

**FINAL DRAFT**  
**01-24-07**

# 7 Corners Gateway Development Evaluation Tool

City of Saint Paul | Saint Paul on the Mississippi Design Center | Seven Corners Gateway Task Force

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# Acknowledgments

The 7 Corners Gateway Development Evaluation Tool was prepared at request of Mayor Chris Coleman and Councilmember Dave Thune.

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## Staff Team

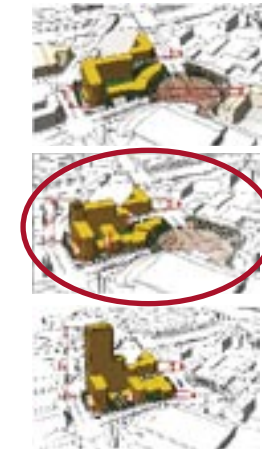
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# Introduction

The Seven Corners Gateway Development Evaluation Tool was created to evaluate proposed developments of the City-owned property across from the Xcel Energy Center between Kellogg Boulevard and W. 5th St., and the adjacent Transit Center triangle site. This document is a result of several focus group discussions of the 7 Corner Gateway Task Force convened by CapitolRiver Council District 17.

As part of the process, the Task Force members were briefed on existing planning document for the site. These included recommendations from the Seven Corners Gateway Plan: A Design Charrette for West Seventh Street (2000) and the Cleveland Circle Design Guidelines (2003) that dealt with land use and development, movement and circulation, public spaces and streets, and architecture. New ideas emerged from this process; most notably, a new development for this should become an icon for the City of Saint Paul.

The Evaluation Tool is intended to be a conversation piece and is presented in sections regarding Area Fit, View Impact, Land Use, Public Realm, Architecture and Green Technology. Each section asks questions assembled specifically for this site. It is intended that each proposed development concept replace the massing diagram shown in the document and a **Score Card** is filled out to evaluate the proposal under each section.



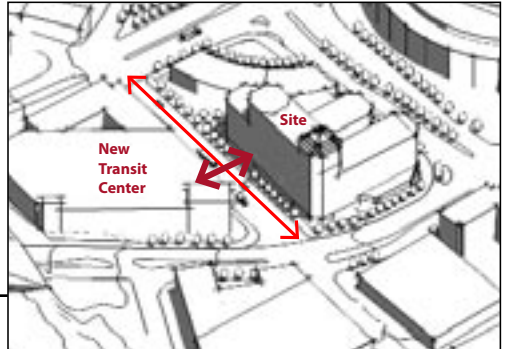
The sample massing diagram used throughout this document was chosen from several alternatives because it best accommodated the key views. The alternatives explored concepts ranging from low scale to high-rise development.

The intention is that development proposals can be inserted into the 3-D SketchUp model (provided by the City) for evaluation.

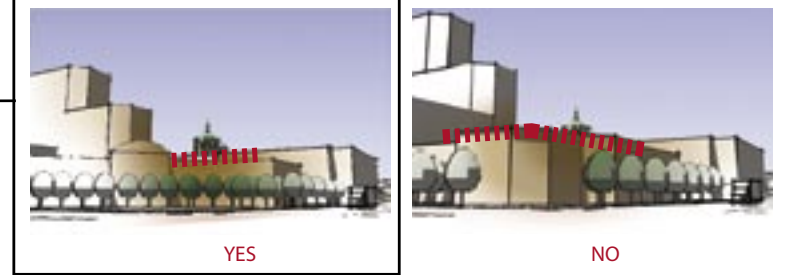
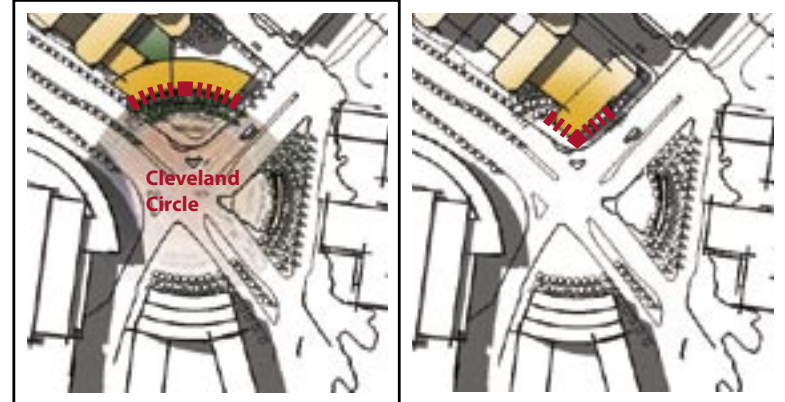
The challenge is to organize the building(s) functions into a massing that protects these key views.



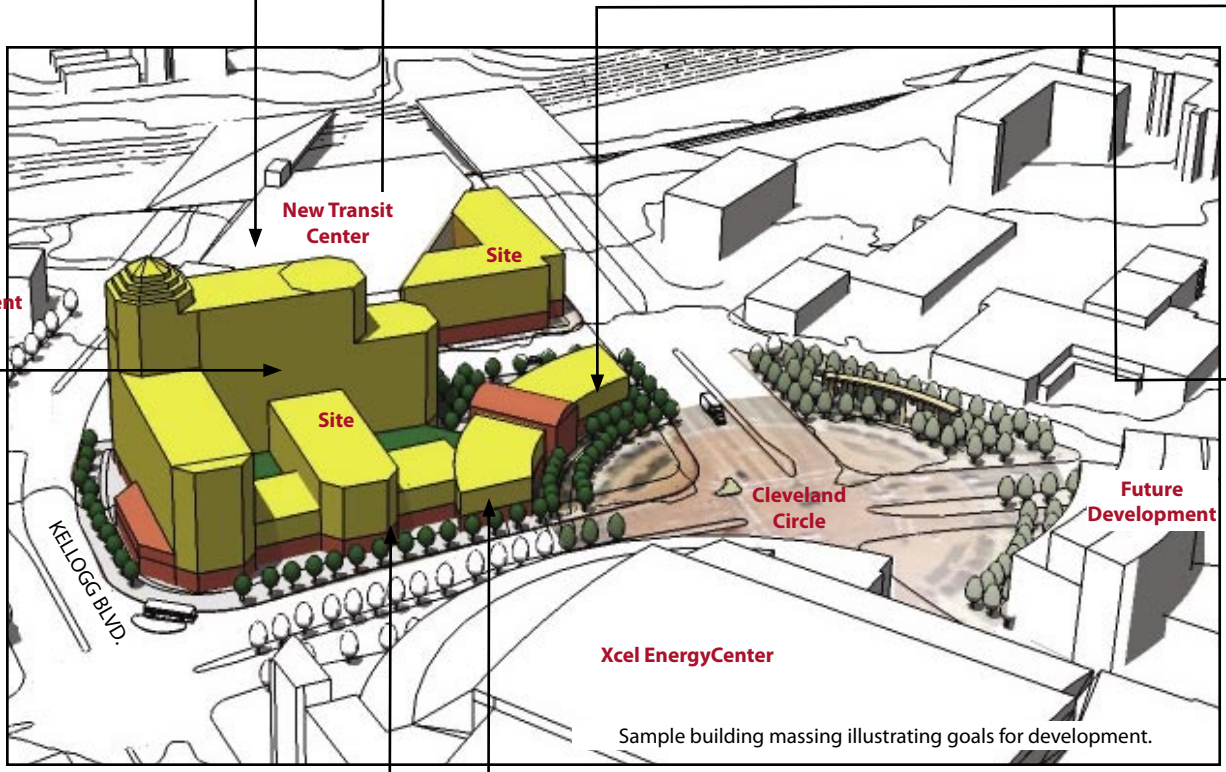
Consideration of roof form could enhance the city's skyline. See **View, Land Use and Architecture** pages.



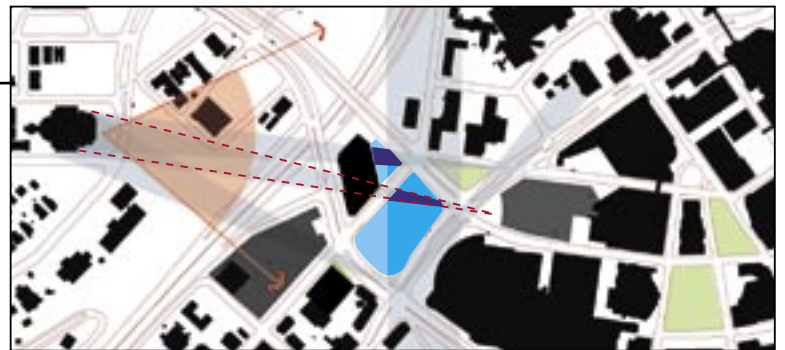
Service and parking access to site at new Smith Ave. signal. See **Land Use** page.



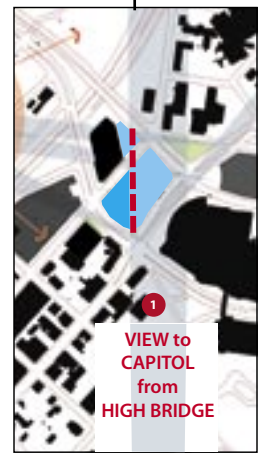
Building set back from Cleveland Circle preserves views of the Cathedral's drum and dome and screens the Transit Center. See **Public Realm, Views, Land Use and Architecture** pages.



Sample building massing illustrating goals for development.



Lower building mass on the dark blue portions of the site preserve the key view from Cleveland Circle of the drum and dome of the Cathedral and the Capitol. See **Public Realm, Views, Land Use and Architecture** pages.



Preserving the primary view corridor from the Smith Ave. High Bridge divides the site and allows taller massing on the west side and lower massing on the east side. See **View** pages.



25' Building set-back to accommodate sidewalk dining and festival uses on W. 7th St. See **Land Use, Public Realm and Architecture** pages.



The prominence of the site and its role as a transition from the W. 7th historic neighborhood to the Downtown Cultural and Entertainment District calls for the best of contemporary design and possibly an iconic architectural statement. See **Architecture** page.

## Issues, Needs & Opportunities

A list of Issues, Needs and Opportunities developed by Task Force members at the beginning of the process to be addressed by the Development Evaluation Tool:

- Active all day, into evenings; event and non-event days; indoors and outdoors
- Mixed use
- Welcoming street frontage consistent with the active public realm along W. 7th St.
- Create an experience that becomes uniquely "Saint Paul"
- Protect view corridors along public rights-of-ways
- Consistent architectural style with the surrounding area
- Connect to mass transit
- Integrate wayfinding and traffic flow for pedestrian safety
- Quality, durable, and lasting materials
- Create a "brandable" destination
- Aim for safety and cleanliness similar to GrandVictoria
- Balance of pedestrian and vehicular movements from I-94, I-35, Kellogg Blvd. and W. 7th St.
- Design for congestion
- Generate revenue for the city by increasing property taxes, sales tax and visitor numbers
- Think about this site as a "gateway," a "look," that stands out and becomes iconic
- Investigate the possibility of height
- Link with green triangle on Transit Center site
- Concentrate pedestrian movement to corner crosswalks
- Site needs to act as a transition between neighborhoods
- Fit with the nearby entertainment venues
- Benefit from the energy of events at Xcel Energy Center
- Interior public space may act as a respite from street
- Encourage local merchants as much as possible
- Investigate the impact of a skyway on street vitality
- Settle on economically viable concept that addresses design guidelines
- Settle on a brandable name: 7 Corners, Cleveland Circle, The Gateway?



View of development site from Cleveland Circle toward the Saint Paul Cathedral.



View on W. 7th St. of Assumption Church, Xcel Energy Center to the right, and the development site to the



## Area Fit

The former 7 Corners site is a key gateway into downtown Saint Paul— an historically lively, bustling intersection. Today, it is the intersection of the revitalized W. 7th St., Kellogg Boulevard and Rice Park Cultural and Entertainment Corridor, which includes the Minnesota History Center, Xcel Energy Center, RiverCentre, Ordway Center for the Arts, Central Library and Science Museum of Minnesota. The successful development of the site will knit these distinct community features into an exciting new place. Here are several questions to explore the fit of any proposed development:

1. Will it capture the sense of the historic 7 Corners area?
2. Will it extend the vitality of W. 7th St. across from of the Arena?
3. Will it strengthen the connection between the History Center and the other Arts, Culture and Entertainment facilities?
4. Will it provide easily recognizable and accessible connections between downtown Saint Paul, the riverfront, and the city-wide and regional open space trail systems?
5. Will it be good neighbor to the residents who live in the area?
6. Will it offer a significantly better balance of transportation uses, including pedestrian, bicycle and transit, than other areas in Downtown?
7. Will it have a minimal effect on the environment?
8. Will it welcome all Saint Paul residents and visitors?
9. Will it allow for integrated public art?

### Cass Gillbert's 1903 Plan

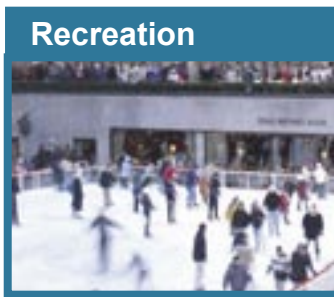


## How Does this Project Fit In To the Area?

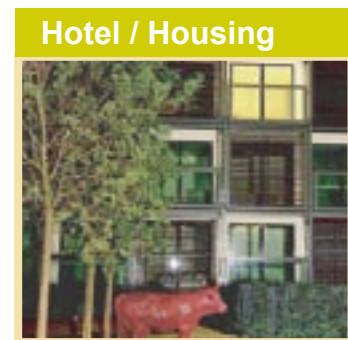
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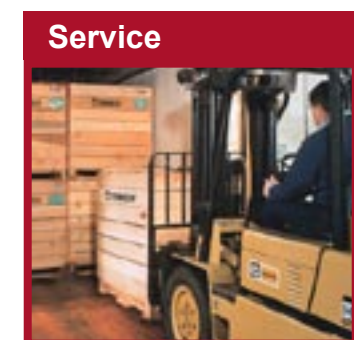
A mixture of activities could include public recreation.



Hotel and/or housing geared to urban dwellers would complement the adjoining entertainment uses.



Locating cultural and entertainment uses at this key site would enhance the entertainment district.



Service

Primary vehicular access to the site occurs at new signal on Smith Ave. extension. W. 7th St. and 5th St. are options for right-only egress.



Cleveland Circle and a range of public spaces are opportunities to accommodate outdoor dining, events and festivals.



Place retail and dining along the ground floor to create lively uses visible from the street.



Block	Existing	Proposed / New
1. Seven Corners	Local businesses and surface parking	Part of the proposed Cossetta mixed-use development
2. Cossetta	Local businesses, Holiday Inn RiverCentre, newly constructed public parking	
3. United Hospital	Surface parking	Want linear building on Smith Ave.
4. Smith Avenue Transit Center	Under Construction	Ramp parking and transit hub and bus layover
5. 7 Corners Gateway	Surface parking	
6. Catholic Charities	Social surfaces and Dorothy Day	
7. St. Paul Travelers	Surface parking	

# Land Use

This development site is at the crossroads of hospital, local retail and entertainment land uses. This calls for a vibrant mixed-use development that enhances the vitality of the area and draws in a combination of downtown residents, shoppers and visitors. The challenge will be combining and emphasizing land use that is synergistic with these surrounding uses. As mixed-use, this development should contain some combination of housing / hotel, working, retail / dining, recreation, cultural and entertainment, and open public uses. Additionally, the adjacent publicly-funded ramp and transit facility provides an important parking resource for subsequent development. Questions that may guide the program:

1. Will it enhance / complement the existing mix of the medical, arts, cultural and entertainment facilities of W. 7th St. and connect the Minnesota History Center to Downtown?  
😊 😐 😞
2. Does it relate well to and/or incorporate health-care-related facilities into the mix?  
😊 😐 😞
3. Is the dining concept complementary to existing venues on W. 7th St., including Xcel?  
😊 😐 😞
4. Does retail serve both visitors and residents?  
😊 😐 😞
5. Are activities programmed for a variety of ages and diverse cultures?  
😊 😐 😞
6. Does the open space feel public and provide recreation or open space amenities to the area?  
😊 😐 😞
7. Are ownership, residential, hotel, rental and/or assisted living complementary to the overall land use program?  
😊 😐 😞
8. Are service activities and parking demands well-organized and confined along Smith Ave.?  
😊 😐 😞
9. Does the proposed land use activate the street throughout the day and during all seasons of the year?  
😊 😐 😞

## What Is The Most Appropriate Land Use?

## Public Green Space

Cleveland Circle is a green pedestrian circle created by pulling crosswalks away from the intersection. This was envisioned to create a major downtown entry and green relief when enclosed by development. The view of the Capitol is greatly embraced by keeping Cleveland Circle.



## Manage Congestion

Create a defining and high profile corner that directs pedestrian flow to the corners to encourage crossing and crowd control during high event times.



## Courtyard

Extend the public realm into an interior courtyard / plaza.



## Activity

Activate the transit corner site.

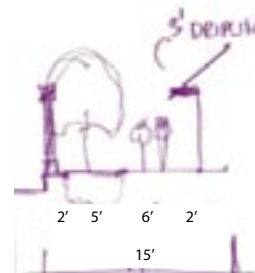


## Parking and Service

Parking and service should access the site at the new signal being installed mid-block on Smith Ave. Explore options such as restricted time loading.

## Sidewalk Width

Establish a typical sidewalk dimension build-to line that creates semi-public spaces in front of buildings. Design convertible sidewalks to include adequate walking paths, window shopping and café zones along the building face.



## Light Fixtures

Provide adequate lighting around the site. The "Washington" acorn fixture should be used along W. 7th St., and the globe lights should be used on other sides of the site.



## Stormwater Management



## Weather Protection



## Signage



## Street Furniture



## Public / Civic Art



## Transit / Parking



# Public Realm

The public realm in the 7 Corners Gateway Area is the space between buildings, composed of streets, sidewalks, courtyards, parks, plazas and overlooks that is perceived to be public and open for everyone to use and enjoy. The "feel" of the public realm depends on design, scale, materials, art, information, and safety. Here are several questions to evaluate the public realm.

1. Does the proposal preserve Cleveland Circle?  
😊 😐 😞
2. Does the proposal allow a wider sidewalk, say 25 feet, on W. 7th St. to accommodate event and non-event pedestrian patterns and land use activity?  
😊 😐 😞
3. Does the proposal build on existing Blooming Saint Paul initiatives to establish a "green" downtown?  
😊 😐 😞
4. Does the proposal provide adequate lighting around the site for safety in the same style as W. 7th St. and Kellogg Boulevard?  
😊 😐 😞
5. Does the design direct pedestrian flow in and out of building(s) at corners to encourage crossing and crowd control during event times?  
😊 😐 😞
6. Does the design have pedestrian entrances and windows facing each sidewalk?  
😊 😐 😞
7. Does the proposal extend the public realm into an interior courtyard / plaza?  
😊 😐 😞
8. Are provisions made for early incorporation of public art in the design or placement of public art pieces?  
😊 😐 😞
9. Does each building have pedestrian entrances and windows facing each sidewalk?  
😊 😐 😞

# Does this Project Enhance Public Realm?

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## Form



A building can be fun and whimsical.



Simple form that is well detailed.



Irregular facade breaks up a large complex.



Separate building design within block design concept.

## Corner Entry



Rounded and predominant corner.



Cantilever provides protection.



Separated corner creates an intimate space.

## Base



Pedestrian-friendly sidewalk.



Multiple openings entry points.

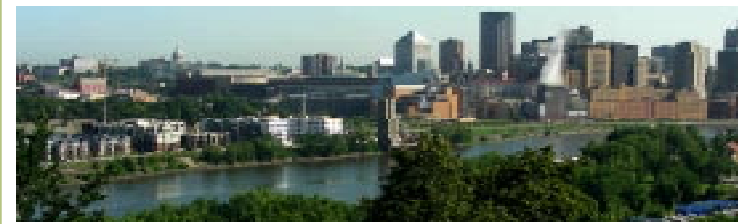


Building naturally protects sidewalk.



Public art and imaginative streetscaping.

## Top / Skyline



Existing view of the skyline from Smith Avenue High Bridge.



Balance of historic and contemporary roof line treatments.



A tall structure becomes an icon for the city.

## Material



Juxtaposition of glass and brick.



Glass curtain wall creates night quality.



Vegetative skin.



Creative use of color.



Careful attention to detail.

# Architecture

Vitruvius wrote the comprehensive Ten Books of Architecture in the 16th Century. His work is based on three core principles: soundness, utility and attractiveness, which are as applicable today as when they were written. Using these principles as criteria, we can evaluate the soundness and firmness of the architectural structure, the utility of the development program in addressing the proposed use, and the attractiveness of the overall composition and the delight that results from its general appearance and specific use. The images on this sheet represent the community's interest in exploring fresh architectural expressions that are substantially more contemporary than the heavier architectural expression of brick and stone frequently associated with Saint Paul. The following questions further inform the architectural design process.

1. Does the overall form of the block architecture knit the district together?
2. Do the corner entries encourage pedestrian flow and "greet" the street?
3. Does the base of the building provide the right façade and openings for the associated proposed use?
4. Is the form of the building(s) complementary to the overall skyline composition?
5. Are the materials and detailing of a more contemporary architectural pallet and high quality?
6. Does the proposal have a presence at night?
7. Does this proposal provide a distinctive icon for Saint Paul?

## Would We Want to Save this Block 50 Years From Now?

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# Green Tech

Building construction is a leading consumer of energy and materials. Growing awareness and practice of sustainable design principles are becoming the norm for urban development. This site offers Saint Paul the opportunity to demonstrate a thoughtful application of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building and site development techniques. Proposals should be evaluated using the following questions, based on a cursory application of LEED standards to the site.

1. Has the project incorporated sustainable site initiatives such as erosion control, stormwater management, heat island reduction and light pollution mitigation?
2. Does the project employ water efficiency measures, such as xeroscape irrigation, innovative wastewater technologies and water use reduction?
3. Does the project positively embrace energy performance, renewable energy use, monitoring and other green energy applications?
4. Does the project conserve materials and resources by managing construction waste and using recycled content materials, local/regional materials, rapidly renewable materials and farm-grown wood?
5. Does the project provide a healthy indoor environment through air quality, low emission materials, thermal comfort and extensive daylight and views?
6. Is the project innovative in terms of green building tenant improvements?
7. Does the development maximize use of the site?

## Sustainable Sites

## Water Efficiency

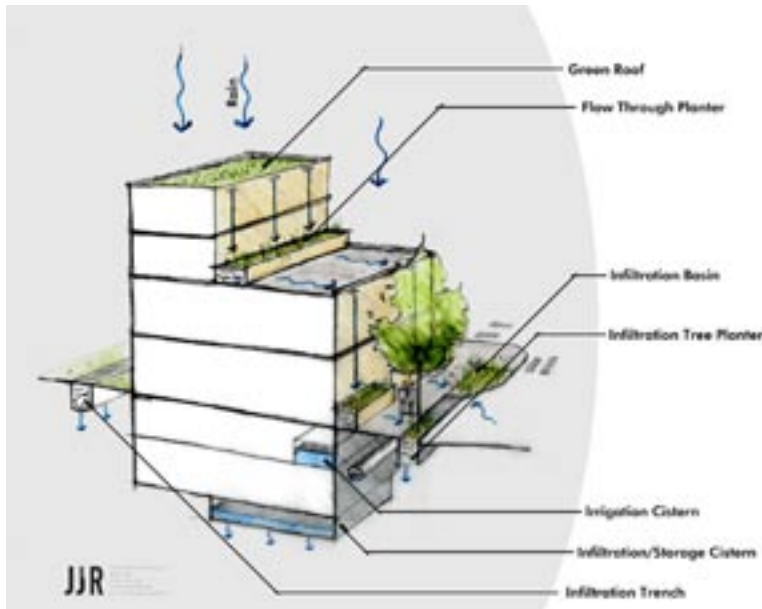
## Energy and Atmosphere

## Materials and Resources

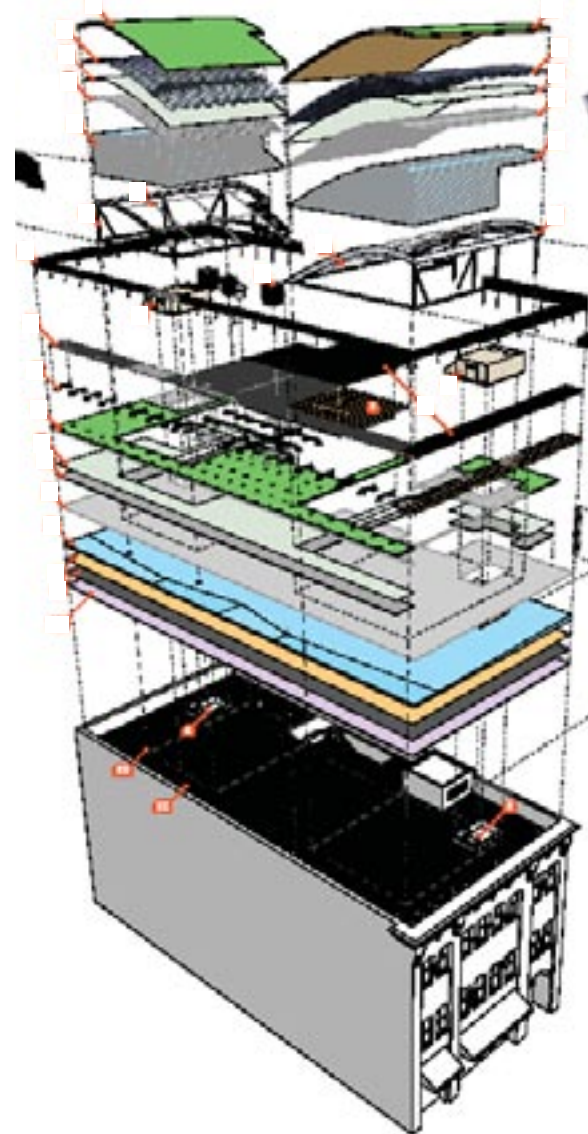
## Indoor Environmental Quality

## Innovation and Design Process

Green roofs consist of many component and must be part of initial design.



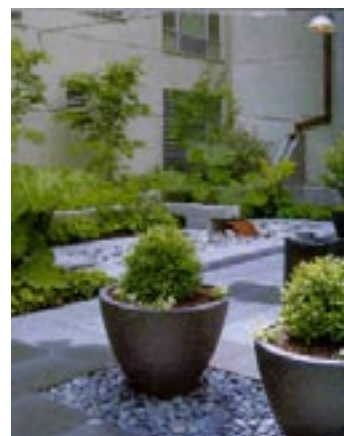
Green technology is part of the entire building process.



Green roofs can retain up to six times more stormwater than conventional roofing material and provide additional insulation to reduce heat loss.



An extensive daylighting system reduces the need for electric lighting.



Managing stormwater on site mitigates the demand on the sewer system.



New technology can become part of building design.



LEED standards require developers to design for alternative transportation.

# Is This Proposal LEED Certified?

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# Score Card

## Area Fit

			Question
			1. Will it capture the sense of the historic 7 Corners area?
			2. Will it extend the vitality of W. 7th Street across from of the Xcel Energy Center?
			3. Will it strengthen the connection between the Minnesota History Center and the other Arts, Culture and Entertainment facilities?
			4. Will it provide easily-recognizable and accessible connections between downtown Saint Paul, the riverfront, and the city-wide and regional open space trail systems?
			5. Will it be good neighbor to the residents who live in the area?
			6. Will it offer a significantly better balance of transportation uses, including pedestrian, bicycle and transit, than other areas in downtown?
			7. Will it have a minimal effect on the environment?
			8. Will it welcome all Saint Paul residents and visitors?
			9. Will it allow for integrated public art?
+		-	Total Score <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">/9</span>

## Views

			Question
			1. How does the proposal impact the view of the overall city skyline from the Smith Ave. High Bridge?
			2. How does the proposal impact the view from the Capitol steps to the river valley and bluffs?
			3. How does the proposal impact the view of downtown from the Cathedral?
			4. How does the proposal impact the view of the Cathedral from W. 6th St.?
			5. How does the proposal impact the view of the Cathedral from Kellogg Blvd. and W. 7th St.?
			6. How does the proposal impact the view along W. 7th St.?
+		-	Total Score <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">/6</span>

## Land Use

			Question
			1. Will it enhance / complement the existing mix of the medical, arts, cultural and entertainment facilities of W. 7th St. and connect the Minnesota History Center to cowtown?
			2. Does it relate well to and/or incorporate health-care-related facilities into the mix?
			3. Is the dining concept complementary to existing venues on W. 7th St., including the Xcel Energy Center?
			4. Does retail serve both visitors and residents?
			5. Are activities programmed for a variety of ages and diverse cultures?
			6. Does the open space feel public and provide recreation or open space amenities to the area?
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			9. Does the proposed land use activate the street throughout the day and during all seasons of the year?
+		-	Total Score <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">/9</span>

## Public Realm

			Question
			1. Does the proposal preserve Cleveland Circle?
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			3. Does the proposal build on existing Blooming Saint Paul initiatives to establish a "green" downtown?
			4. Does the proposal provide adequate lighting around the site for safety in the same style as W. 7th St. and Kellogg Boulevard?
			5. Does the design direct pedestrian flow in and out of building(s) at corners to encourage crossing and crowd control during event times?
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## Architecture

			Question
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			7. Does this proposal provide a distinctive icon for Saint Paul?
+		-	Total Score <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">/7</span>

## Green Technology

			Question
			1. Has the project incorporated sustainable site initiatives such as erosion control, stormwater management, heat island reduction and light pollution mitigation?
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			4. Does the project conserve materials and resources by managing construction waste and using recycled content materials, local/regional materials, rapidly renewable materials and farm-grown wood?
			5. Does the project provide a healthy indoor environment through air quality, low emitting materials, thermal comfort and extensive daylight and views?
			6. Is the project innovative in terms of green building tenant improvements?
			7. Does this development maximize use of the site?
+		-	Total Score <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">/7</span>

Project \_\_\_\_\_

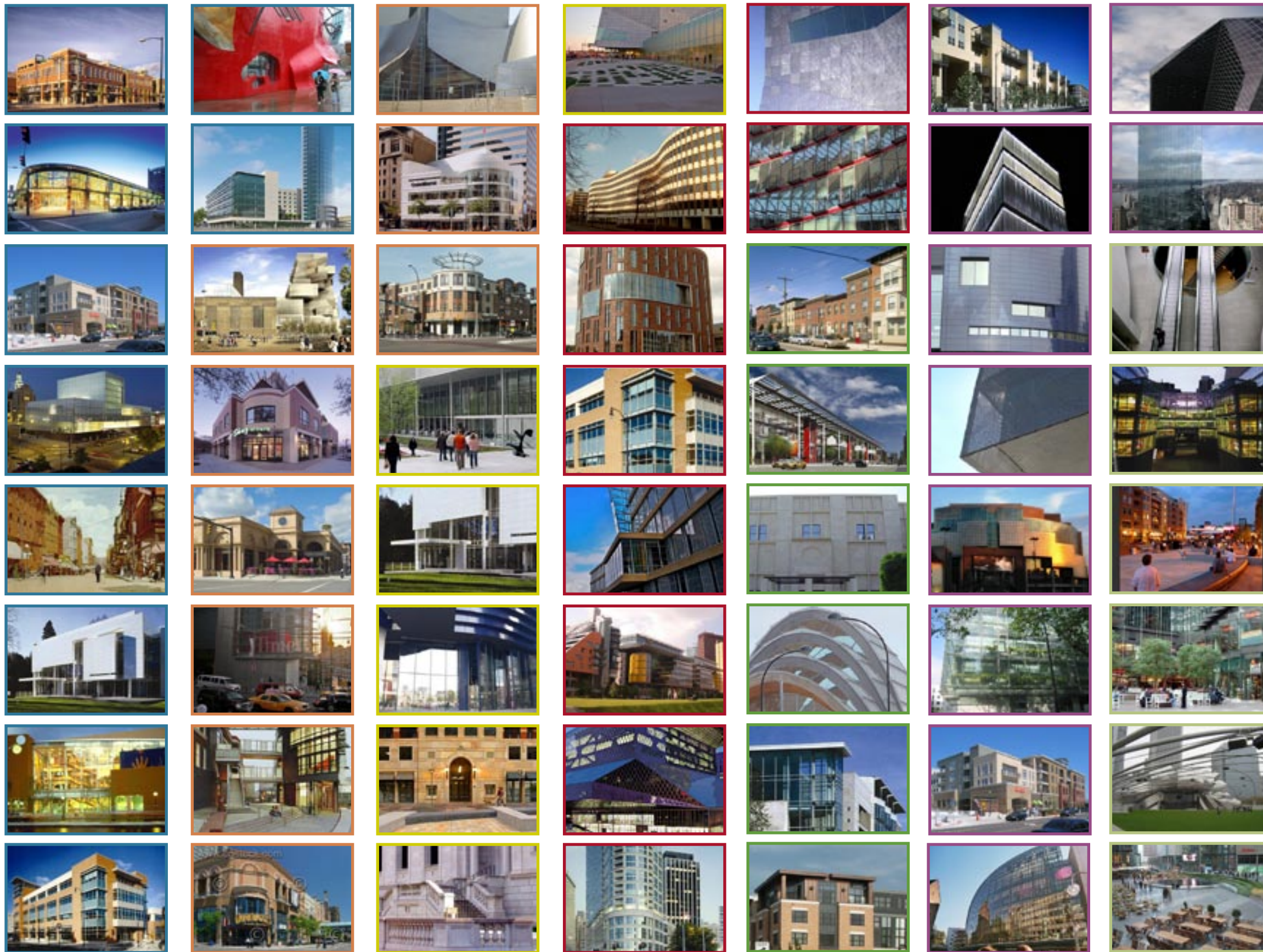
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# Appendix I.

The third Task Force Meeting consisted of a visual preference survey used to help define preferences for architectural elements. Members were shown this catalog of images grouped into separate architectural elements, and then asked to rate and comment on each image. The chosen collection of existing projects provide positive examples and helps to illustrate the architecture section of the evaluation tool. The architectural elements highlighted were:

- Form
- Corner
- Base
- Middle
- Cornice
- Materials
- Courtyards



What Do You Think Of This Architectural Element?

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