control of threats to persons and property. Those choosing where to live or evaluating whether to

remain or whether to invest in their properties naturally take a reading of whether their surroundings afford an acceptable environment.

Quality of life disturbances include disturbance calls, noise violations, liquor law violations and violations that can affect the peace and orderliness of a neighborhood. Police statistics gather calls about noise, disruption and behavior problems under the rubric “Quality of Life.” Western District Commander Todd Axtell measured these for the study area and reports as follows.

Quality of Life Disturbance Totals in Grids Adjacent to the St. Thomas Campus

Quality of Life					
Grid	2007	2008	2009	2010	Change ('07-'10)
122	157	161	123	156	
123	166	156	201	170	
142	116	80	84	74	
143	143	130	175	131	
Avg. 4 Grids	146	132	146	133	-9%
City Average	251	210	206	196	-22%

(St. Paul Police data specialist Bret Auritt to Senior Commander Axtell, “Crime in the Vicinity of St. Thomas,” July 28, 2010, plus 2010 figures were supplied in November 2011.)

Findings indicate that:

- Quality of Life disturbances ranged from 38 percent to 87 percent of the city average in each grid for each year, and the four-grid average range from 58 percent to 71 percent of the city average each year.
- There was a notable rise in Quality of Life calls in grids 123 and 143 (east of Cleveland) between 2007 and 2009, but those dropped to 2007 levels in 2010. Calls were flat or declined in grids 122 and 142 (west of Cleveland) from 2007 to 2010.
- Over the four years, Quality of Life calls have decreased 22 percent (from an average of 251 to 196) in the city as a whole and 9 percent (from an average of 146 to 133) around the St. Thomas campus.

Thus, statistics for disturbances, noise, liquor violations and other behavior issues, considered on a per-grid basis in the St. Thomas neighborhood, give neighbors in grids 123 cause for concern (slight increase) but are more positive than other areas of St. Paul, and neighbors in grids 122, 142 and 143 remained flat or saw decreases over the four-year period.

The Quality of Life calls, considered as a neighborhood average, have not kept up with the decreases in such calls citywide.

CHAPTER V

PROPERTY STATUS AND HOUSING MARKET ISSUES

Neighbors have noticed a trend to the conversion of owner-occupied properties to rental properties in some locations near the St. Thomas campus, and fear there is a “tipping point” in the neighborhood. The statistics seem to bear out the concern over time, although there has been a similarly strong trend across the entire city.

Two 2010-2011 studies should be noted for the record: one conducted on behalf of WSNAC by Smith Partners and the other by a geography professor and her student.

Partnership Feasibility Study (2010-2011)

WSNAC retained Smith Partners (Louis Smith, principal) to explore the feasibility of public-private partnerships to promote livability and housing market stability. Smith interviewed neighborhood residents and St. Thomas personnel and, in addition to his own research, reviewed the St. Thomas Geography Department residential property analysis (*see section below for details*). St. Thomas did not request the Smith Partners study but participated in it. WSNAC paid for the study from funds the university contributes to the committee (\$10,000 per year) as mandated by the city in the 2004 CUP.

Smith concluded the conversion to non-homestead properties in the St. Thomas neighborhood “has increased well above what would generally be considered a ‘tipping point,’ which warrants concern that disinvestment and decline could follow.”

Using Geography Department study statistics, Smith concluded that non-homestead residential properties grew from 10.6 percent in 2002 to 21.4 percent in 2009 in an area bounded by Interstate 94, Cretin, Randolph and Snelling. In five smaller areas surrounding the St. Thomas campus, non-homestead parcels grew from 23.9 percent in 2002 to 40.5 percent in 2009.

Smith acknowledged there is no precise formula in determining when an area has passed a tipping point. Research from Milwaukee, WI, Athens, GA, and Athens, OH, indicates that 30 percent rental is the approximate upper limit to maintain the character of a neighborhood. Smith recommended three integrated initiatives to stabilize the housing market in the St. Thomas campus neighborhood.

- Continue the city-mandated “housing buyback” program that St. Thomas began in 2004. St. Thomas is required to facilitate the conversion of 30 student rental houses to owner-occupied status by 2016 (and as of November 2011 had converted 19 such properties). Specifically, Smith suggested extending the program for 10 years (to 2026). St. Thomas has said it is open to the idea of a program extension but will not discuss the issue until closer to 2016.
- Initiate a down payment assistance program with special incentives for St. Thomas

employees to acquire homes in the neighborhood. Specifically, Smith suggested 40 grants of \$5,000 over a 10-year period for anyone interested in purchasing a single-family residence within focus areas and 40 grants of \$7,500 for St. Thomas employees to do the same. St. Thomas has said it would need to do a market study to determine if there would be enough interest in such a program; one of the university's concerns is that \$5,000 or \$7,500 grants would be insufficient in generating interest given the high price of neighborhood housing.

- Sponsor, with WSNAC, a market study to facilitate private development of student rental housing in priority areas adjacent to campus. St. Thomas has said it would be willing to sponsor such a study but questions if sufficient property exists near campus for redevelopment as student housing and cites difficulties that several developers had in obtaining neighborhood approval to redevelop a service station site on the southeast corner of Cleveland and Grand; ultimately, the property was sold to an individual who is running it as an automotive repair shop.

St. Thomas has suggested that one way to address the increase in rental housing in the area is to encourage homeowners to place a covenant on their property specifying that when it is sold, it must remain owner-occupied for a certain period of time. (The St. Thomas housing buyback program includes such a covenant.) WSNAC has expressed concern whether such a “covenant campaign” would be successful and has asked whether that is a fair demand of homeowners.

St. Thomas Geography Department Study (2010-2011)

A geography professor (Catherine Hansen) and student (Justin Riley) used Ramsey County and Metropolitan Council data to conduct a study to analyze changes in homestead status and estimate residential property market values and sales values between 1990 and 2009. In addition, St. Thomas provided Hansen and Riley with student housing addresses kept since 1998 by neighborhood liaison John Hershey and kept by the university since 2005 (after the 2004 CUP mandated that undergraduate students provide a local address when they register for classes).

The study focused on five areas directly surrounding the campus with the most-dense concentration of student residences and compared results with (a) the larger neighborhood bounded by Interstate 94, Cretin, Randolph and Snelling and (b) the entire city.

Study results showed the following (*see Pages 30-34 for maps related to points below*):

- In the five areas closest to campus: from 1990 to 2002, 44 properties converted to homestead status and 41 properties to non-homestead, and from 2002 to 2009, 10 properties converted to homestead and 129 to non-homestead – the latter a 13 to 1 margin. Of these 129 properties, 66 (51 percent) were identified as having St. Thomas students living there.
- In the larger neighborhood study area, conversions were studied only from 2002 to 2009: 51 properties converted to homestead status and 663 to non-homestead – a 13-1 margin. Of the 663 properties, 143 (22 percent) were identified as having St. Thomas students living there.

- In the city, again from 2002 to 2009, 1,264 properties converted to homestead status and 11,506 to non-homestead – a 9 to 1 margin.
- In 2009, St. Thomas students occupied 26 percent of the properties near campus and 10 percent of those in the larger neighborhood.
- The mean estimated market values in the five study areas near campus increased 31 percent – to \$307,000 – between 2002 and 2009 for homesteaded properties. The increase was 20 percent – to \$415,000 – for non-homesteaded properties.
- Sales values were flat in the broader neighborhood from 2002 to 2009, compared with an average decrease of 15 percent citywide. While the St. Thomas campus rests within an area that experienced value increases somewhat less than the apparent average in the western end of the city, there is so much variability among U.S. Census tracts that a firm conclusion is unwarranted. We might say that property values in our neighborhoods do not demonstrate a significant departure from the range of changes common to our side of the city.

As noted earlier, the number of students living off campus in the area bounded by Interstate 94, Snelling, St. Clair and the Mississippi River has been relatively stable over the last 20 years: 3,541 in 1991, 3,091 in 2001 and 3,393 in 2011. That raises the question, when considering the 13-fold increase in non-homesteaded property in the slightly larger Geography Department study area: who is living in the additional rental properties? This issue would need further study, but one suggestion has been that more adults (non-students) are renting property in the neighborhood because of the recession and housing market crisis. On the other hand, the conversion to rental property is happening at a faster rate around St. Thomas than is the case citywide, raising another question: From where is the pressure for rentals coming?

It should be noted that members of WSNAC, while not disputing the accuracy of the housing market research conducted by Hansen and Riley, did not agree with the researchers' following conclusion:

“...The housing market around St. Thomas is not suffering. These maps and data have shown that there is a significant increase in student rentals in the area, but this has not hurt the housing market, and if anything has helped bring money and investment into it.”

City of St. Paul Activity

In August 2011, the St. Paul City Council approved a one-year moratorium that bans the conversion of owner-occupied housing to student housing in the St. Thomas neighborhood (the area bounded by Interstate 94, Snelling Avenue, St. Clair Avenue and the Mississippi River except Desnoyer Park).

The council also ordered its Planning and Economic Development Department and Department of Safety and Inspections to study the issue and recommend how to address the conversion issue. The two departments are expected to make recommendations by the end of 2011, after which the Planning Commission and City Council will hold public hearings and make decisions.

CHAPTER VI

SUGGESTIONS FROM NEIGHBOR AND STUDENT INTERVIEWS

As noted earlier, WSNAC members conducted interviews of three students and five neighbors for this report.

Names of students and neighbors were solicited from UST officials and neighbors. Those who were responsive and available were interviewed either on campus or in their home. The dialogues were recorded but interviewees were promised anonymity.

The following chart is an attempt to summarize the “take-away” suggestions from the interviews, and St. Thomas’ response is parenthetically noted in italics after several suggestions).

<u>Observation</u>	<u>Suggestion</u>	<u>St. Thomas Response</u>
Students feel supervised and stifled in the dorms.	Encourage on-campus living by examining regulations of student life.	St. Thomas policies are very similar to other campuses and model state law.
	Equalize university engagement with off-campus students, perhaps through reps and alumni in neighborhood.	St. Thomas has made some strides in this area this fall, establishing a Neighborhood Student Advisers program, where commuter students work with other students.
	Equalize university engagement with off-campus students with mandatory training for those not opting for dorms.	St. Thomas knows of no other school that mandates training, but it does provide optional programs for students moving off campus.
Students find dorm rooms too institutional; apartments are “homey.”	Design dorms that appeal to student preference for a “homey” environment.	St. Thomas makes regular investments to make residence halls more attractive and to maintain the quality of furnishings.
Off-campus apartments appear cheaper.	Research typical utilities, parking and other costs and educate students and parents.	St. Thomas works with students to compare room charges for on-campus living vs. off-campus apartment costs (rent, food, utilities, cable TV, Internet). St. Thomas, in an attempt

Observation	Suggestion	St. Thomas Response
		to make on-campus housing more financially feasible, will raise room rates by only 1 percent in 2012-13.
Landlords highly variable in accessibility and responsibility.	Publish a landlord directory and make it available to neighbors and renters.	St. Thomas does not publish a comprehensive directory, but landlords must provide contact info if they advertise their properties on the St. Thomas Off-Campus Student Services Web site.
	Publish a recommended lease agreement clause specifying limits on behavior and complaints	St. Thomas shares samples of “party-related” lease agreement language with landlords who request it.
	Reserve “Apartments Available” site for landlords with a clean record.	St. Thomas has been advised not to attempt to distinguish between landlords who have “clean” records and those who may not.
Student and neighbors remain strangers; inherited perceptions of each other block effectiveness of simple introductions.	Sponsor neighborhood projects involving students and residents; e.g., community garden, compost site.	This is done to a modest extent at this time.
Students are unaware of communal neighborhood venues (e.g., community councils).	Outreach to off-campus students should explain opportunities to participate.	St. Thomas is making more of an attempt to do this.
Much of UST and WSNAC effort is post-problem, while we need to head off issues.	Diminish the number of students living in the neighborhoods by building desirable living options on campus.	St. Thomas does not have the financial capacity to build additional housing on campus for the foreseeable future, and believes current demand for on-campus housing – lack of waiting list and some open

Observation

Suggestion

St. Thomas Response

		beds – does not support the notion that additional capacity could be filled.
	Revisit idea of controlling density of rentals near St. Thomas.	The City of St. Paul rental housing study will examine this option.
	Commit to a policy of housing capacity for a set percentage of the student body.	St. Thomas believes such a policy would be unwise because it needs to consider ever-changing demographics and the economy and their impact on residence hall occupancy.
	Research two-year on-campus requirement, including capital costs and benefits to UST academic community.	St. Thomas believes such a requirement would negatively impact recruitment and retention. The handful of schools with the requirement are smaller colleges in rural areas or urban campuses that recruit the majority of their students from outside the region (e.g., Macalester).
Students claim the social host ordinance is arbitrary, capriciously enforced and leads to fight-or-flight responses.	Evaluate effectiveness and fairness of the ordinance.	
Immediate, personal follow-up is needed after initial behavior problems to educate on boundaries.	Few neighbors have skills or want to perform. UST reps are needed in the neighborhood.	St. Thomas has initiated a new program this fall to accomplish that.
Relatively few neighborhood residents visit campus for events, cultural opportunities.	Ensure that neighbors are aware of opportunities (e.g., flyering, community council newsletters, etc.)	St. Thomas reports regular attendance by neighbors at events, publicized in print newsletter and community council e-newsletters.

<u>Observation</u>	<u>Suggestion</u>	<u>St. Thomas Response</u>
Loss of tradition of UST faculty and staff living in the neighborhood.	Subsidize faculty and staff buying near campus.	St. Thomas reports that 444 employees (29 percent of 1,539) live near the St. Paul campus, in ZIP Codes 55104, 55105 and 55116. The Smith Partners report recommended subsidies; UST questions if they would be effective given the cost of housing and says a market study would be needed.
Take a broader view of housing issues and create a mechanism to deal with all of them.	Consider founding a community development corporation for this sector of the city, or collaboration with SPARC, a CDC that expanded its operations in 2011 to include all of Ward 4.	St. Thomas considered a CDC proposal in 2004 but turned it down because of its cost; the university has always said it would consider other CDC proposals.

CHAPTER VII

EXPERIENCES AND POLICIES OF OTHER UNIVERSITIES

We sought information from 11 other urban universities and researched additional institutions over the Internet. WSNAC members cooperated with St. Thomas staff in compiling this chapter.

The following universities were contracted: Creighton, Duquesne, Hamline, Macalester, Marquette, Portland, Seton Hall, St. Catherine, Tufts, Villanova and Washington University (St. Louis). Only five responded in a useful way: Hamline, Marquette, Portland, St. Catherine and Villanova. Their answers follow (St. Thomas' answer is italicized after the question).

Does your university have any kind of on-campus residency requirement? (*St. Thomas has no requirement but about 90 percent of freshmen live on campus.*)

Hamline: No

Marquette: Yes. We require first- and second-year students to live in residence halls. They may be exempt from this policy if they are commuting from their parents' home, are 21 years of age or older, or are more than two years out of high school. (*St. Thomas notes that Marquette is in a troubled neighborhood near downtown, very dissimilar to St. Thomas, and also recruits 60 percent of its students from out of state.*)

Portland: Yes. First-year students must live on campus.

St. Catherine: No.

Villanova: No requirement but 98 percent of first-year students live on campus.

What is the approximate percentage of your undergraduate population residing on campus? (*St. Thomas: 43 percent of 5,961 undergraduate students in fall 2011*)

Hamline: 47 percent

Marquette: 94 percent of our first-year and sophomore classes live on campus.

Portland: 57 percent

St. Catherine: 45 percent

Villanova: 70 percent.

What is the approximate percentage of your undergraduate students residing within a 10-block area of campus who live in single-family or duplex style rental units? (*St. Thomas: 27*

percent)

Hamline: Does not keep data.

Marquette: While we don't have a solid percentage to cite, "most" of our undergraduate juniors and seniors live within a 10-block radius of campus.

Portland: 85 percent.

St. Catherine: Does not keep data.

Villanova: Villanova is located in a well-to-do area on the Philly Main Line. Student renters live 2-3 miles away from campus in city-approved houses. Radnor Township has restrictive codes for student housing and actually has "student-approved housing."

What programs have you put into place to prevent student-related disturbances in the immediate neighborhoods surrounding your campus? (*St. Thomas has a wide range of programs, as identified in its annual Neighborhood Initiatives Action Plan.*)

Hamline: Communicates with neighbors via newsletters and lets them know they can call campus security office, which has a four-block radius around campus for "concerned visits" with students; works occasionally with the Midway Coalition to conference with students and neighbors.

Marquette: Our Department of Public Safety (DPS) does a lot of work with our off-campus student population in terms of educating them about parties, responsible hosting, and consequences. We have a close relationship with the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD), and utilize some of their officers in following up on incidents that happen on the weekends. DPS is constantly patrolling the neighborhood and we have an extensive camera system in the neighborhood as well. One of the things they try to do early in each academic year is break up parties as they see them. If MPD is contacted and ends up issuing citations, those get very expensive for students very quickly, and can send a message that parties are not worth the financial or legal risk. Landlords are also notified if this happens, which creates further trouble for students.

Portland: No response.

St. Catherine: Sees no need for a program.

Villanova: Has no one person dedicated to dealing with neighborhood civility issues, partly because student disturbances don't happen in the immediate neighborhood. There is a part-time community liaison who mainly deals with political connections rather than livability issues, and a committee meets monthly and deals with off-campus issues.

If you have programs you can identify, how do you judge their effectiveness? (*St. Thomas keeps detailed statistics and analyzes and refines programs as necessary.*)

Hamline: Most-effective tool is security department's "knock and talk."

Marquette: The number of off-campus parties has steadily decreased over the years, although some years are more active than others.

Portland: No response.

St. Catherine: No need for a program.

Villanova: Did not respond.

Are student misbehavior-related incidents in the neighborhoods surrounding your campus increasing, decreasing or remaining relatively constant? Do you maintain any statistics that document the trend? (*St. Thomas maintains detailed statistics; numbers have been up and down in recent years.*)

Hamline: Does not keep trend statistics.

Marquette: DPS may maintain some statistics related to house parties; don't know for certain.

Portland: No response.

St. Catherine: No need to keep trend statistics.

Villanova: Dean of Students Office handles student comportment issues on a case-by-case basis but the university has no over-arching program to address student disturbances in the neighborhood or to do commuter education. Villanova addresses livability concerns in a "patchwork" way, "not nearly as sophisticated" as what St. Thomas does.

Do you have or keep any information pertinent to off-campus residential housing patterns? Do you work in any way with local landlords? (*St. Thomas has kept detailed statistics since 1998, knows residences of 95+ percent of undergraduate students and stays in regular contact with landlords.*)

Hamline: Does not keep such information or work with landlords.

Marquette: Have relationships with almost all neighborhood landlords, and serve as a clearinghouse for information about properties in the neighborhood.

Portland: No response.

St. Catherine: Sees no need to keep information or work with landlords.

Villanova: It doesn't keep housing data. It gets a list of "city approved student housing"

from Radnor Township.

What programs involve residential students, area residents, landlords, off-campus students, law enforcement or municipal agencies, or do you have other initiatives that you would recommend to our attention? (*St. Thomas has a series of programs, as documented in its Neighborhood Initiatives Action Plan.*)

Hamline: Most effective tool is security department's "knock and talk" program.

Marquette: We do not have a large number of homeowners in our neighborhood, so almost everything we or DPS does is related to educating our students about being smart consumers and being safe in the neighborhood. A school that works extensively with its surrounding neighborhood associations however is UW-Milwaukee. Its Neighborhood Housing Office website is: <http://www.aux.uwm.edu/nho/>

Portland: No response.

St. Catherine: Sees no need for such programs.

Villanova: Refer to

<http://www1.villanova.edu/villanova/studentlife/reslife/offcampus.html>

From this limited sample of different types of schools that may not be comparable, it appears that St. Thomas houses a smaller proportion of its students on campus and that the environments in which these schools find themselves vary considerably. Villanova is in a tightly regulated municipality where local government seems active in controlling student rentals, while Marquette is in a neighborhood very close to downtown Milwaukee, full of rentals and few owner-occupied properties. Villanova's locality, Radnor, Penn., requires off-campus student houses to be registered as student homes and they may house no more than three unrelated residents.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY

This report shows that residents and property owners in the neighborhoods surrounding the University of St. Thomas can continue to be confident of the future of their community, but that confidence is contingent on making progress on at least two problems.

Confidence is justified by property values data which shows, at the level of neighborhood-wide averages, that these neighborhoods continue to be of high value relative to St. Paul. Likewise, data on major crime shows that our community is safer than most others in the city.

The report also shows, however, problems that must be overcome if that confidence is to be maintained into the future. The growth of rental properties in the neighborhoods near St. Thomas exceeds that of the city as a whole, and the demand for rentals is largely driven by St. Thomas students seeking lodging near campus. The growth is accompanied by a record of disturbances and complaints that has failed to match the city-wide decline in such problems.

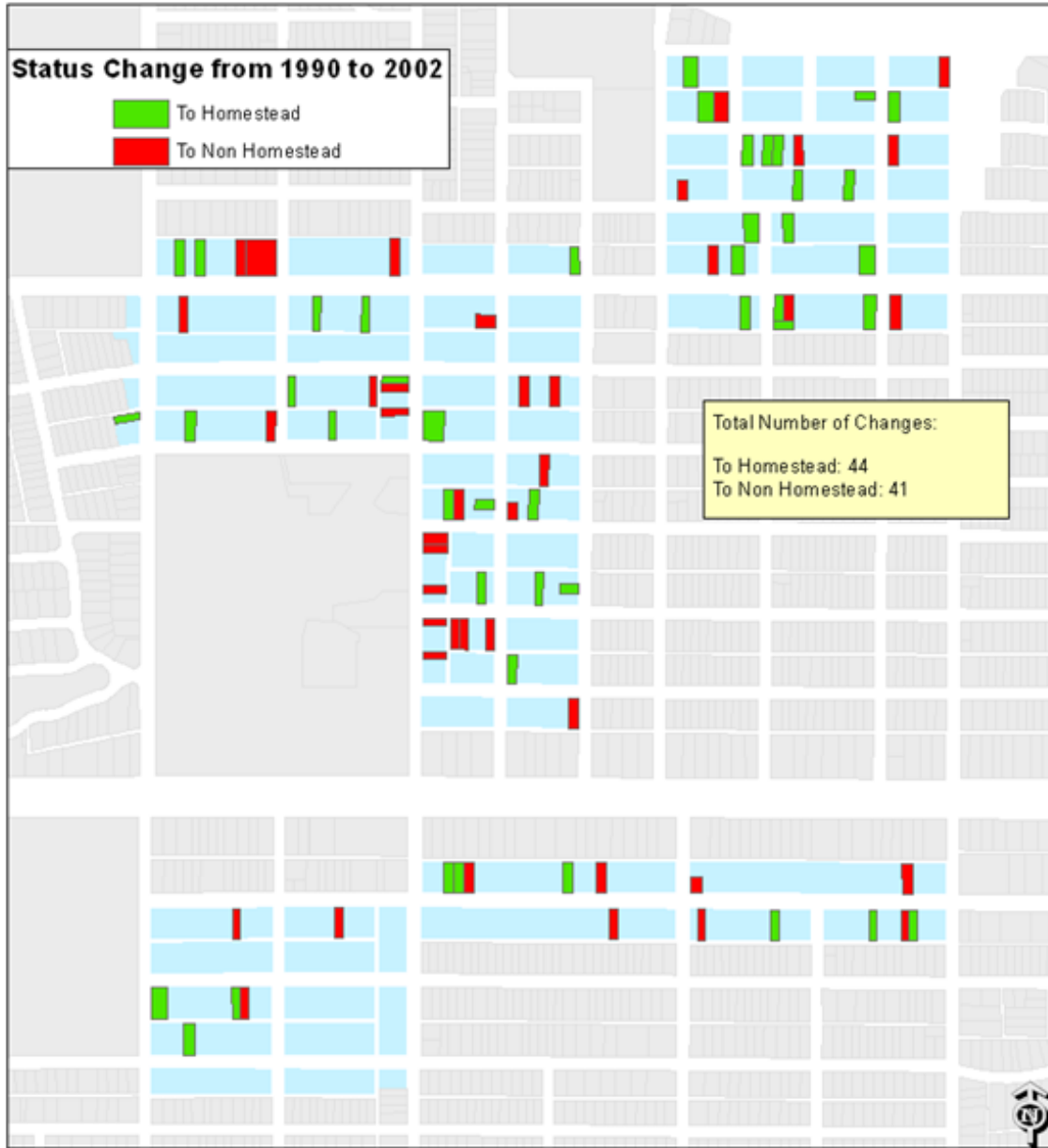
These issues have become very serious among affected neighbors and must be dealt with if confidence in the future of the neighborhoods is to be maintained.

The conclusions of this report include:

- Undergraduate enrollment on the St. Paul campus alone has increased by 16 percent since 1991. About 44 percent of St. Paul campus students live on campus. On-campus living capacity has increased by 1,000 beds since 1998, so the off-campus population has fluctuated between 3,100 and 3,500 since 1991, with half of those commuter students living in surrounding neighborhoods.
- Increasing the proportion of students living on campus, given the current enrollment, would mean building additional capacity and would bring up issues of financing and appealing to student preferences. These preferences include a more “homey” environment, loosening lifestyle restrictions and accurate assessment of comparative costs (students and families often underestimate actual costs of living off-campus). St. Thomas says the current demand for on-campus housing (lack of a waiting list and some open beds) does not support the proposition that additional capacity could be filled. St. Thomas also points out that it has invested heavily in new athletic-recreation and student centers to make the campus more attractive to students and keep them actively engaged on campus.
- Research shows that social and academic measures of student success favor on-campus living, especially for first-year students. About 90 percent of St. Thomas first-year students live on campus, but there is no on-campus requirement. The move off campus typically begins in the sophomore year, a reportedly more difficult time in terms of behavior. St. Thomas does not support a requirement that sophomores live on campus.

- Crimes against persons and property in the grids of our neighborhoods are significantly below the citywide averages. Our neighborhoods remain safe relative to others in St. Paul. However, quality of life violations (noisy parties, drunkenness, trash, etc.) have not followed the downward trend in the city as a whole. St. Thomas and WSNAC have made a concerted effort the last two years to work together to decrease these violations.
- Change of property status from homestead to non-homestead accelerated from 2002 to 2009, as it did citywide, but the change in our neighborhoods (13 to 1) outstripped the city average (9 to 1). Some fear parts of the neighborhood near St. Thomas are reaching a “tipping point,” where the number of rental vs. owner-occupied properties is not properly balanced.
- Those neighbors whose opinions were researched feel that UST's response to problems with off-campus students has been inadequate and *post hoc*. St. Thomas disputes that assessment and says it is working earnestly with WSNAC and St. Paul police on a number of fronts to address the problems.

Homestead Status Changes in Focused Study Areas, 1990 to 2002



Parcel Source: Metropolitan Council MetroGIS
Regionally Endorsed Parcel dataset, 2009.
1990 Value Source: Ramsey County Assessors Office



Homestead Status Changes in Focused Study Areas, 2002 to 2009

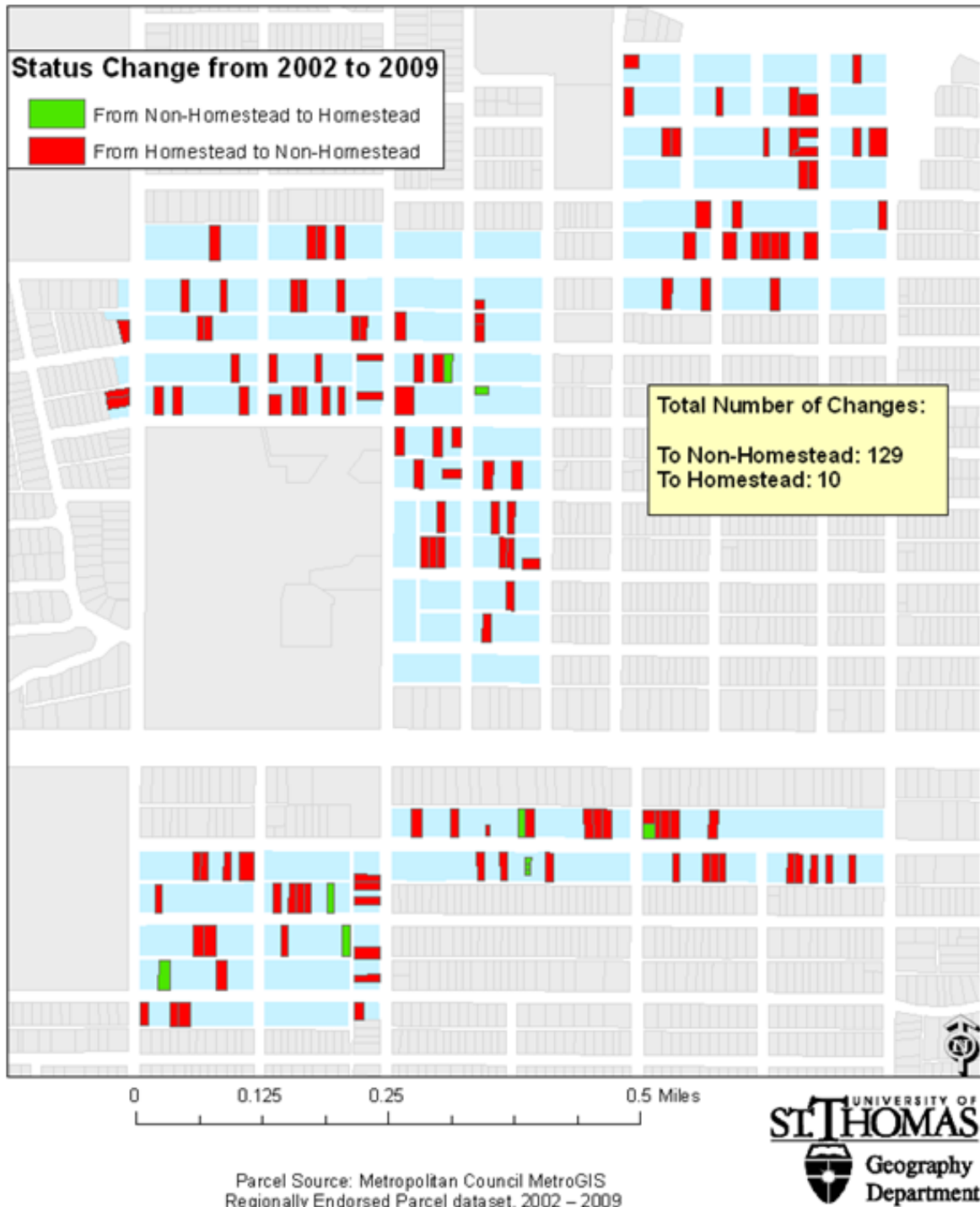
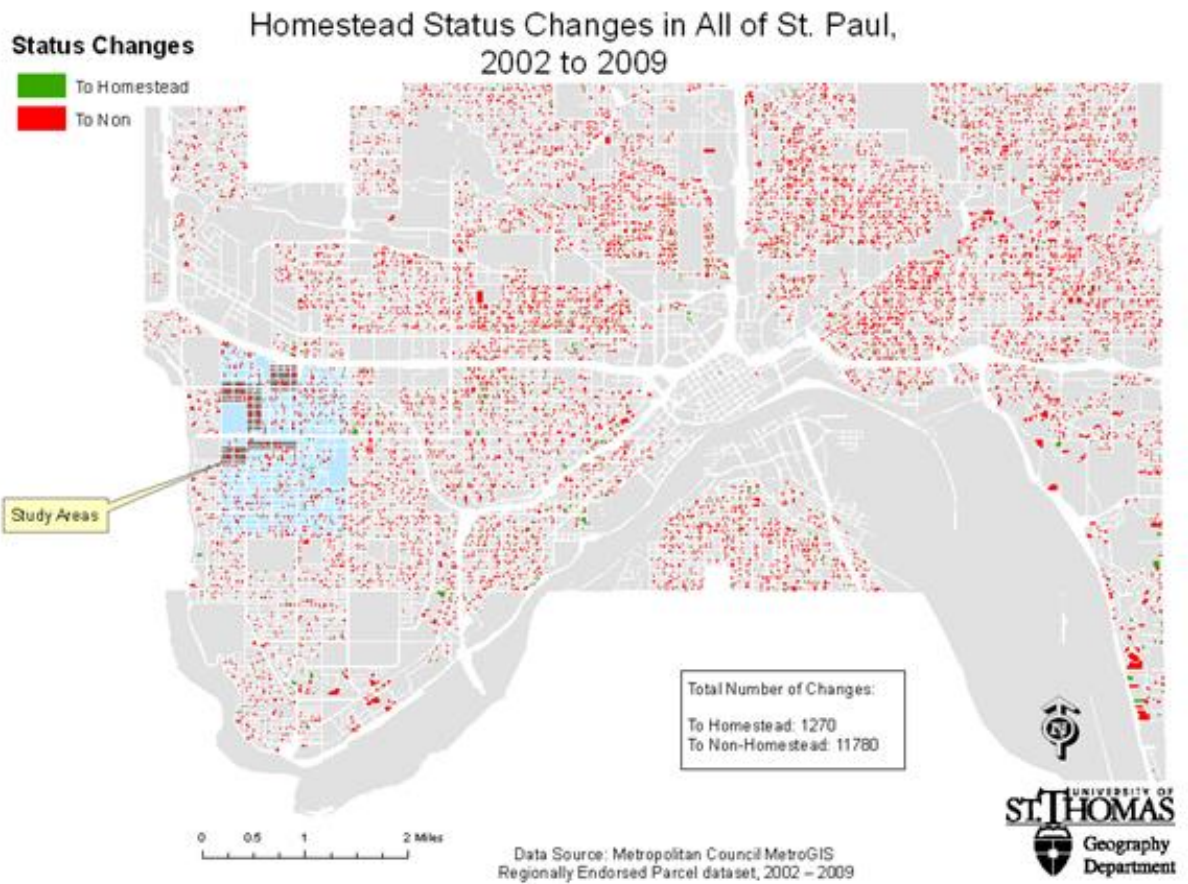


Figure 4: Homestead Status Changes 2002 - 2009



Regionally Endorsed Parcel dataset, 2002 - 2009

Figure 11: Sale Value Changes by Tract,

