

REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST

For Developer of Mixed-Use, Transit-Oriented Development,
in the Central Business District of Saint Paul, MN

Please Respond By: 5:00 p.m., Thursday, January 11, 2024



**SAINT PAUL
MINNESOTA**



Introduction

The Metropolitan Council and the City of Saint Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority are eager to gauge private sector interest in the redevelopment of the Central Station site in downtown Saint Paul, Minnesota. This unique development opportunity, in the heart of Saint Paul's Central Business District (CBD), is a 1.66-acre site intersected by the METRO Green Line Light Rail Central Station. The site covers most of a city block, and the remainder of the block is currently being advertised for sale by the current owner.

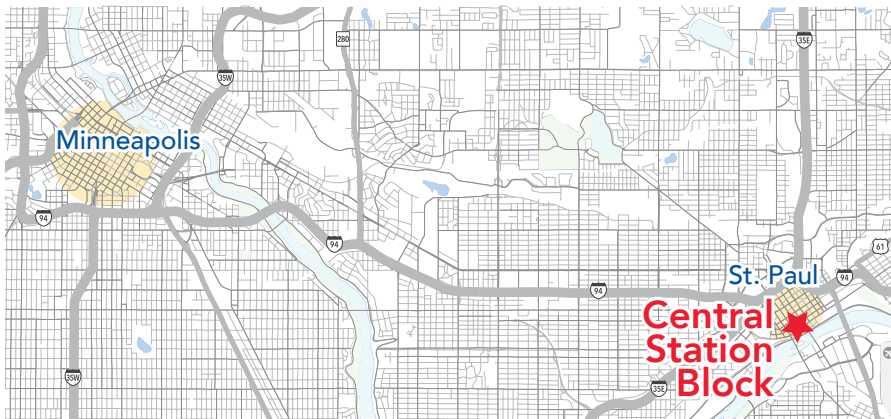


Letters of Interest are being sought to help determine the type and extent of the interest in the redevelopment of the property, and to inform the final preparation and issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP). All respondents to this Request for Letters of Interest will be notified when an RFP for this development opportunity is released. Early 2024 is when the RFP is expected to be released with responses due early in the summer of 2024.

Minneapolis-Saint Paul Region

Saint Paul is at the center of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul region, one of the top performing economies in the United States. The region has almost 3.7 million residents, a diversified economy, and has the most Fortune 500 corporate headquarters per one million people than any other metro area in the US, making this region a strong financial, manufacturing, distribution, and transportation hub. A well-educated labor force, in which 94% have a high school diploma and 45% have a bachelor's degree or higher, ensures that the region can meet the staffing needs of growing technology, medical, and agricultural industries.

The region had an unemployment rate of 2.7% in September 2023, lower than the State of Minnesota (3.1%) and the national average (3.8%). The 12-month inflation rate as of September 2023 was 2.2% in MSP, well below the national average from that period of 3.7%, and among the lowest of any qualifying metro area. The 15-county metropolitan region has a median household income of \$91,341, 11% higher than the statewide median (\$82,338). Among the top 30 MSA's, MSP ranked 2nd in homeownership rate (70.5%) and 4th in poverty level (8.8%). The U.S. average poverty rate is 12.6%.



City of Saint Paul

The City of Saint Paul is home to over 312,000 residents, over 4,500 acres of parks, recreation, and reserves, 13 colleges and universities, historic architecture, world-class fine arts, vibrant neighborhoods, multi-modal transportation, and a robust business community. Saint Paul is the capital of the State of

Minnesota, and home to both state and regional government agencies. Demographically, Saint Paul is younger and more ethnically diverse than the nation as a whole.

Downtown Saint Paul serves as one of the region's two largest CBDs, with more than 55,000 employees and 15.4 million square feet of office space. In addition to the prosperous business district, the number of downtown residents has grown dramatically since 2010. As of 2021, 10,300 residents call downtown Saint Paul home.

The CBD is nestled between the residential enclave centered on Mears Park and the cultural/entertainment district surrounding Rice Park. It sits atop a bluff with spectacular views of the Mississippi River and access to the Sam Morgan Regional Trail, part of a 340-mile pedestrian and bike trail system. Running one block to the south of Central Station along the edge of the bluff are Kellogg Boulevard and the proposed River Balcony project, which envisions the creation of new visual and physical connections between downtown and the river. Significant development projects proposed along this route include a \$788M mixed-use project known as RiversEdge, which will incorporate a public pedestrian connection from the top of the bluff down to the river, and development of 3.4 acres over the RiverCentre parking structure.

Saint Paul Downtown Alliance

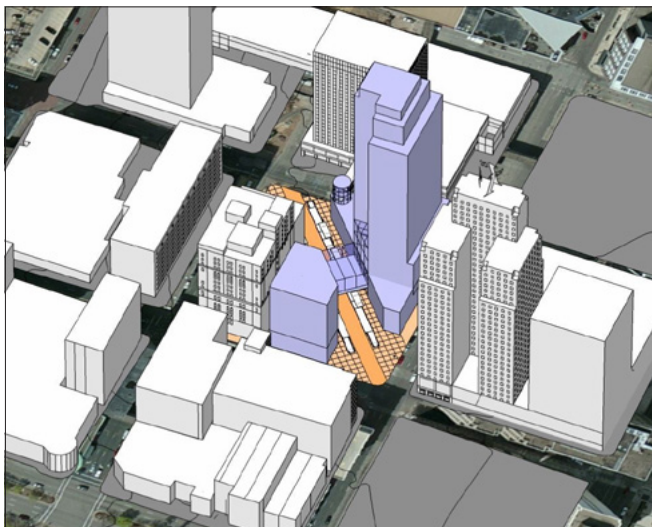
Downtown Saint Paul businesses, non-profits, government agencies, and residents came together in 2018 to create The Saint Paul Downtown Alliance (Alliance). Its stated mission is to create and maintain a vibrant and economically successful, safe, and attractive downtown. A comprehensive Downtown Investment Strategy, sponsored by the Alliance, is expected to be released in early 2024.

The entity that redevelops the Central Station site will benefit from the support of Alliance business members including Ecolab, Securian Financial, Bremer Bank, and Saint Paul Port Authority and cultural/entertainment members including the Minnesota Wild hockey team, Saint Paul Saints baseball team, Ordway Theater, and Science Museum of Minnesota.

Development Vision

The vision for the block is for a landmark, high-density, mixed-use development that both maximizes the development potential of the site and increases transit ridership.

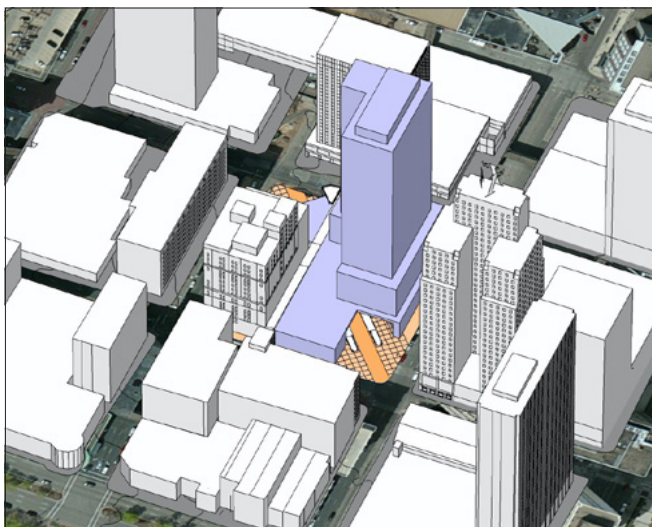
New development should demonstrate high-quality architecture and urban design that:



- Contributes to the urban fabric of downtown Saint Paul
- Activates the street
- Brings increased vitality to the core of the CBD
- Takes advantage of the extensive transit network

The site is zoned B4 - Central Business, which allows for most forms of retail, office, multifamily residential, and mixed-use development. No parking or setbacks are required for the site. A maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 8 is permitted; FAR bonuses are available for certain public improvements on the site.

Design guidelines were created to address building massing, form, height, and materials. The guidelines were adopted by the Saint Paul City Council and can be accessed by following the link below.



2017 Guidelines

Examples of the massing of a potential development on the Central Station Block. Source: Central Station Block Design Guidelines

Site Information

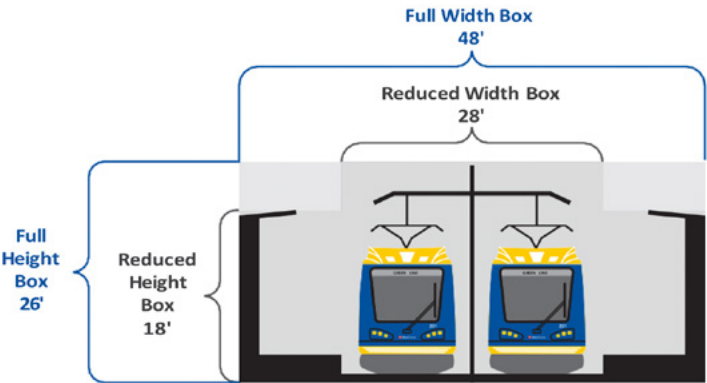
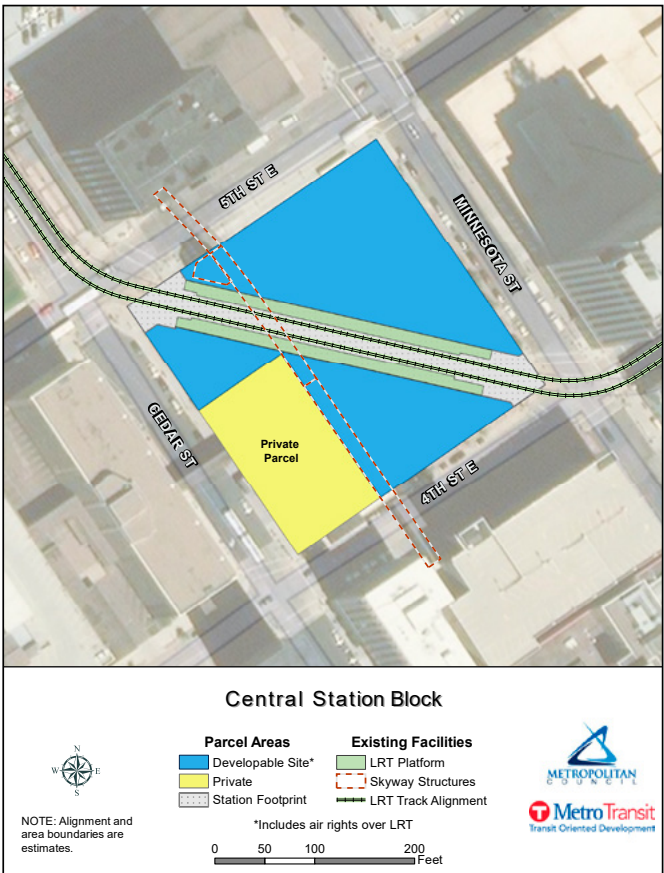
The site consists of a newly constructed Bus Rapid Transit station, the Central Station Light Rail Transit platforms, and a vertical circulation tower which directly connects to the skyway system, an elevated, enclosed corridor providing access to 47 downtown city blocks. On the same city block is a historic building at 340 Cedar, which previously housed the Saint Paul Athletic Club and the Hotel 340. That building is not included as part of this solicitation, but is primarily vacant and is being advertised for sale.

The light rail alignment bisects the block, creating a unique opportunity for transit-oriented development. In addition to the land on both sides of the LRT platform and tracks, air rights over the transit are available. Restructuring of the skyway, vertical circulation tower and bus stops, including incorporation into the new building(s) can be part of the site redevelopment.

The building at 340 Cedar is depicted in yellow and currently being advertised for sale. The remainder of the site, depicted in blue, is owned by the Metropolitan Council and the City of Saint Paul.



View of Skyway and Vertical Circulation Tower from 5th and Cedar

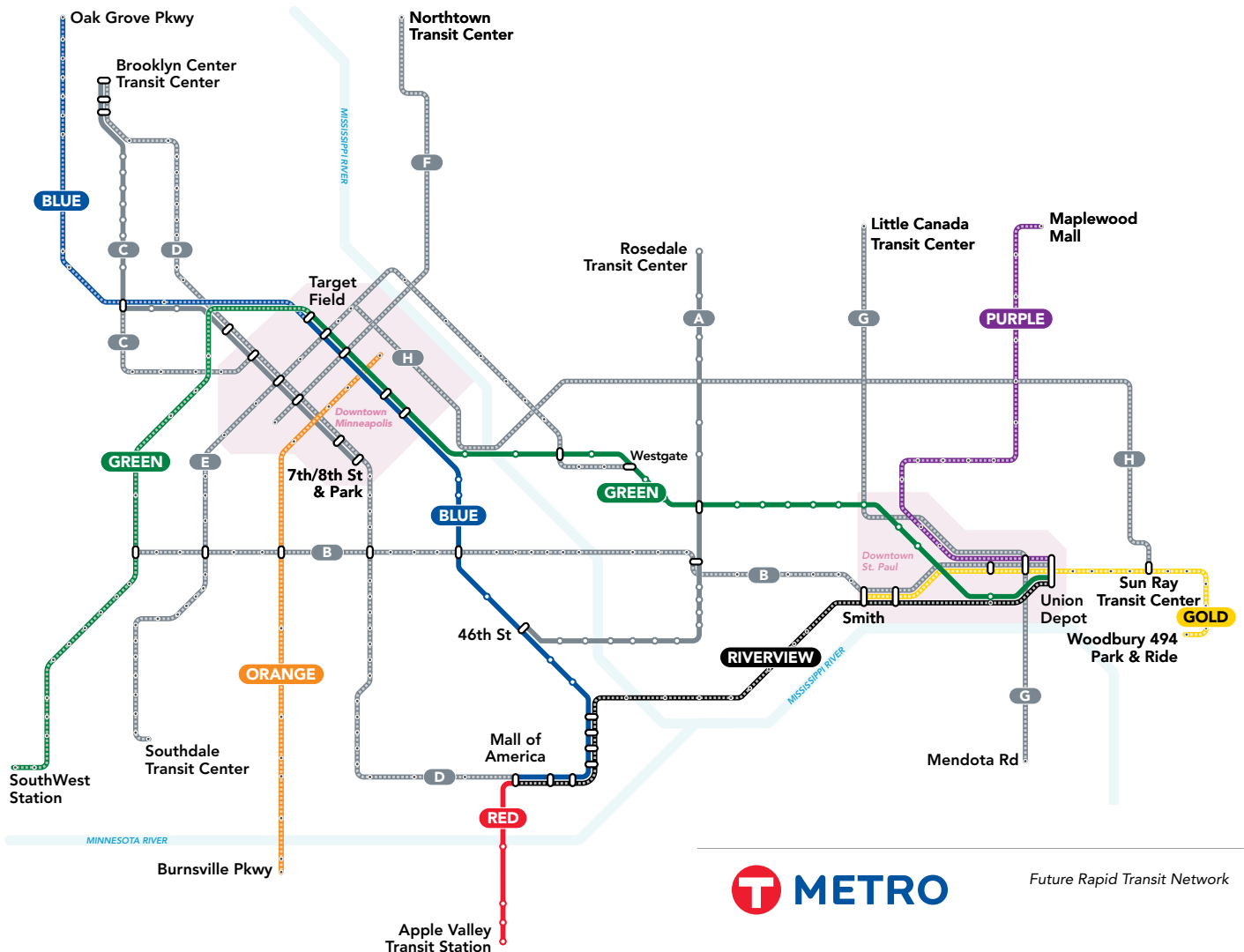


Space necessary for safe and efficient transit operations can be envisioned as a box or envelope around the transit components. The image shows various configurations for the transit envelope. Metro Transit staff are ready to work with a developer toward a creative solution that benefits the desired uses on the site.

Transit Oriented Development and Transit Expansion

Neighborhoods served by high frequency transit have grown significantly over the past decade. Since 2009, more than 40% of all multifamily and commercial development has occurred within a half mile of a high-frequency transit investment, which represents just 3% of the region by area. Cumulatively, over \$13.7 billion has been invested and over 44,000 new multifamily units have been built near transit. Much of this development will have direct and frequent transit service to Central Station Block.

The Central Station site is at the heart of a rapidly expanding regional transit hub with direct access to light rail, bus rapid transit, local and express buses, and an extensive pedestrian and bicycle network. The METRO Green Line, completed in 2014, connects the Central Station Block directly to the largest job and activity centers in Minnesota: the Capitol is a 6-minute trip; the University of Minnesota campus is a 29-minute ride; and the heart of downtown Minneapolis is just ten minutes farther along the line, all with a one seat ride on light rail trains departing every 15 minutes. The Green Line is the busiest single transit route in Minnesota serving 25,000 - 30,000 weekday trips.



Request For Letters of Interest



Submittal Components (Please limit responses to 10 pages):

1. Identify the primary developer's business name, contact person, address, phone number and email address.
2. Describe the developer's interest in dense, urban, transit-oriented development and mixed- use projects. Highlight three recently completed projects to include the project location, an image (if available) and the size and scope including the square footage of commercial retail, office, residential and public space.
3. Provide a narrative description of the proposed uses for the Central Station site property including an estimate of square footage of each.
4. Identify any other significant factors, requirements, or preferences regarding the respondent's ability to be financially successful at completing this type of project at the noted scale. Responses to this question will help shape the future Request for Proposals.

Submittal Instructions

Interested parties are asked to submit a Letter of Interest (LOI) by
5:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 11, 2024.

An electronic copy of the materials should be in PDF format and emailed to Laron.Weddington@metc.state.mn.us with "RLOI"-Central Station" in the subject line.

If the responding party is unable to submit electronically, please send the LOI and packet to:

Laron Weddington
RLOI – Central Station Block
390 Robert Street North
Saint Paul, MN 55101

All costs incurred in the preparation of the LOI shall be the responsibility of the preparer. All materials submitted become the property of the Metropolitan Council. The Council intends to use the responses to this RFI to inform the selection and evaluation process for an RFP for this development opportunity. Failure to submit a Letter of Intent will not preclude a developer from responding to a future Request for Proposals.