



January 21, 2021

To: The Honorable Rhonda Pownell, Mayor, City of Northfield
and Members of Northfield City Council

cc: Mitzi Baker, Community Development Director, City of Northfield
Mikayla Schmidt, City Planner, City of Northfield

From: Janet Hanson, VP/CFO, St. Olaf College

Re: Responses to City Council Questions

Thank you for your time and consideration of the Conditional Use Permit request that members of the Ole Avenue Housing Project team presented at the January 5th City Council meeting. As that meeting progressed it became obvious that the St. Olaf team had not sufficiently answered Council questions regarding the number of parking spaces included in the project's design and how our team had arrived at those numbers or sufficient information on Project implications for existing properties owned by the College. Council members also asked questions about cost implications should the project be delayed. This memo is intended to provide additional clarification to your questions.

St. Olaf College owns 31 houses along St. Olaf Avenue, 1st Street West, 2nd Street West, Lincoln Avenue, Forest Avenue, and Walden Place. Attachment A provides a map of where these houses are located and are color coded based on how the College is currently using these houses. Nineteen of these houses are currently used for student housing in what are known as honor houses. These honor houses are highlighted in red on the map included in Attachment A. Four houses are used for student overflow housing, or in the case of this past year, as quarantine housing and are shaded blue on the attachment. Three houses are used for program/office space and are highlighted in purple on the map; this includes the recently demolished President's House. And five of the College-owned houses are used for faculty/staff housing and are shaded green on the attachment. These might be for visiting faculty or faculty/staff until they can find permanent housing in Northfield.

The honor houses are private, residential homes that have been acquired by the College over a number of years and have been used to accommodate the College's student housing. These structures were not built to accommodate the number of students we place in them or serve the needs of a residential college. As part of the housing study analysis, we explored the possibility of renovating these homes, but concluded that even a significant investment in renovation would reduce the number of beds available in these structures and still not result in student housing that

meets today's standards. It is critical that St. Olaf student housing facilities meet today's standards for fire safety, accessibility, egress, indoor air quality, and other student needs.

The College has 138 students living in the 19 honor houses. All these students will be housed in the town houses as part of the Ole Avenue Project. The College will no longer use the honor houses for student housing. These honor houses have 85 available parking spaces associated with them. The number of available parking spots by honor house is identified on the attachment.

The Ole Avenue Project construction requires that seven (7) honor houses and two (2) program/office houses be demolished or moved as part of the construction. The program/office houses are Boe House and the President's House which has already been demolished. These houses are identified in the column labeled "Deconstruct/Move as Part of Construction" on the attachment and are shown on the map with an X over the structure. These buildings have 49 parking spaces that will be gone.

At the completion of the construction project, the College will deconstruct or move nine (9) structures. Seven are honor houses, one is a program office, and one is student overflow/quarantine housing. These are identified in the column labeled "Deconstruct/Move when Project Completed" column in the attachment and are also shown on the map with an X over the structure. These buildings have 35 parking spaces that will be gone.

At the completion of the project, the College will utilize five (5) existing honor houses for visiting faculty or temporary housing for faculty/staff until they can find permanent housing in Northfield. These five were identified as being in the best shape of the honors houses and could be used for temporary housing for faculty/staff. They are also adjacent to homes which the College does not own. Long-term the four houses located on St. Olaf Avenue and 1st Street West will eventually be deconstructed or moved to achieve the open green space vision shown on our site plans. The fifth house located on 2nd Street West could be put on the market for sale; that could happen at the completion of construction. These houses are identified in the column labeled "Utilize for Temporary Visiting Faculty Housing" on the attachment and are highlighted in red on the map but do not have an X over the structure. There are 20 parking spaces associated with these houses that will be used by faculty/staff; the parking spaces will not be available for student parking.

The College will continue to use the houses currently being used for faculty/staff housing after the Ole Avenue Project is completed.

In the presentation to City Council on January 5th we identified 189 parking spaces being included in the Ole Avenue Project design. We also stated that 161 spaces were replacement spaces. The table below shows how these 161 spaces are calculated. We also stated that there were 28 new spaces (189 designed less 161 replacements = 28 new.)

Existing spaces at Klein Field lot	57
Existing Honor House/Office spaces demolished for construction	49
Existing Honor House/Office spaces demolished at completion of construction	35
Existing Honor House spaces to be used by visiting faculty/staff and no longer available for student parking; long-term these houses are deconstructed or moved with parking spaces eliminated	<u>20</u>
Total Existing Spaces Replaced in Project Design	161
New Spaces	<u>28</u>
Total Designed Spaces	<u>189</u>

Attachment B shows these calculations along with the site layout including the 200' Transitional Perimeter Area that Council members were provided in an earlier presentation.

Two final reminders – The students living in these new housing facilities will be junior or seniors who often have practicum or internships requirements as part of their program. As noted by Council members, it is important for these students to have access to their vehicles to go to/from their practicum or internship sites. And, at the neighborhood open house held in August, the biggest complaint the College received from those attendees was the number of students who park on city streets in their residential neighborhoods to the east of Lincoln Avenue.

The other question that I believe was left insufficiently answered was that of project delays and cost implications of those delays. Jason Krueger, from Boldt Construction, indicated that yes, there would be cost implications and timeline implications, but we didn't quantify those for the Council members at the meeting. After further conversation with the team, Boldt is estimating a cost factor of \$70K to \$80K per week should the project be delayed. This takes into consideration the overtime costs that the variety of laborers would incur to keep us on track for a fall 2022 occupancy. This also assumes that the project could begin to install footings for the residence hall in early March 2021. For the footings to begin in early March 2021, we would need to begin clearing trees and shrubs and start the soil correction work in the residence hall footprint by mid-February.

Attachment B – Ole Ave Project Parking as Designed

Planned Project Parking

Lincoln Street Lot*	91
Townhouse Lot**	89
1st Street/St. Olaf Ave connector	9
# of Designed Spaces	189

Replacement Spaces:

Existing Klein lot	(57)
Existing Honor House/Office spaces eliminated with construction	(49)
Existing Honor House/Office spaces eliminated at completion of construction	(35)
Existing Honor House spaces used by visiting faculty/staff at completion of construction; Long-term houses are deconstructed or moved and parking spaces eliminated	(20)
Net new spaces	28

* 57 of these spaces are existing spaces in the Klein Field Lot

**42 of these spaces are outside of the Perimeter Transition Area

