

**From:** [Donald Mullin](#)  
**To:** [\\*CI-StPaul\\_Contact-Council](#)  
**Subject:** UST Arena  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 5, 2024 7:02:33 AM  
**Attachments:** [20240603093101045.pdf](#)

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Please accept the attached letter for public comment regarding the University of St. Thomas Arena.

Thank you.

Regards,

Don



Donald Mullin  
Executive Secretary  
Saint Paul Building Trades Council  
651-224-9445 O 612-889-1360 C  
[dmullin@stpaulbt.org](mailto:dmullin@stpaulbt.org)

# *Saint Paul* **Building and Construction Trades Council**



Honorable Mitra Jalali  
President, Saint Paul City Council  
310 City Hall  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Saint Paul, Mn 55102

Dear Council President Jalali and Members of the Saint Paul City Council:

I'm writing on behalf of the Saint Paul Building and Construction Trade Council to support the construction of the Lee & Penny Anderson Arena at the University of St. Thomas. The Saint Paul Building and Construction Trade Council is a strong advocate for unionized construction workers in Minnesota and stands firmly in support of the Lee & Penny Anderson Arena project. With a membership of over 70,000 union members, our council has been a beacon of leadership and advocacy for construction workers in Minnesota for the past 70 years.

The University of St. Thomas has a rich legacy of meticulous campus development characterized by creating aesthetically pleasing, high-quality buildings. These structures are not just a testament to the university's commitment to excellence, but also to its dedication to supporting unionized construction workers. The proposed Lee & Penny Anderson Arena will be yet another shining example of this commitment, with the skills and expertise of our unionized construction workers playing a pivotal role in its successful realization.

We understand that St. Thomas has met all of the requirements for the Site Plan approval, and we firmly believe construction should be allowed to continue. Construction projects like the UST Arena are a significant contributor to a healthy economy. A recent economic impact study completed by the University of St. Thomas highlights that an estimated 1,800 jobs will be supported during this project's construction phase. Most of these jobs will be performed by unionized construction workers. The arena's development is also estimated to generate \$162 million directly and an additional \$152 million indirectly to the state economy. We are proud to partner with the University of St. Thomas and Ryan Companies on this exciting project. Let's get our construction workers back to this job site by denying this latest appeal and allowing the UST Arena project to move forward.

Sincerely,

Don Mullin  
Executive Secretary  
Saint Paul Building & Construction Trades Council  
651-224-9445 O 612-889-1360 C  
dmullin@stpaulbt.org

**From:** [Jerry Friedmann](#)  
**To:** [\\*CI-StPaul Contact-Council](#)  
**Subject:** RE: University of St. Thomas Arena - 2260 Summit Avenue  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 5, 2024 4:33:13 PM

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File # 24-039-050; Site Plan File #23-079-985

St. Paul City Council Members:

I recently wrote to the University of St. Thomas administrators expressing my thoughts regarding the proposed campus arena under consideration. I respectfully reiterate my thoughts to City Council members.

As a proud 1959 St. Thomas graduate and four year letter winner, I wish to comment on the apparent delayed construction of the Lee and Penny Anderson Arena on the UST campus. The University has demonstrated its commitment over many years to the City of St. Paul, that it possesses the financial ability and technical know-how to build new structures while creating excellence in its mission to educate men and women in our community. Many graduates continue to live and work in this community, contributing to the excellent quality of life we enjoy. I trust that the resulting financial impact on our great community is significant. I attended the College of St. Thomas when there were few buildings and some students and families lived in quonset huts after serving our country in combat service. Considering this legacy, it is especially disheartening to read in the daily newspapers that a relatively small number of neighbors have the ability to delay arena construction that promises to benefit the University as well as the City and broader community. It is suggested that there may be increased traffic at selected times. I understand that the University has promised to accommodate this prospect and if the past is a predictor, UST will fulfill its promise to commit necessary resources to manage increased traffic issues, if any.

I suggest that a few considerations in this matter may be overlooked by dissenters. UST is now competing in Division 1 athletics and has been imminently successful as reported by the media. As a former senior human resources officer for leading Twin Cities employers and board member for several non-profit organizations (United Way, Courage Center and American Red Cross, to name a few) I know and understand the importance of attracting and retaining a diverse number of employees to contribute to the success of our community. Without the necessary bricks and mortar and supporting infrastructure, UST will not be successful in recruiting quality student athletes to be educated and to compete. St. Thomas will lose and the community will lose. These opportunities to grow and excel do not present themselves often. I trust that the St. Paul City Council will recognize this opportunity in its thoughtful decision making.

Last, up until 2023, I had the privilege of serving as Chair of the Lilydale Planning Commission. Lilydale is admittedly not highly populated, but it borders entirely on the Mississippi River. While discerning on requests for proposals for new structures, it was readily apparent to our Planning Commission and City Council, that new construction necessarily requires strict adherence to public sector statutes and regulations that serve to improve the quality of life in our community. It is axiomatic to state that there are many benefits that construction of an arena in the Mississippi River corridor will bring to UST as well as to our great city.

Thank you for allowing me to bring my opinions to your attention and for your discernment in this matter.

Sincerely,

Jerry Friedmann  
825 Mount Curve Boulevard  
St. Paul, Minnesota, 55116

To: Mitra Jalali, Council President  
310-D City Hall  
15 Kellogg Boulevard West  
St. Paul, MN 55102

rec 6/5

The City Council, mandated to protect the lives, health, and safety of St. Paul residents, needs to fulfill its obligation and resolve a serious safety issue. The Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for the proposed University of St. Thomas (UST) arena fails to analyze an important danger to residents, blocked first responder vehicle access for emergencies in adjacent neighborhoods during arena events.

The problem is a consequence of the number of cars needing parking, two-sided parking, and narrowing of the streets with winter snowfall during basketball and hockey seasons. The number of cars that will need parking accommodation can saturate the space available on adjacent neighborhood streets. In addition, cars leaving the neighborhood will experience delay, because the cars must merge with traffic flow and will require both right and left turns to merge. The resulting delay from the queued cars waiting to exit was calculated at 41 minutes. With two-sided parking in winter, and for one way traffic flow, a driving lane width of only 8.5 ft or less is available for emergency vehicle access. Fire trucks and first responder ambulances are 10 ft wide and require a lane wider than 10 ft when in motion. With two-way traffic, and cars queued to exit in both directions, no adequate access lane will exist for fire trucks and ambulances. For residents experiencing a heart attack or stroke, the delay can result in irreversible loss of heart tissue or brain tissue and increased risk of death. This risk to the health, lives, and safety to residents affected by the current UST arena plan has been ignored in the zoning commission hearing. The UST arena plan must not be approved without resolution of this safety issue. Please review the following step by step discussion that explains the factors that cause this safety issue.

Why will this situation occur?

The UST plan states that residential city streets will be used for parking. On campus parking will accommodate approximately 750 vehicles. A UST spokesperson stated in the EQ Monitor that events having 5500 attendees will occur 35 times a year. For an event of 5500 attendees, the UST estimate of 22% of attendees arriving by non-private motor vehicle, and 2.7 passengers per private vehicle, 1589 cars will require parking accommodation. For the FHA value of 1.7 passengers per vehicle, 2523 cars will need parking. If 750 cars park in the adjacent parking ramp, 839 to 1773 cars will need off campus parking.

Where will the cars park?

People will choose to park as close to the arena as possible, even if more distant off-street parking is available. This assumption is reasonable and has evidence. It is reasonable, because hockey and basketball are primarily winter sports, and arena attendees will likely choose to walk no further than necessary in the cold and snow. If UST charges a fee for ramp parking, free city street parking will likely be preferred. Evidence for this argument already exists. UST students and staff park on the north side of Goodrich Avenue, a street adjacent to the UST campus, even though more distant parking is available. On this portion of Goodrich Avenue, an average of 56 cars was counted from Mississippi River Boulevard to Cretin Avenue. This number of parked cars saturates the street on a daily basis when school is in session.

What streets will be used?

For further analysis, consider the neighborhood bordered by Goodrich Avenue, Princeton Avenue, Mississippi River Boulevard, and Cretin Avenue. It is adjacent to the south campus and is one of the neighborhoods that will be used for overflow parking. Making the reasonable assumption that cars will park at the same density as UST students and staff parking on the north side of Goodrich Avenue, we used this average number of cars divided by the length of the street from Mississippi River Boulevard to Cretin Avenue to calculate the number of cars that can be accommodated in this neighborhood. Over 300 cars can park on these streets. Clearly, 839 to 1773 cars are enough to saturate this neighborhood.

Why is the saturation of the adjacent neighborhood a safety problem?

Access of emergency vehicles will be blocked. This conclusion was reached by measuring the width of the streets with two-sided parking on 3/26/2024 following a moderate snowfall. A typical width of a parked car is 5 ft. The measurement did not include the width of parked pick-up trucks. For example, a Ford F-150, excluding extended side mirrors, has width of 6 ft. 6 inches. With two-sided parking and one way traffic, the width available for travel was measured at 8 ft 5 in. First responder emergency vehicles are 10 ft wide and require a lane wider than 10 ft when in motion. Minnesota fire code requires access road width of 20 ft for non sprinkler protected homes.

How long will the clogged streets persist?

The Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) identified Level of Service F at key intersections. With LOS F, volumes of cars exceed capacity, delays occur, and gridlock is common. The duration of congestion is not measured, but the EAW states that, with events, "multiple unsignalized side street approaches on Cretin Avenue will be difficult to make left turn movements for 15 to 30 minutes". The EAW fails to analyze the consequences of this recognized delay. For further analysis, consider, as an example, Fairmount Avenue, from Woodlawn Avenue to Cretin Avenue. This section of Fairmount Avenue is merely one block from the south campus and is a likely choice for parking. With two-sided parking, 84 cars can be accommodated in this portion of Fairmount Avenue. Cretin Avenue is the likely choice of exit from this street. Exiting on Cretin Avenue requires both right and left turns. Exit time to Cretin Avenue from Fairmount Avenue was measured at 2-minute intervals from 4:36 PM to 5:30 PM on 4/9/2024 without a special event in progress. Average delay for cars to enter the traffic flow on Cretin Avenue was 41.4 seconds. Exit time for cars that queue at the exit was modeled using the method of Mao et. al. (Mao, X et al., Optimal Evacuation Strategy for Parking Lots Considering the Dynamic Background Traffic Flows, Intl J Environ Res and Public Health, 2019,16:2194) Their model assumes no left turn, no non-motorized or pedestrian traffic, and exit of only one car at a time. Their published numerical simulation for two exits onto a street with background traffic flow that reasonably approximates the conditions of Fairmount Avenue exiting to Cretin Avenue demonstrated a delay of 17 minutes and 28 minutes, respectively. Using their model, and again assuming one way traffic, no non-motorized traffic, and left turns, queue clearing time from Fairmount Avenue to Cretin Avenue was calculated at 41 minutes. During this interval, a lane of only 8.5 ft width will be available for emergency vehicles, if traffic is only one way. During the winter snow season, residential streets with 2-sided parking, two way traffic, and cars queued to exit in both directions will be clogged. No driving lane will be available for emergency vehicles. With two-way traffic and thousands of pedestrians converging on the neighborhood with an arena event, the delay time is likely to be increased. Details of the calculation have already been submitted in the Application for Zoning Appeal submitted by Daniel L.M.Kennedy,

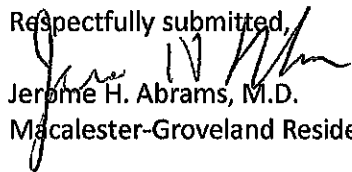
4/15/2024 and are included in the appendix to this email . The EAW solution for this safety risk is, "Communication should be made to area residents and other sources of commuter traffic, so they are aware of potential traffic ...". This thoughtless statement would require neighborhood residents to schedule heart attacks, strokes, or other emergencies around the basketball and hockey schedule, an impossible task that can only fail.

Why is the delay a problem?

American Heart Association guidelines state that for, heart attack, door to treatment time goal is less than 30 minutes. For stroke, door to treatment time goal is less than 60 minutes. These guidelines will be impossible to meet under these conditions. Delay causes irreversible loss of heart tissue, irreversible loss of brain tissue, and increased risk of death. The obstruction of emergency vehicle access to the neighborhood as a result of the arena events risks the lives, health, and safety of neighborhood residents. Please note that the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) identified 1 death and 3 serious crashes without an arena event.

This concern has been communicated to the planning commission during oral testimony and was ignored by the commission. The residents of St. Paul can reasonably demand that the City of St. Paul government protect the lives, health, and safety of its residents. I am asking the City Council to fulfill its duty to citizens of St. Paul and not approve the current arena plan. Approving the current UST arena plan ignores this safety concern and increases the risk of death, serious illness, and destruction of homes to neighborhood residents.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Jerome H. Abrams, M.D.  
Macalester-Groveland Resident

## Appendix

### Calculation of delay in exit of parked cars

The issue is the delay that will occur when the arena event concludes, the attendees attempt to leave the streets where their cars are parked, and a neighborhood resident has an emergency. Again, we use Fairmount Avenue as an example. The argument will apply to other neighborhood streets. The model employed is that used by Mao et. al. (Mao, X et al., Optimal Evacuation Strategy for Parking Lots Considering the Dynamic Background Traffic Flows, Intl J Environ Res and Public Health, 2019,16:2194) The model assumes no left turn, no non-motorized or pedestrian traffic, and one car can exit at a time.

Let  $Q_r$  = the background traffic flow. Please see appendix for determination of  $Q_r$

$\tau_r$  = minimum time for background traffic to allow exiting vehicle to merge into background traffic. Please see appendix for determination of  $\tau_r$

$T_r$  = average time for two consecutive intervals for car to exit.

$\mu_r$  = average time of arrival in queue. Please see appendix for determination of  $\mu_r$ .

$T_r = 1/(Q_r \cdot \exp(-Q_r \cdot \tau_r)) - 1/Q_r - \tau_r$ .  $T_r = 6.05$  minutes.

Since the vehicle at the front of the queue can only leave and merge in to the background traffic flow when vehicle headway is greater than the minimum time for background traffic to allow vehicle to exit into background traffic flow, the average time between the intervals is the service time of queueing system.

Let  $d_r$  = average queueing time per car.

$d_r = T_r/(\mu_r \cdot T_r - 1) = 41$  minutes.

Numerical simulation, by Mao and colleagues, of evacuation of a parking lot with two exits similar to the exits from the neighborhood streets to Cretin Avenue had average queueing times of 17 minutes and 28 minutes. The simulation assumed no left turns, background traffic flow, and no non-motorized traffic. (Mao et al, op. cit.). With left turns and two way traffic, delays in excess of 28 minutes are reasonable.



Open Letter to the St Paul City Council on the UST Arena

rec 6/5

St Paul City Council  
310-A City Hall  
15 Kellogg Blvd. W.  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Ward 1, Anika Bowie, [ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us)  
Ward 2, Rebecca Noecker, [ward2@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:ward2@ci.stpaul.mn.us)  
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Ward 6, Nelsie Yang, [ward6@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:ward6@ci.stpaul.mn.us)  
Ward 7, Cheniqua Johnson, [ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us)

Dear Councilperson,

I have little faith you will read to the end of this letter, but some of your constituents will. Hopefully they'll reflect upon it when they next cast their ballots.

To this self-proclaimed "historic" City Council the impact of the University of St Thomas arena on surrounding neighborhoods may seem insignificant in the greater scheme of world events. This situation is incomparable to genocide in the Middle East for example. But it is every bit a holy war. Righteous battles rage right here in St Paul where your constituents reside—in the very wards you are elected to represent. Council members are supposed to be advocates for their ward constituents. These UST/community struggles should have drawn your attention and your advocacy long before now. To date it has not.

At the core of the conflict is an unholy alliance between two earthbound saints; St Thomas and St Paul. I don't pretend to understand it. But these entities have historically allied to fulfill every wish the elite, private, religious institution wants granted, with the vengeance of a crusade. Any citizen who dares stand in their raging path must be converted or vanquished. I have met former officials who carry their bitterness years later. Skirmishes over UST expansion have flared for decades and they are now erupting again.

In 1990 a Conditional Use Permit or CUP was created by a resolution of the Planning Commission. Its purpose was to reign in UST from absorbing city blocks of nearby properties in order to expand their campus. The CUP defined campus boundaries, setbacks and height limits to future buildings as well as parking accommodations based on the number of students and faculty commuting to campus. It was an agreement created to prevent a ravenous institution from seeping into the peaceful, adjacent residential areas and degrading them. It has been partly successful.



In 1995 and again in 2004 the CUP was revised to allow expanded campus boundaries. Boundaries were only held in check through intense community resistance. In those years, the school grew from the manageable St Thomas College to the ambitious University of St Thomas. Since then the school's aspirations have only continued to spiral heavenward. In its latest stage of development, driven by its own design, UST has advanced from a Division 3 sports school to Division 1. The circumstance, we are told, will require expanded sports facilities—*starting* with a 5,500-seat arena. I emphasize *starting* because this arena is not the end of UST's sports expansion. However, as aspirations billow, the cramped dimensions of the campus remain exactly the same as when the school was a college of a mere 2500 students.

UST has been on an aggressive building track for decades. And with each new structure the student body of commuters grew. UST's website claims 9,000 full and part-time students and over 1,000 faculty and staff, 2/3rds of which commute to campus on a daily basis. I want to emphasize that fraction. 2/3rds of the student body, as well as all faculty COMMUTE! They do not arrive by train, bus or bicycles. They drive cars. This fact creates a parking situation unlike anything occurring at other local colleges that share the same neighborhoods; Macalester College, Concordia University or St Catherine University. None of them are commuter schools. UST is a COMMUTER COLLEGE, and it has nowhere near enough available campus parking today. Those other schools are not in conflict with their neighbors either.

Parking at UST is a shell game. Talk to any student at UST about the lottery to get a parking pass and then the likelihood of actually finding an open space, even with that coveted pass. Yet despite the dire parking situation that exists today UST eliminated almost 400 parking spaces to build the recent Schoenecker Center and planned Anderson Arenas. The campus is about as cramped as it can get right now and not one new parking space is to be added.

Thanks to UST's legions of commuters, and to its parking policies, nearly half of all "permit only" parking zones in the City of St Paul are designated around the school. Think of it, half a city's worth of parking problems can be easily traced to UST, with a worsening situation to come. Savvy students know that permit parking is only loosely enforced. Some have even made the calculation that it is cheaper to pay the occasional tickets than it is to buy a parking pass at all.

The straw that finally broke the camel's back for the mostly tolerant neighbors is the proposed *multi-purpose* arena, intended to be shoehorned into UST's south campus. In case you have not visited, the south campus is surrounded on three sides by stately, residential neighborhoods and on a fourth side by the Mississippi River. A less appropriate site would be hard to imagine for a sports arena the square footage of two Target stores, bringing with it about the same amount of traffic. Note I accented *multi-purpose* for good reason. I will explain in a bit.

The desire to expand is strong at UST—an institution so willful that it has no regard for even its own storied past. The two final, original campus buildings designed by Cass Gilbert and funded by James J. Hill will fall in order to make way for a bloated Megachurch, dedicated to the worship of basketball and hockey.

At every step in the development of this arena UST has practiced a pattern of deception—first with the City, then with the community.

1.

In the Environmental Assessment Worksheet or EAW that UST prepared for the City it carefully understated the impacts of the arena. Among UST's many deceptions this one has proved to be the most consequential of all.

Though UST hired a reputable firm to do a traffic and parking study the report is woefully inadequate. Here's why. UST under-played the facts in the assumptions it put forth at the beginning of the study. Namely: **the size of events**, the **frequency of events** and **the actual number of parking spaces on campus**. Doing so, narrowed the scope of the study, to a few capacity-size events, which in turn led to the conclusion of fewer cars, and lower impacts caused on the environment. Most of the events that will take place in this venue are totally ignored in the study, as if anything less than a full house will have zero impact.

Even the best engineering firm can produce a misleading study if they begin with false assumptions. Good engineering requires good data. Period.

Once the City approved the EAW, though it is profoundly flawed, the fact it has been "approved" seems to mean that no other department or agency will bother to question it.

2.

Without an approved plan or a building permit (or even notification to students living in the Cretin and Grace residence halls, or to professors teaching in the Brady Education Center) in January 2024 UST began demolition and site preparation for the arena. A grove of mature trees fell overnight. Acres of concrete were jackhammered and carted off. An endless parade of dump trucks removed an immense volume of soil and replaced it with engineered sand. A complex underground infrastructure, specific to the arena was laid. A deep excavation was made, to be filled with concrete, and a construction crane was erected. All of this took place out of either; extreme arrogance on the part of UST, or the confident foreknowledge that the City would approve, the as yet unapproved plan. No private party would be so foolish to invest millions in an uncertain outcome. UST was.

3.

UST's public relations propaganda regarding its community involvement is pure fantasy. The institution repeatedly boasts the number of public meetings held as evidence certain of their transparency and willingness to collaborate. But what they

term public meetings are little more than scripted presentations by UST or Ryan Companies. No collaboration whatsoever. After neighbors became fed up with this nonsense and demanded an open forum to discuss neighborhood concerns, a WSNAC Zoom meeting was scheduled. Questions were to be submitted in advance. No follow up questions would be taken. Several ARD members submitted questions that were never addressed. Without the ability to ask follow up questions it was obvious we were just getting rehearsed pat answers, and even then, only answers to "easy questions" nothing controversial. Chalk another public meeting on the board.

4.

ARD, the neighborhood non-profit established to re-site the arena filed an Appeal to the Planning Commission. The Appeal was filed after the arena plan was approved. The Appeal stated eight points of objection to the plan and suggested more appropriate, alternative sites available.

The very first point was that no site plan should be approved because UST was out of compliance with the existing CUP. The Planning Commission was oddly unmoved.

The second point was that the plan included development within the setback area laid out in the Minnesota River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) established by the Minnesota Legislature in 2017. Although the guidelines are posted to the St Paul website as if they had been enacted, they have not yet been adopted by the City. So moot point.

A second Appeal written by two other ARD members citing, among other things, the fact that the drive-in arena would produce so many tailpipe emissions that it was completely at odds with the City's 2040 Comprehensive Plan. In the Zoning meeting a woman who worked for the City said to the Zoning Committee, that "The 2040 Plan was a recommendation, not a law." I was dumbfounded.

During the Zoning Committee hearing, where ARD Appeals were heard, a prelude to the full Planning Commission, UST had a few students speak to their perceived benefits of the arena. I recognized one of them from picketing outside the UST campus. We spoke one day and told me he thought the arena would enhance property values. I thought he was delusional. But now I understand he is instead on his way to becoming a skilled propagandist. I did not know he was the President of the Student Council. In the course of his two minute remarks, and I am paraphrasing here, he said that if nearby residents didn't support what UST did then they should pick up and move elsewhere! A neighbor, when he had his own turn to speak, took time from his comments to call the boy out for making such a foolish and insulting statement.

Beyond the embarrassment I felt for everyone involved, it struck me that this young man was really no different from a now familiar caricature of a semi-literate, white guy draped in a flag, screaming at a person of color, who may be a third generation American, to "Go back where you came from!" The kid's statement was exactly that

ignorant. No comment from the school. I guess "the common good®" excludes the hood.

5.

In a community meeting, I asked Jerome Benner if the Traffic Management Task Force he was convening, would begin their problem-solving from a baseline that agrees that there is a parking crisis today? "We have no parking crisis" he replied.

In the same meeting, I asked Amy McDonough, Chief of Staff at UST how many campus parking spaces they had in total, since this number is not published anywhere. Rather than provide a number she told me it was on page 37 of the EAW. Funny she knew the page number off the top of her head but not the number of spaces. So I checked. Maybe I had missed it. On page 37 is a chart showing Supply, Demand and Deficit numbers based on the UST parking shell game I mentioned earlier where lots already committed to students, faculty and staff would be "cleared" for the 2-4 capacity events. The chart, like the premise of the EAW, upon which all City decision-making is based, states only 0-2 full capacity events per year, which is incredulous.

The idea UST has tried to plant in the public mind was that there would be disruptions, anyone could see that, but that there would be so few of them that the impact would be incidental. In one of those early public meetings UST first talked about only those 0-2 major sports events. By the second meeting they admitted to 35 or so events, not all anticipated to be "at capacity."

In the press, UST revealed what it termed "other uses" for the multi-purpose arena. As you'd expect, they mentioned commencements, then high school athletics. Ice Arenas are in demand. There was a passing mention of rental events like conventions and concerts.

In a neighborhood meeting Amy McDonough told neighbors that UST would have its hands full with sporting events that first year or so, and that they had no definite plans to rent out the arena. One meeting later, in a deck presentation Ryan Companies showed a variety of seating layouts for concerts. I think it was supposed to allay our concerns over how many people would fit in an event when the arena floor was open. Instead it confirmed their plans for things like concerts

In mid-April UST announced a budgetary shortfall of \$10.5 million along with staff cuts. Something tells me that arena rentals might be critical to UST's future. So why would Mrs McDonough downplay rental events? Simple. It contradicts the entire premise of the EAW, upon which the house of cards is carefully built.

On May 15, shortly after the Planning Commission denied our Appeals to the arena plan, UST announced that they will be moving to a different hockey conference in 2026, NCHC includes several powerhouse regional teams. The result of which is that these games will have increased attendance from the competing schools. Boy, I'll bet

nobody saw that coming—those big “at capacity” games and all those out of town cars and buses.

Opposing the arena, as we have for months, introduced members of ARD to a surprising number of UST faculty, students, and seminarians who privately cheer us on and urge us to continue in our fight. Sadly however, they find themselves unable to express their opinions in any way that might expose them to the school. I can't say what reprisals they fear, but fear inside the institution is rampant. Fear of being dismissed, expelled, excoriated for expressing any dissenting opinion to the party line. It's real. Even the tenured faculty feel afraid. “All for the Common Good®” begins to sound like a lame explanation rather than an altruistic pledge.

I spent a long and successful career in design and branding. I can tell you we'd never allow any organization adopt a tagline, so utterly inconsistent with its nature. Copyrighting a false claim only amplifies the lie. But deception is an art at UST.

By supporting our Appeals the St Paul City Council has an opportunity to do something both historic and of benefit to your constituents.

The Council is the last remaining firewall between the community it serves and the rabid ambitions of a private institution. They say that faith is in the present and Hope is in the future. Direct experience warns me to have little faith the City Council will stand against UST and the army of consultants and agencies who played their roles in supporting UST's false narrative. But still, I hope a majority of councilmembers might bravely exercise some degree of independent, common sense in reviewing the facts of this case and deny St Thomas for once.

Their next expansion is almost certainly being planned. It will be built somewhere else, on a satellite campus, just as we suggest this arena should be.

For a denial of this site I choose to hold out hope. One must always retain a shred of hope. Without it we lose faith in common decency.

Speaking of common decency, perhaps UST could be persuaded to build a Social Justice Center on the arena site instead—to realign the institution with its branding.

Sincerely,  
Steve Sikora  
Shadow Falls



St Paul City Council  
310-A City Hall  
15 Kellogg Blvd. W.  
Saint Paul, MN 55102  
Ward 4, Mitra Jalali

rec 6/5

Dear Councilperson Jalali,

When the ARD (Advocates for Responsible Development) Appeal against the site plan for the University of St Thomas arena comes before you:

- **Think Independently.**
- We do not live in the *City of St Thomas*, but rather in the *City of St Paul*. Let's keep it that way.
- UST rules through influence and intimidation of well-placed personnel within the City. In this case the City's acceptance of the flawed EAW almost assures an automatic rubber stamp from every other agency and department.
- UST flaunts it's power with the expectation of automatic approvals, as extensive site preparation months before a building permit proves.
- I question the wisdom of building a 5,500-seat arena 1 block from the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area. While many commercial enterprises are "grandfathered in" to continue doing businesses on riverfront properties, the proximity of this arena should be considered environmentally unsound today. You can put an end to this practice, and send a strong message right now.
- I urge you to *approve* the UST Appeal to *deny* UST's site plan.

Kindly acknowledge your receipt of this letter.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lynette Erickson-Sikora  
Shadow Falls  
Lynette@designguys.com

Lynette Erickson-Sikora