

From: jerome.abrams
To: [*CI-StPaul>Contact-Council](#)
Subject: Goodrich Avenue Drive access
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025 9:30:29 AM

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Comments to City Council regarding case previously identified as ZF #04-054-501 and having no other case number indicated on the mailed public hearing notice mailed on 2/20/2025

Item 16 of the Conditional Use Permit states:

“At such time as the University remodels or replaces the Binz Refectory or replaces Grace Hall, the loading drive which currently exists between Goodrich Ave. and the Binz Refectory shall be removed, such that there shall be no vehicular access from Goodrich Ave. to any of the University’s buildings on the south campus.” In 2022 and 2023, the University of St. Thomas (UST) remodeled Binz twice to make most of it an athletics building: locker rooms, coaches’ offices, team meeting rooms, etc. UST still feeds priests in part of the building, but the food is brought in from elsewhere. The permits identified both projects as “remodel” and stated a combined cost of \$1.3 million. UST has not removed the driveway, which now gets traffic from the adjacent athletic fields. The language of the CUP is clear. Refusing to close the loading drive is in violation of the CUP. On July 1, 2024, the Department of Safety and Inspections ordered UST to remove the Goodrich Drive access, since the Binz Refectory had been remodeled (City of St. Paul ordinance, Section 380.03) and UST was violating the 2004 CUP by failing to remove the Goodrich Ave access drive. UST did not appeal and did not comply with the order.

In December 2024, the Planning Commission rejected the UST request to modify paragraph 16 of the CUP such that UST could continue to use the Goodrich Ave. drive access. The Planning Commission found that the removal of the Goodrich Drive access was necessary to achieve compatibility between UST and the residential neighborhood. It also found that removing the drive was not unreasonable, unnecessary or impossible of compliance.

Keeping the drive open will have significant impacts to the adjacent neighborhoods.

The arena events of maximum capacity are estimated in the EAW of 2024 to generate 2853 vehicle trips. An open drive will serve as drop off point for arena events and will increase traffic, produce traffic congestion, and increase noise and pollution from both idling and moving cars and trucks. Arena patrons, who envision vehicle access to the south campus via an open drive, will be an additional source of traffic. In addition to increased green house gas emissions from all vehicles, diesel powered vehicles, such as used for deliveries, will increase PM 2.5 particle pollution. Epidemiological studies show that asthma, lung dysfunction, lung cancer, and other related diseases are positively correlated with increased PM2.5 particle exposure. (Yen-Yi Lee, et al. Aerosol and Air Quality Research 17:2424a (2017).

The streets of the neighborhoods within the 350 foot zone include streets of 30-32 feet width. Goodrich Avenue, Woodlawn Avenue, and Fairmount Avenue are in great proximity to the Goodrich Drive and do not have the capacity to handle the traffic generated by arena events. With 58 arena home games scheduled for the 2024-2025 season this situation will be a frequent occurrence. With the University of St. Thomas

(UST) joining the National Collegiate Hockey Conference and holding conference hockey tournaments plus an undisclosed number of concerts, conventions, and other non athletic events, the frequency of traffic complications will be even higher. With Cretin Ave traffic at LOS F, which means that the street does not have capacity to handle the traffic, the obstruction to emergency vehicle access to the neighborhood will persist for a calculated time of 41 minutes. With parking on two sides, two way traffic, and delayed access to Cretin Avenue that will have LOS F during events that will prolong congestion, emergency vehicles will be unable to reach emergencies in the adjacent neighborhoods. I discussed this problem with the firefighters of Station 14, who agreed that emergency vehicle access would be a significant problem.

Sirens and blinking lights cannot displace cars that are clogging streets. I have modeled this situation and the consequent health and safety consequences in my comments to the updated EAW of 2024.

UST was not forced to build an entertainment center on a site that does not have the infrastructure to support it and is in an environmentally sensitive area. Testimony to the zoning commission that the driveway would not be used for arena access during events is clearly not enforceable. Why must the residents on the adjacent streets compromise their safety to serve UST's poor judgment and arrogant need for entertainment? The statement in the EAW that UST has arbitrarily decided that good management practices do not apply when inconvenient for the needs of UST further demonstrates the arrogance of UST and lack of consideration for the residents of the adjacent neighborhoods.

The City of St. Paul must not ignore this significant safety concern that already has been communicated to the planning commission and the city council in written form and oral testimony. These august bodies have not provided any evidence of understanding the safety issue or of mitigation of this safety risk.

Members of the city government take an oath of office that states that government staff will uphold the constitution of the state of Minnesota. Article I Section I states "Government is instituted for the security, benefit and protection of the people..." The city government is not forced to jeopardize the safety of tax paying residents for a tax exempt entertainment center.

The Goodrich Ave. loading drive must be closed as stated in the CUP. As noted above, the Department of Safety and Inspections and the Planning Commission have already required closing the Goodrich Drive access. I am asking you to fulfill your obligation to tax paying residents of the designated neighborhoods and uphold the CUP. The loading drive must be closed.

Jerome H. Abrams
151 Woodlawn Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105
jeromeabr@comcast.net

From: [Vincent Graziano](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul>Contact-Council](#)
Subject: Saint Thomas Goodrich driveway
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025 10:36:36 AM

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To the Saint Paul City Council,

I have lived near St Thomas University for over 30-years and have witnessed its never-ending expansion and negative impact on our neighborhood. I do not live on Goodrich Ave but I am very much against the continued use of the driveway on Goodrich Ave by St Thomas. It will have an increasingly negative impact on the people on that street as the new arena is completed and huge trucks will move materials, food, people, etc. in/out of the arena from the South. People on Summit Ave will also be heavily impacted but Goodrich is a normal city street will be impacted the most. They already pay huge property taxes and are expected just to accept the downgrading of their street? Doesn't the city want to protect their own property values or give St Thomas carte blanche to do as they please? St Thomas agreed to close the driveway and they should live up to it's agreement. Please reject their appeal.

Thank you,
Vincent Graziano
121 Otis Ave
Saint Paul, MN. 55104

From: [Lynette Sikora](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_Contact-Council](#)
Subject: UST CUP Hearing at March 5 City Council Meeting
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025 10:24:44 AM
Attachments: [UST CUP Hearing Lynette FINAL 2-2025.docx](#)

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Please see attached comments regarding Case number: ZF #04-054-501

Case number: ZF #04-054-501

February 27, 2025

In 2004, UST wanted to expand its campus and was sued. The lawsuit was settled in mediation.

5 parties were involved in the settlement: UST, SARPA, the Mac-Groveland Community Council, Union Park, and the City of St. Paul. FIVE. All made concessions.

The resulting CUP clearly states that UST must remove the driveway from Goodrich Avenue to the Binz Refectory if they remodel the building.

UST did remodel in 2023-24. The former Binz Refectory was reconfigured twice, into an athletics facility featuring locker rooms and coaches' offices. Building permits confirm the work to be "remodels." The building has also been renamed the Binz Building to reflect its new purpose. Despite the CUP, UST has defied its obligation to remove the driveway.

In July the Department of Safety and Inspections determined that UST was in violation of the CUP and ordered the driveway removed. But UST refused to uphold its promise, in clear violation of the CUP. The city then reversed itself.

But the Department of Safety and Inspections had it right. The CUP is a city council mediated agreement between 5 parties. No single party can nullify the terms of a nuanced, 5-party agreement. All must agree to any modification.

If the city grants UST's wish to reopen the CUP before it comes into compliance with the existing CUP, the decision will make a mockery of all codes and regulations. It will erode public trust in the processes of St Paul city government.

Lynette Erickson-Sikora

173 Montrose Place, St Paul

From: [Steve Sikora](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_Contact-Council](#)
Subject: UST CUP Hearing at March 5 City Council Mtg
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025 10:20:25 AM
Attachments: [UST CUP Hearing Steve FINAL.docx](#)

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Please see attached comments regarding Case number: ZF #04-054-501

Case number: ZF #04-054-501

December 5, 2024.

A CUP is a permit issued by local government to allow a property holder to use their land in a way not normally permitted under standard zoning laws, “provided” they comply with **specific conditions** outlined in the permit. Ergo “conditional” use.

In 2004, UST wanted to expand its campus. They were sued, and ultimately 5 parties came to a mediated agreement.

A **specific condition** of the CUP states that UST must remove the driveway from Goodrich Avenue to the Binz Refectory if the building is remodeled.

In 2022 and 23, UST remodeled the former Binz Refectory twice, to reconfigure most of it into an athletics facility: with coaches’ offices, locker rooms, and more. Building permits verify the projects were “remodels.” The building was even renamed the Binz Building to reflect a change in purpose. Despite this **specific condition** in the CUP, UST failed to remove the driveway, which now gets additional traffic from the adjacent athletic fields, due, in part, to the remodels.

In July, The Department of Safety and Inspections determined that UST was in violation of the CUP and ordered the driveway removed. UST defied the order and refused to uphold its end of the CUP agreement. And UST now wants to reopen the CUP.

A CUP by its very definition is a series of **specific conditions** governing permitted use

My question is this:

If UST refuses to abide by the **specific conditions** of the existing CUP, why should they be trusted to honor the terms of any new agreement?

From: [Kristin Koziol](#)
To: [Greg Weiner](#)
Subject: Fw: Deny St Thomas's appeal of their Conditional Use Permit
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025 12:47:30 PM

For APC 25-1

From: Abigail Boetticher <abbyboetticher@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 11:02 AM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward4 <Ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Deny St Thomas's appeal of their Conditional Use Permit

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Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

Greetings -

I live at 2208 Goodrich Ave, on the same block as St Thomas's Goodrich Avenue driveway.

Children from the surrounding neighborhoods ride their bikes past this driveway to safely access the bike by using the crosswalk and stop signs at the Goodrich and Mississippi River Boulevard intersection.

One of the best things a city can do for the mental and physical wellbeing of its children is to make its streets safe for children to walk and bike to school, parks, friends houses, and public spaces. Experts who study the negative impact of screens / smartphones on our kids mental health assert that the antidote includes kids being able to get around their real life neighborhoods on their own, so that they can have face to face interactions, become more responsible, and learn to manage risk.

In neighborhoods all across St Paul kids bike to school, walk to the park to play with friends, and pick up milk at the corner store on their own. This is something incredibly special about our city. It's something that we should grow and expand so kids in every neighborhood have this experience. St Paul should not follow so many other cities down the path of prioritizing commercial interests and vehicular access over the well being of children.

I am asking you to deny St Thomas's appeal. You, as city council members, are the only people who have the power to maintain and even increase kids access to their real life, outdoor neighborhoods. St Thomas can figure out its own vehicular access issues without further externalizing those costs to St Paul families. They must honor their obligation as laid out in the Conditional Use Permit.

Sincerely,
Abigail Boetticher MD
2208 Goodrich Ave

From: [Kristin Koziol](#)
To: [Greg Weiner](#)
Subject: Fw: St Thomas appeal to keep Binz Refectory driveway
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025 12:45:31 PM

For APC 25-1

From: david O'Brien <davesob1@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 08:45 PM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward4 <Ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: #CI-StPaul_Ward3 <Ward3@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Melvin Carter <Melvin.Carter@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: St Thomas appeal to keep Binz Refectory driveway

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Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

I'm writing in regard to the Binz Refectory – Goodrich Avenue driveway. Per the existing Conditional Use Permit, St Thomas agreed to remove the driveway. Now they want to keep the driveway and are appealing to the City Council. I want to see the driveway removed.

The appeal that will come before the City Council should be denied. The driveway has significant impact on the immediate neighbors to St Thomas. There are real problems with traffic in the neighborhood. The driveway needs to go away.

Thank you,
David Obrien
2208 Princeton Ave
St Paul, MN 55105
651-699-4945

From: [Terrance Brueck](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul>Contact-Council](#); [#CI-StPaul_Ward3](#); [#CI-StPaul_Ward4](#)
Subject: Binz Refectory Driveway: Do not approve UST Appeal
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025 2:04:25 PM

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Dear City Council Members,

DO NOT APPROVE UST APPEAL FOR BINZ DRIVEWAY TO REMAIN IN PLACE.

The City Planning Commission denied a request by St. Thomas to amend its conditional use permit to eviscerate the requirement that UST remove the driveway from Goodrich Avenue to the Binz Refectory (case ZF #04-054-501).

I have lived 22 years on Summit Avenue across from the Saint Paul Seminary and over 40 years as a resident in the city. I have seen the expansion of UST buildings and facilities over these many years with disregard for the surrounding neighborhood and environmental impacts. The Binz driveway is just another example of a "loophole" to be exploited when access to the arena is expanded to Goodrich Avenue due to congestion on Summit and Cleveland.

With the driveway in place, it will provide another pedestrian walkway to the arena from Goodrich, resulting in cars and buses using it as a drop-off point. This will undoubtedly increase traffic and parking on nearby neighborhood residential streets. In addition, tour buses which exceed the load limit of Goodrich, will sit idling during wintertime events causing noise and pollution from diesel exhausts. The "million dollar" brick surface of Goodrich Avenue will also be destroyed.

Even though UST claims the Binz driveway will only be used for deliveries to the Binz refectory or Brady educational center, do not believe them! As shown by UST previous violations of the CUP and many other city permit infractions for the arena, they have disregard for compliance with city policies and ordinances.

Please respect the rights of Saint Paul property taxpayers over the non-taxpaying UST.

Terrance Brueck
2279 Summit Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55105

From: [BRUCE PEDALTY](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Comment on public hearing regarding St. Thomas driveway access to Goodrich Ave.
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2025 1:43:20 PM

You don't often get email from brucekeys@comcast.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello. My name is Bruce Pedalty. I own and live in the home at 2234 Fairmount Ave 55105. Here is my comment on the Goodrich driveway access.

I walk and drive on Goodrich Ave daily. On school or event days, the north side of Goodrich is usually filled with parked cars. There are no parking restrictions. The use of the drive by maintenance and delivery vehicles, as well as workers and students running errands, contributes to the congestion. The south side of Goodrich from Cretin to the river is occupied by single family homes, in the traditional style and character of this neighborhood, which was developed 100 years or so ago. The traffic and congestion caused by the constant pressure of parking, cars looking for parking, and delivery and errand traffic, is ruining the nature of this neighborhood. I understand that in a previous agreement the University agreed to abandon the drive, in deference to the neighbors and neighborhood. The city recently denied a change to that previous agreement.

I see no reason why the University should now get a do-over.

Thank you.

Bruce Pedalty