UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS MULTIPURPOSE ARENA

Findings of Fact

December 2024

Prepared for:

SAINT PAUL
MINNESOTA

Prepared by:

Kimley»Horn

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Administrative Background....1
Findings of Fact....2
Project Description....2
Corrections to the EAW Update or Changes to the Project Since the EAW Update was Published....2
Agency and Public Comments on the 2024 EAW Update....3
Mitigation Plan....3
Mitigation....4
Conclusions....8

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: September 2024 EAW
Appendix B: Agency Comments
Appendix C: Public Comments

ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUND

The University of St. Thomas (St. Thomas), as the project proposer, has proposed to redevelop an approximately 6 acre site located on the St. Thomas South Campus in Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota. The Lee and Penny Anderson Arena (Arena) consists of one building that will house a dual-purpose competition venue for the University's hockey and basketball programs, with capacity for approximately 4,000 to 5,500 spectators. The Arena also includes coaching offices, locker rooms, and student athlete support services including sports medicine, strength and conditioning, nutrition, and equipment. Additionally, two basketball practice facilities and an auxiliary ice sheet are included. It is anticipated that the Arena will host other university events such as commencement ceremonies, academic convocations, speakers, and career fairs.

The City of Saint Paul is the Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU) for this project. An Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) was prepared in accordance with Minnesota Rules, part 4410.4300, subpart 34: sports or entertainment facilities and was published for public comment in July 2023 (2023 EAW). A negative declaration on the need for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was issued by the City on September 26, 2023 (2023 Findings of Fact). An appeal of the negative declaration on the need for an EIS was filed in October 2023 with the Minnesota Court of Appeals. An opinion was issued by the Court of Appeals on July 8, 2024 (the COA Opinion), reversing and remanding the City's negative declaration on the need for an EIS. The COA Opinion requires the City to complete an updated EAW. The COA Opinion specifies that the updated EAW should include an analysis of environmental effects associated with the Schoenecker Center, a new academic building that is also located on St. Thomas' South Campus that opened for academic use in February of 2024. The Court of Appeals determined that the Schoenecker Center and the Arena are "phased actions" as defined by Minnesota Rules. The COA Opinion also noted that the updated EAW should provide mitigation measures that are "specific, targeted, and certain" and include an analysis of greenhouse gas emissions related to spectator vehicles.

An EAW Update (2024 EAW Update) has been prepared in accordance with Minnesota Rules Chapter 4410 to include the additional analysis noted in the COA Opinion: the Schoenecker Center, greenhouse gas emissions related to spectator vehicles, and more specific, targeted, and certain mitigation recommendations (see Appendix A). In addition to the analysis noted in the COA Opinion, the 2024 EAW Update also includes an analysis of the environmental effects of two projects that are in the same geographic area as the Arena and are proposed to commence construction in the next year: an addition to the existing Owens Science Hall that will house an expansion of the Center for Microgrid Research on St. Thomas' campus (Microgrid Project) and a parking lot proposed by a neighboring landowner, the Saint Paul Seminary (SPS Parking Lot). Construction of the Arena began during the Court of Appeals process and the three pre-existing buildings on site have now been demolished, as have six pre-existing surface parking lots.

The 2024 EAW Update was filed with the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) and circulated for review and comment to the required distribution list. A notice of availability was published in the *EQB Monitor* on October 8, 2024. This notice included a description of the project, information on where copies of the 2024 EAW Update were available, and invited the public to provide comments.

The 2024 EAW Update was made available electronically on the City of Saint Paul's website at https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/planning-and-economic-development/planning/current-activities/university-st-thomas. Notice of availability was distributed through the City of Saint Paul's Electronic Notification System (ENS) and published in the Pioneer Press.

The 2024 EAW Update comment period extended from October 8, 2024, to November 7, 2024. Written comments were received from two agencies. Forty-eight public comments were also received. All comments were considered in determining the potential for significant potential environmental impacts.

Based on the information in the record, which is composed of the 2024 EAW Update for the proposed project, the comments submitted during the public comment period, the responses to comments, and other supporting documents, the City of Saint Paul makes the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Project Description

The proposed University of St. Thomas Lee and Penny Anderson Arena will be a redevelopment of an approximately 6-acre site located on the St. Thomas South Campus in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

In addition to the project, development on and near the St. Thomas South Campus was analyzed in the EAW Update, including the completed Schoenecker Center, the proposed expansion of the Center for Microgrid Research (Microgrid Project), and the proposed St. Paul Seminary Parking Lot (SPS Parking Lot). The total redevelopment area analyzed is approximately 11.7 acres.

Corrections to the EAW Update or Changes to the Project Since the EAW Update was Published

A number of public comments referenced the potential for other campus events to occur at the same time as high attendance events at the Arena, compounding potential traffic and parking impacts. One recommended parking and traffic mitigation measure outlined in the 2024 EAW Update Transportation Analysis is that St. Thomas avoid other on-campus events that would attract outside nonstudent/staff visitors (who require on-site parking) during sporting events with anticipated attendances of 2,100 or greater. This measure was recommended to reduce compounding impacts of multiple events. As part of responding to comments with respect to other events, the author of the Transportation Study provided further clarification. For purposes of the Traffic Study, "other on-campus events that would attract outside nonstudent/staff visitors" was assumed to be an event with approximately 75 or more outside visitors. In addition, the 2,100 threshold for Arena events is recommended for weeknight events. Because parking supply is higher on the weekends, it would be reasonable to use a higher threshold for Arena events, such as 3,000, on weekends.

The July 2024 COA Opinion did not specifically address any matters related to the proposed SPS Parking Lot, and that project was not addressed in the 2023 EAW. However, the COA did require further consideration of a nearby development considered to be a "phased action", specifically citing the nearby Schoenecker Center. In the spirit of the COA Opinion, the City of Saint Paul opted to include the SPS Parking Lot for consideration of

"cumulative effects" given the proximity and overlapping timing of the project to the separate Arena project. The City does not consider the proposed SPS Parking Lot a "connected action" as defined under Minnesota Rules 4410 relative to the Arena, and the SPS Parking Lot should not have been characterized as such in the 2024 EAW Update. The SPS Parking Lot project itself does not trigger any requirements for environmental review under Minnesota law. This classification was done in error and without prior communication to SPS. Additionally, SPS Parking Lot restrictions on permitting under Minnesota Rules 4410 do not apply and any references to permit requirements regarding the SPS Parking Lot were included in Section (or "Item") 9 of the 2024 EAW Update in error.

Agency and Public Comments on the 2024 EAW Update

During the comment period, the City of Saint Paul received written comments from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The City of Saint Paul received an additional 48 written comments from the public.

Consistent with state environmental rules, responses have been prepared for all substantive comments received during the comment period. The tables included in Appendix B of this Findings of Fact document contain response to agency and public comments. Copies of the agency and public comments received are included in Appendix C and D, respectively.

Mitigation Plan

A number of measures have already been implemented through the project design or inclusion in the Project's Site Plan Approval to prevent or minimize potential environmental impacts. Mitigation measures for traffic and parking will be required as a condition of the Certificate of Occupancy, as set forth below, to ensure that potential impacts will not rise to the level of significance and to address concerns raised by the community through the public comment period.

Based on the record, the City of Saint Paul as RGU has determined that based on the criteria provided:

The proposed Arena will have a maximum capacity of approximately 5,500 spectator attendees for basketball events and non-athletic events, and approximately 4,000 spectator attendees for hockey events. The 2024 EAW Update estimated both average and maximum attendances for sporting events, also categorizing spectator attendance by attendance ranges spanning from less than 1,000 attendees up to 5,500 attendees at different levels. This analysis was based on observed attendance at similar facilities in the Division 1 NCAA athletic conference that St. Thomas is a member of and a known change in athletic conference for men's hockey during the 2026-27 season. Average attendance calculations varied by sport, ranging from 550 for women's hockey to 3,600 for men's hockey, and attendance for max events varied by sport, ranging from 3,000 for women's basketball and 5,500 for men's basketball. Parking impacts were evaluated based on projected event frequency at average and maximum capacity events for each sport as well as for attendance ranges at different intervals. Approximately 12 of the 66 anticipated sporting events are expected to have a parking deficit with no mitigation, which decreases to 3 of the 66 events if the SPS Parking Lot project is constructed because the St. Thomas lots will no longer be used by seminarians, freeing up parking on St. Thomas' campus

for events. Attendance thresholds at which parking can be accommodated on/near campus without mitigation are estimated to be approximately 2,575 spectator attendees for Thursday nights, 3,870 for Friday nights, and 4,395 for Saturday nights. In addition to sporting events, the Arena is proposed to host other university events of unknown frequency and exact nature of the events, which is described in the transportation analysis.

Potential traffic impacts were evaluated for a maximum attendance event. The 2024 EAW Update included an updated analysis documenting the "level of service" (LOS) ratings and maximum queues expected for the max attendance scenario both with and without event traffic management strategies, which are often documented within an event management plan. Event management plans help facilitate vehicular traffic flow and enhance safety for pedestrians and are further described in the transportation analysis. The LOS ratings indicate that, without mitigation, there would be notable impacts to traffic in the immediate vicinity of the proposed Arena, particularly at the intersections of Cretin Avenue with Grand and Summit Avenues, which are both signalized. The EAW also notes that left-turn movements onto Cretin at unsignalized intersections would be particularly impaired for short durations (15 to 30 minutes) before and after an event. The Site Plan Approval requires St. Thomas to undertake a number of infrastructure improvements and requires an Event Management Plan. Implementation of these mitigation measures, along with the additional requirements below, are expected to mitigate traffic and parking impacts.

Mitigation

Based on the nature and extent of the potential traffic and parking impacts, and building on the strategies identified in the EAW and infrastructure and management strategies required through the Site Plan Review process that will mitigate impacts associated with the operation of the Arena, the following mitigation measures will be implemented and enforced through the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy by the City. The City's regulatory authority over the mitigation measures is ongoing, allowing the City to revoke the Certificate of Occupancy if the University is not complying with the required mitigation efforts.

The City finds that implementing and enforcing the mitigation measures through the Certificate of Occupancy will ensure that the mitigation measures are subject to ongoing regulatory authority as set forth in Minn. R. 4410.1700, subp. 7.C. Pursuant to the City's Legislative Code, a Certificate of Occupancy constitutes a certification of zoning compliance. St. Paul Leg. Code § 61.102. Failure to comply with any condition of a zoning determination or other zoning approval may result in revocation or modification of such approval. St. Paul Leg. Code § 61.108. Further, for any use that requires a site plan, a certificate of occupancy shall only be renewed if the use is in conformance with the site plan and all conditions of the Code. St. Paul Leg. Code § 61.402(f). The Site Plan Approval contains certain requirements that the City has determined will mitigate traffic and parking impacts of the Project once the Project is operational.

Please note the mandatory language (i.e., "will") for strategies. The City finds that the following mitigation measures are expected to effectively mitigate the potential traffic, parking and other transportation-related impacts of the Project.

1. Event Traffic Management: As a condition of its site plan approval and as a condition of receiving and maintaining a certificate of occupancy, St. Thomas is required to develop, in consultation with Saint

Paul Police Department, Public Works Department, and the Office of the City Attorney and implement an Event Management Plan (EMP), including strategies for traffic control management, parking and pedestrian safety. The plan will tie specific strategies to event size and timing. In addition to collegiate hockey and basketball, the plan will also cover any other planned/potential events at the Multipurpose Arena. EMPs are regularly used to effectively manage parking, traffic and pedestrian safety and an EMP for the Arena can reasonably be expected to manage the identifiable parking congestion and traffic issues that may result from Arena operations. As a part of the EMP, St. Thomas is required to monitor event attendance, traffic, and parking, and shall provide such data to the City upon request. At a minimum, such data shall be provided annually to the City of St. Paul for no less than five operational years after the Multipurpose Arena is occupied. An EMP is considered a living document and will be modified as needed based on the attendance, traffic, and parking data gathered during the monitoring period. Modifications will follow the processes below. Following the conclusion of the initial monitoring period, the Zoning Administrator will determine whether to extend the monitoring and reporting period.

2. The initial EMP will include, at a minimum, the following components:

    a. Pre-Paid Event Tickets & Parking Assignment: St. Thomas will use and further encourage online ticket purchases with options for designated parking passes or alternative transportation information. This minimizes the need for attendees to circle campus lots and serves as a platform to inform users about potential alternative transportation options and incentives such as free transit, discounted rideshare, and alternative shuttle services, which are discussed below.

    b. Permit Modifications & Parking Ramp Restrictions: St. Thomas will implement time-of-day restrictions and/or “no park” days at visitor parking facilities for events anticipated to exceed their available parking supply to ensure event patrons have reserved spaces in their designated ramps. This strategy is expected to increase parking availability by 150 to 405 spaces, depending on the night. The number of parking facilities cleared will be dependent on the expected attendance at each event and will be further defined as part of the EMP. This strategy has been used successfully by St. Thomas in the past for athletic and other campus events. To avoid shifting students/staff parking to the public streets, the strategy St. Thomas be paired with early communications and clear notification prior to enforcing the event parking restrictions in St. Thomas facilities. One of the visitor ramps is expected to remain available for commuting students/staff under all event scenarios, ensuring at least one parking option is available to non-event visitors while event activities are underway.

    c. Free Transit Passes: St. Thomas will work with Metro Transit to offer free transit pass options with the purchase of event tickets, which is estimated to reduce demand by 10 to 30 vehicles. Preliminary discussions with Metro Transit have indicated that distributing free pass options

through the online ticketing system will be feasible. St. Thomas is required to include details on the implementation of this program in the Event Traffic Management Plan.

d. Discounted Rideshare: St. Thomas will pursue a partnership with a rideshare company to provide discounted rates for ticket holders, which is estimated to reduce demand by 25 to 50 vehicles. Preliminary discussions with two rideshare companies have indicated that discounted rates can be easily implemented. St. Thomas is required to include details on the implementation of this program in the Event Traffic Management Plan.

e. Restaurant/Bar Shuttle Service: St. Thomas will pursue collaborations with local establishments to offer shuttle services, which is estimated to reduce demand by 25 to 75 vehicles. St. Thomas has had preliminary discussions with potential locations who have an interest in establishing a partnership. St. Thomas is required to include details on the implementation of this program in the EMP.

f. Avoid/Minimize Other On-Campus Events: St. Thomas will implement policies to avoid or minimize the number of other on-campus events that would attract outside (non-student/staff visitors) during sporting events at the Arena. St. Thomas is required to include implementation details in the EMP, which, for the first year of Arena operations, shall limit on-campus events that would attract 75 or more outside non-student/staff visitors (who require onsite parking) during sporting events at the Arena with anticipated attendances greater than 2,100 (weeknights) or 3,000 (weekends). The attendance level at which this measure is triggered may increase or decrease year-to-year based on data collected, operational changes or changes to overall campus parking infrastructure. This strategy will reduce compounding traffic and parking impacts.

g. St. Thomas will notify event patrons that they may be ticketed and towed if they park illegally on residential streets. This notification will be included in the online pre-paid ticketing and parking assignment system, and the University will also explore additional strategies to further inform event attendees. St. Thomas is required to include details on implementation in the EMP. This strategy is expected to reduce illegal parking on residential streets.

h. St. Thomas will designate an event transportation coordinator to oversee and manage the EMP, as well as serve as the primary point of contact for other agencies and the public. St. Thomas is required to include details on implementation in the EMP. This strategy was suggested in a public comment and is designed to ensure successful implementation of the EMP.

i. Off-street Parking and Shuttle Services: St. Thomas will partner with offsite parking lot owner(s) and shuttle provider(s) to provide off-site parking and shuttle services for Arena events with anticipated attendance above 4,350 on Thursday/Weeknight, 4,775 on Friday, and 5,200 on Saturday evenings to offset the parking deficits that are expected to occur after the mitigation measures above are provided. St. Thomas has had preliminary discussions with

Allianz Field to utilize their parking lot for shuttle services, which has sufficient available parking to accommodate the deficits. St. Thomas is required to include details on the implementation of this program in the EMP. This strategy will provide enough off-site parking spaces to accommodate the potential parking deficit on campus for large events.

j. Traffic Management and Pedestrian Safety: St. Thomas will provide traffic control officers for large events and designated pedestrian routes. St. Thomas is required to include details on the implementation of these measures in the EMP. This strategy will improve pedestrian and traffic safety and reduce traffic impacts.

k. The above components of the EMP (a-j) may be modified by the Zoning Administrator following consultation with St. Thomas and appropriate City staff, as well as notification to the Union Park and Macalester Groveland Neighborhood District Councils. Such modification may be made when a mitigation component is unnecessary or ineffective in its current form, considering real-world circumstances, and the remaining strategies alone or alternate strategies, will result in effective mitigation.

3. St. Thomas, in consultation with Saint Paul Police Department and/or Public Works Department, shall monitor the efficacy of the EMP and may make changes to non-required components (components of the EMP not specifically listed in part 2(a)-(j) above) and to the particular implementation details of all components to better manage traffic and parking.

4. For the first five years of Arena operations, St. Thomas shall report to the Zoning Administrator by June 30th of each year on: (1) event attendance in the prior year, and (2) efficacy and/or deficiencies of the mitigation measures included in the EMP.

5. For the first five years of Arena operations, St. Thomas will not sell standing room tickets that cause spectator attendance to exceed the spectator attendance thresholds analyzed in the 2024 EAW (5,500 for basketball and other events, approximately 4,000 for hockey). After the first five years of Arena operations, the Zoning Administrator has authority to authorize additional sales of standing room only tickets based on data related to the efficacy of mitigation measures, changes to overall campus parking infrastructure or other relevant factors.

6. St. Thomas will continue to operate a Snow and Ice Management Plan within their property in order to avoid overuse of ice melt products and enroll grounds crew members to attend the MPCA's Smart Salting program, or an equivalent to mitigate downstream runoff effects of public waters.

7. St. Thomas will provide a parking spot for visiting team buses during events held at the Arena along with an indoor campus location for the bus drivers to wait during the event to reduce idling buses contributing to greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition to the mitigation above, the City will enforce parking and traffic regulations related to any potential impacts from the project. The City's Traffic Engineering Department will review, accept, and implement the signal timing plans developed for events.

Conclusions

1. All requirements for environmental review of the proposed project have been met.
2. The 2023 EAW, the 2024 EAW Update and the permit development processes related to the project have generated information that is adequate to determine whether the project has the potential for significant environmental effects.
3. St. Thomas has undertaken appropriate efforts to minimize environmental impacts of the project. Areas where potential environmental effects have been identified have been addressed through project design and the requirements of site plan approval and have been or will be coordinated with appropriate governmental agencies or units, including the City of Saint Paul. The project has been and will be subject to regulatory authority which will be sufficient to implement any mitigation necessary to address potential environmental effects from project construction, operation or maintenance.
4. Potential operational impacts related to parking and traffic are limited-in-time, reversable, and will be managed through an EMP. An EMP that meets the requirements set forth in the Mitigation section above is required as a condition of a certificate of occupancy. An EMP was also required as part of the final site plan approval.
5. Based on the criteria in Minnesota Rules, part 4410.1700, the project does not have the potential for significant environmental effects, and an environmental impact statement is not required for the proposed project.

Signature Nicole Newton Date 12/10/24

Title Director, Department of Planning and Economic Development