



## Overview – Draft **Event Management Plan** Concepts

As we plan for the opening of the Lee and Penny Anderson Arena, the University of St. Thomas is developing an Event Management Plan (EMP) with the City of St. Paul Traffic Engineering Department and the St. Paul Police Dept. *This was a requirement of the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) mitigation and noted in the Site Plan approval as an outstanding condition.*

The EMP will provide details about how St. Thomas will manage traffic and parking for all events at the arena. The EMP will also provide details about how St. Thomas will communicate and notify community members about the schedule of events happening on campus.

As this plan is developed, St. Thomas will voluntarily work with the neighborhood communities to secure community input. This will happen through meetings at the district councils, through the West Summit Area Neighborhood Association (WSNAC) and through a specific community input group we are creating.

The University has contracted with SRF, a traffic and engineering firm with expertise in event management, to lead the development of the EMP.

The EMP will help alleviate concerns about traffic and parking by providing detailed solutions. It is of utmost importance to St. Thomas to ensure that our fans visiting the arena have a good experience, and that we do not cause undue burdens on our neighbors.

### **Background about Capacity of Arena**

The maximum capacity of the arena has decreased since the original assumptions in the EAW. In the EAW, the seating capacity was projected to be 5,500 for basketball and 4,000 for hockey. Current designs call for 5,311 for basketball, 4,006 for hockey. These numbers will continue to be refined as the project team finishes the design and permitting processes this summer but are anticipated to remain close to those values.

In community meetings, St. Thomas estimated that when the arena floor is used for an event like commencement, the maximum capacity could be higher, such as 6,000 seats. That is now projected to be 4,524 (less capacity than basketball), using an end stage configuration, and 5,497 (less capacity than what was analyzed in the EAW), for center stage floor configuration.



A refresher on the average and maximum attendance marks for comparable athletic programs, as outlined in the EAW Transportation Study, is below. St. Thomas anticipates that only a very limited number of events will be sold out.

*(The final schedules for athletics conferences will be released the summer prior to each competition season. Key information about what home games will bring the highest crowds is needed before this plan can be projected on an annual basis. Also, commencement ceremonies are scheduled on an annual basis)*

- Game attendance largely depends on factors such as opponent, conference standings, rivalry games, weather and other variables, both predictable and nonpredictable.
- Men's basketball programs generally have 1-2 higher attendance games per year. The highest attendance for similar programs was 4,600 with the average attendance being 1,800.
- Men's hockey programs generally have 2-4 higher attendance games per year. The highest attendance for similar programs was 4,500 with the average attendance being 2,475.
- Women's hockey/basketball programs generally have a max attendance around 3,000. Average attendance ranges from 550-1,175.
- Figure 7 of the EAW Transportation Study shows the comparable programs attendances plotted out on a graph for visual purposes.
- Table D9 & Table D10 in Appendix D of the EAW Transportation Study also shows Similar Men's Hockey & Basketball Program Stadium Capacities.
- As summarized at previous community meetings, St. Thomas is anticipating 3-6 maximum capacity athletics events (4,006 for hockey or 5,311 for basketball) and approximately 35 well-attended events (mostly Men's hockey and basketball games)

### **On-site Parking Management**

St. Thomas will regularly communicate to fans prior to gameday indicating where attendees should park via e-mail and social media channels, and the Neighborhood Relations web site. Information about the consequences of parking in restricted parking areas within the neighborhood will be included.

- Attendees who purchase tickets and parking in advance of an event, as well as event staff, will receive instructions on where to park in designated parking ramps and lots on campus, with clear directions to those spots.
- Attendees will be directed away from permitted neighborhood parking. Additional enforcement of illegal parking in the neighborhood within permitted parking-only areas will be discussed with the City of St. Paul.



- If needed, St. Thomas Parking Services can require that employee parking facilities be cleared before large weekday events. The EMP will determine what level of events will require ramp/lot clearing before the event.
- St. Thomas will manage events scheduled on other areas of campus to ensure that we avoid scheduling other large events when we expect large arena crowds.
- Additional parking on campus will be explored.

### **Off-site Parking Management**

For the events where there could be a deficit of parking spots on campus, there are several mitigation efforts to be considered.

#### **A. Rideshare Services**

- a. We will work to draw up agreements with rideshare companies when we have more clarity on what companies will be operating in the metro area. We anticipate that rideshare services will be popular for our patrons and will ensure that we provide pick up and drop off locations to relieve congestion around South Campus. We are considering rideshare locations such as the west side of the arena through the Summit Ave access point and the turnaround area located west of the Anderson Student Center located on North Campus.

#### **B. Transit Options**

- a. We will develop incentives for attendees to use transit, similar to some of the programs that already exist for the university. We will also gather expertise and best practices through our discussions with MoveMN and Metro Transit to develop incentives that work for similar events and ways to encourage the use of multi-modal options.
- b. Bike parking is available near the arena and throughout St. Thomas' campus.
- c. St. Thomas will continue to advocate for enhanced transit service to our campus.

#### **C. Shuttle Services**

- a. For the few maximum capacity events where we expect to exceed parking, we will arrange off-site parking and shuttle services. We are solidifying a partnership with Allianz Field. The location for shuttle pick-up and drop-off is shown on the site plan on the drive lane west of the arena which will allow for post-game queuing of shuttles to occur within the campus boundaries and not in the public right of way. We are anticipating shuttles will enter the site through the Southeast Cretin Ave access point and exit the site through the existing Summit Ave access drive.

### **Traffic Control**



St. Thomas currently partners with St. Paul Police Department to manage traffic during the heaviest times before and after large events and is planning to do so with Anderson Arena events that require support. Officers will assist in directing traffic in and out of the Anderson Parking Ramp at Grand and Cretin. They will assist in controlling the flow of both vehicles and pedestrians. The current thinking is to post two officers at Grand/Cretin and two at Summit/Cretin to help traffic flow northbound towards I-94. The expertise of the St. Paul Police who currently work at games at the Xcel, Saints and Allianz Field will be helpful. St. Paul Police will share their guidelines and cheat sheets relative to traffic control, and a final plan will be determined through the EMP process.

### **Communications**

- St. Thomas will establish regular email communications to inform neighbors before arena-related events. Athletics schedules will be shared as they are updated. The Neighborhood Relations website will have a feature where interested parties can learn about other large events happening on campus.
- St. Thomas will use an e-list serve to communicate with neighbors and will seek to grow this list. Currently, neighbors can sign up to receive updates related to events happening on campus.
- Once the Arena is developed and operational, St. Thomas will continue to seek feedback about the management of events through the District Councils, WSNAC and neighborhood groups, and adjust operations where necessary.

### **Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan Routes**

Pedestrian and bicycle routes will be developed for attendees accessing the arena from different directions. Wayfinding signage will be placed to direct pedestrians and bicyclists to the appropriate street crossings and locations to enter the arena.