

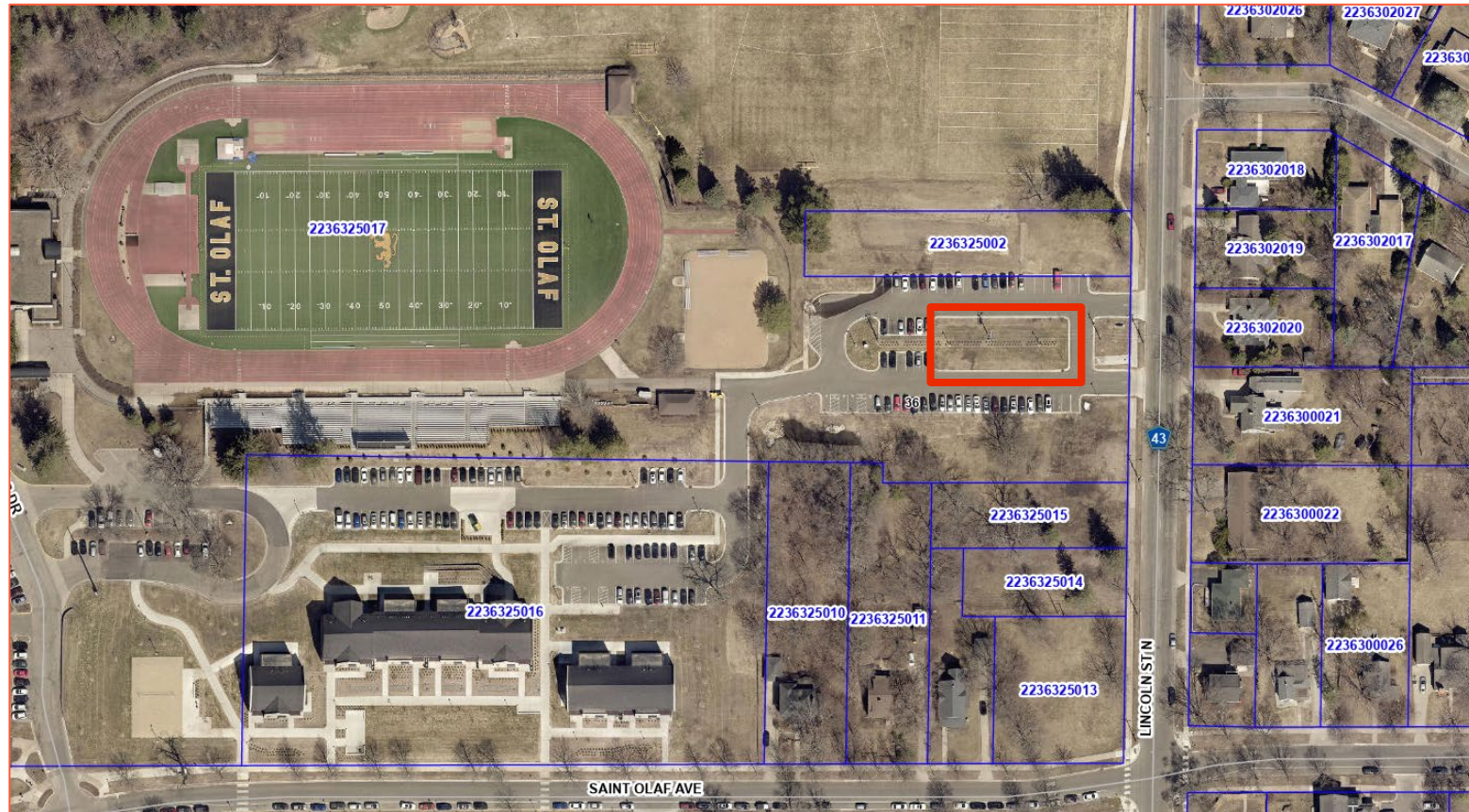


Conditional Use Permit for Saint Olaf – 219 Lincoln St. N.

City Council– July 22, 2025
Mikayla Schmidt, City Planner
Mathias Hughey, Associate City Planner



Location



Timeline & Process

Type 4 Review



June 4, 2025:
Public hearing
notice in
Northfield News

June 16, 2025:
Public hearing and
Planning
Commission
recommendation

July 22, 2025:
City Council
reviews and
makes final
decision on CUP

June 5, 2025:
Public hearing
notice mailed to
properties within
350 ft.

July 7, 2025:
Neighborhood
Meeting

Summary Report



- St Olaf constructed additional student residences in 2022 – approved in 2020 – parking limited by PC and CC at that time
- Student enrollment has increased by 130 students since 2020
- Staff & faculty employment has increased by 100 since 2020
- Waitlist of 300 individuals seeking a parking permit
- Student parking on nearby residential streets has generated complaints

Conditional Use Permit Approval Criteria



- a) The proposed use is allowed as a conditional use in the district for which it is proposed, as shown in Table 2.7-1;
 - Allowed as a conditional use as an accessory to a School
 - Area meets the definition of the Perimeter Transition Area (PTA), wherein development is subject to the development standards applicable to Conditional Use Permit criteria



- b) The conditional use will be in accordance with the general objectives, or with any specific objective, of the city's comprehensive plan and this LDC;
 - Expanded parking in this location will
 - Reduce the use of sustainable modes of transportation by students
 - Increase vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
 - Increase burden on city services
 - Increase greenhouse gas emissions and reliance on non-local energy sources
 - Contrary to strong neighborhood qualities of adjacent residential area



- c) The conditional use will be designed, constructed, operated, and maintained to be harmonious and appropriate in appearance with the existing and essential character of the area;
 - The proposed use increases surface parking area directly adjacent to a residential neighborhood, in an area where large areas of surface parking have not previously existed, increasing traffic, and the negative externalities associated with increased car use and storage, inconsistent with the essential character of the same area.



- d) The conditional use will not be hazardous or reasonably disturbing to existing or future uses;
 - Increased surface parking will result in increased vehicle traffic in the immediate area, which will likely increase the risk of injury due to vehicular crashes.



- e) The conditional use is adequately served by streets, police and fire protection, drainage, refuse disposal, water and sewer;
 - The parking lot would be adequately served by essential public services. The property is served by Lincoln St. N. to the east and Founders Dr. to the west. Emergency services will have access from both Founders Dr. and Lincoln St. N. Drainage on site is served by a storm sewer easement. The project will not have a significant impact on refuse disposal or water and sewer connections.



- **f) The benefits of the conditional use outweigh the potential negative effects of the surrounding community;**
 - The benefits of the proposed development do not to outweigh the potential negative effects. This project will likely increase vehicle miles traveled by the students who will use the parking, expanded parking will have a negative impact on the character of the neighborhood while contributing to urban heating and stormwater runoff. There is insufficient evidence to suggest the project will meaningfully address neighborhood concerns about the use of on-street parking – a concern that applies only for brief periods throughout the year.



- g) The conditional use will not create excessive additional requirements at public cost for public facilities and services;
 - The conditional use will not create additional public cost for public facilities or services.
- h) The conditional use will not involve uses, activities, processes, materials, equipment and conditions or operations that will be detrimental to any persons, property or the general welfare by reason of excessive traffic, noise, smoke, fumes, glare, or odors;
 - The expanded parking lot is not expected to generate noise, smoke, fumes, glare, or odors that are any more excessive than the existing conditions. There may be a noticeable increase in traffic, but it is not anticipated to be excessive.



- **i) The conditional use will not result in the destruction, loss, or damage of natural, scenic, or historic features;**
 - The parking lot is not expected to result in the destruction, loss, or damage of natural, scenic, or historic features of major importance as may be established in the comprehensive plan or other city plans related to natural, scenic, or historic features.
- **j) The traffic and parking generated by the use will not lower the Levels of Services within a quarter mile of the site.**
 - The additional trips generated by this use are not significant enough to lower the Levels of Services in the downtown area.



- I) In the Perimeter Transition Area (PTA) within the college development district (CD-S) that abut residential and commercial districts, height, building orientation, massing, setback and scale shall be considered in building renovation and/or new construction in order to maintain compatibility with surrounding areas as described in Section 3.4, Neighborhood Compatibility Standards. These neighborhood compatibility standards are to be administered in order to maintain a harmonious neighborhood environment and absolute compliance with these standards is not intended.
 - Large parking lots have a negative impact on the essential character of the adjacent residential neighborhoods. The existing parking lot was approved in conjunction with the development of additional student housing, and no additional student housing has been constructed since that original approval.



- m) Impacts such as noise, hours of activity, and outdoor lighting have been addressed to mitigate negative impacts on nearby uses.
 - The increased parking will intensify activity in the area.



- n) Parking is adequately provided for the proposed conditional use.
 - The LDC requires no additional off-street parking in the CD-S: College Development zone. Instead, it requires a parking study to assess mitigation strategies that will reduce demand for parking.
 - 2020 Study recommendation – “As enrollment and faculty/staff grow, increasing existing multi-modal transportation and working with businesses to provide sustainable alternatives for the community that align with the school’s values and keep demand for parking on-campus low is recommended.”

Staff Recommendation



Staff recommends denial of the conditional use permit (CUP) for Saint Olaf to expand the parking lot at 219 Lincoln St. N.

- FACULTY, STAFF, AND VISITOR PARKING
- STUDENT PARKING
- VISITOR ONLY PARKING
- REMOVED EXISTING PARKING
- PROPOSED PARKING

Questions?

