

From: [Tyler Penniman](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul>Contact-Council](#)
Subject: Assessment 215200 Onjection
Date: Tuesday, April 8, 2025 4:57:51 PM

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Subject: Objection to Special Assessment – 1282 Highland Pkwy (Assessment #215200)

To the Saint Paul City Council,

I am writing to formally object to the proposed special assessment for the Griggs/Scheffer Area Paving and Lighting, Phase II (2021), affecting my property at 1282 Highland Parkway (Parcel ID: 15-28-23-12-0051).

While I support the city's efforts to maintain infrastructure, I am concerned that the charges outlined—specifically for grading, paving, and lighting—may fall under the category of routine maintenance, which the Ramsey County District Court has ruled cannot be constitutionally assessed to individual property owners unless a special benefit can be demonstrated.

In addition, the timing in which this was communicated demonstrates a lack of good faith on the part of the City Council. You are sending a notice of billing years after the initial attempt to charge property owners for this, and years after its completion. It is clear that the council understood at the time that this was going to be rejected. I do not understand how you can send this notice to, for example, someone who bought the house since the completion and expect them to have any belief that they should pay. This is a dead bill and needed to be settled years ago.

I voted for a sales tax increase to fund road and lighting work, in the belief that this was to make up for the shortfall of the city losing this funding source. Now apparently even that new source is not enough and you are attempting to resurrect old bills from years ago that were determined to be invalid. This has a feel of being disingenuous and of the council seeing what people might just be willing to pay.

Finally, the idea that Highland Parkway improvements benefit my household more than others is false. I barely drive on the road, and it is in fact a thoroughfare for commuters from across the city. This is why the local sales tax which voters approved is the right way to pay for this. If you want to apply the assessment to a church or other entity that does not pay property tax, that is one thing. However, we already pay over \$1000 a month in property tax, plus hundreds per year in the new sales tax; you need to find a way to live within your budget and stop viewing homeowners as an unlimited source of funds.

The court ruling in *First Baptist Church of St. Paul v. City of St. Paul* (2022) made clear that maintenance activities like street lighting and certain road repairs are not inherently assessable unless a clear and specific benefit to the property is shown beyond what the general public receives. I respectfully request:

1. A detailed explanation of how the grading, paving, and lighting in this project constitute a special benefit to my property rather than general maintenance shared by all taxpayers.
2. Clarification on how the city is applying the court's ruling in this and similar assessments moving forward.

1. An explanation of how the city decided, years later, to give this billing a retry and attempt to collect on something that I would have objected to doing if the facts were known.

Until such justifications are provided, I object to this assessment as potentially unconstitutional and respectfully request that the Council delay or deny its ratification.

Sincerely,
Tyler S. Penniman
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