

## Student Overlay District

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To: #CI-StPaul\_Ward1 <Ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

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

Councilmember Thao:

I write in opposition to changing the Student Overlay District around the University of St. Thomas. For years, this initiative has produced less strain on residential streets for parking, a reduction in noisy (“problem”) houses and has created a safer environment for our student neighbors.

What it hasn’t curbed is an insatiable appetite for investors and developers to buy up single-family homes to rent by the bedroom to students at monthly rents approaching \$3,500 - \$4,000 per month. I suspect these inflated prices are part of the reason you are considering increasing occupancy to make these costs more “affordable”.

I am concerned at the number of homestead properties versus non-homestead around UST. When we bought our house on Dayton Avenue eighteen years ago studies indicated that the non-homestead rate in the neighborhood was at 24%. Now it has more than doubled. Studies conducted around universities in Milwaukee and in Georgia suggest that “an increase to over 30% non-homesteads would generally be considered a “tipping point” for a single-family residential neighborhood that could lead to disinvestments and decline”. Our neighborhood is beyond that point. While it’s obvious why investors and developers want to buy homes to rent to students as there are enormous profits to be gained, we allow this at the peril of losing a significant part of any neighborhood – the owner-occupied single family home. Home ownership continues to be the number one way to build personal wealth.

I’m young enough to remember a Dinky Town that looked far different than it does today. It used to be a neighborhood where you could still find homes, schools, and family neighborhoods close to the U of MN campus. Now, it is all U of MN buildings and high rises with a few homes badly maintained being rented to students. We do not want this neighborhood to see the type of development and disinvestment we see currently around the University of MN.

Now, with St. Thomas announcing their intent to increase freshmen enrollment by 25% by 2025, it’s critical that the student overlay district remain intact – for their safety and to sustain a balanced neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Daniel Taylor  
2127 Dayton Avenue