

RIVERCENTRE RAMP REPLACEMENT PROGRAM STATEMENT

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Department of Planning and
Economic Development
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VISION

The Saint Paul RiverCentre is Saint Paul's convention, special event, and entertainment venue. Occupying more than 250,000 square feet of event space, the complex hosts a broad array of meetings and events throughout the year, and also operates, in cooperation with the adjacent Xcel Energy Center, NHL hockey, concerts, and other entertainment events. Parking at RiverCentre to support these functions is vital, as attendees are typically from the metropolitan area and greater Minnesota, and unfamiliar with parking options.

Parking also plays an important role in the economic vitality of downtown Saint Paul. Availability of affordable safe and secure parking is critical to support downtown growth but also economic development. Additionally, present parking revenues provide financial support of the RiverCentre facility itself.

The goal of this document is to provide information to plan for replacement of the existing structure, responsible use of public funds to design and construct a world-class parking facility, and promote a high-quality standard of design that offers flexibility for future operation.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Constructed in 1970, the 1,627 space RiverCentre Ramp is in need of major reinvestment or replacement. Analysis of the area area indicates that a replacement project should provide parking for approximately 1,850 passenger vehicles, which includes an assumed new additional parking demand of up to 450± spaces for private development adjacent or on top of the ramp structure.

In addition to providing a high-quality parking experience, any new facility should have the following key features:

- Future expansion potential for non-parking use
- Logical and complementary pedestrian connections
- River Balcony connection opportunities
- Efficient event traffic / flow capacity
- Centralized parking management technology systems
- Coordinated design with Kellogg Boulevard
- State-of-the-Art durability in design
- Responsible use of funds
- Sustainable design and management practices

USER GROUPS

The facility currently has two primary user groups: event parkers and daily contract holders. Event parkers use the facility on evenings and weekends, but also during weekday events. Contract holders are typically employees in nearby buildings which represent about half to three-quarters of the typical weekday usage of the ramp.

With such a large event parker population, many users are unfamiliar with the RiverCentre, requiring a high-degree of care and skill in design to support logical and intuitive facility design for users.

Typical parking demand is as follows:

- Weekday permit / contract holders (incl. RC staff): ±900 parkers
- Weekday evening event ±1,400 parkers

Flexibility in parking areas needs to be considered since event parking demands can vary within a single day. Additionally, parking volume and sales for events can vary widely, leading to a need for staff to be able to right-size specific parking areas within the ramp to ensure that packages sold with booking events are managed well. This leads to a need for maximum flexibility of parking areas for event-specific reconfiguration.

FACILITY FEATURES

As a facility serving a wide array of user types, various amenities are required for successful operation.

PEDESTRIAN CONSIDERATIONS

For pedestrians, logical and convenient stair and elevator towers are necessary to promote vertical circulation for safety and ease of facility use. Clear, welcoming pathways with passive security measures are a necessity. Given the substantial height difference between Chestnut and Kellogg, substantial elevator capacity is vital for patron use. It is anticipated that two primary elevator cores be provided (number, size and speed of elevators should be confirmed by an elevator study during design):

- Northwest: 5-6 elevators serving both RiverCentre and the Xcel Energy Center, with connectivity to the existing skyway across Kellogg Boulevard.
- Northeast: 2-3 elevators serving the RiverCentre and downtown contract parkers.
- Southwest: 2-3 elevators supporting access from downtown to the Mississippi as recommended in the River Balcony Master Plan

A new eastern skyway could also be considered to separate pedestrian movements from Kellogg. This could be considered in conjunction with a building located atop the ramp and should be coordinated with any such design.

KELLOGG LEVEL STRUCTURE & PLAZA

To promote future flexibility, the top level of the facility is recommended to have reduced parking, so that future construction atop the ramp may be considered. Parking ingress/egress should be minimized to increase available non-parking frontage along Kellogg.

This floor may be contemplated as a transfer deck with enhanced load capacity. It would be possible to re-purpose this floor as event or public assembly space, occupied building, support and loading/trash facilities for a building atop the ramp or other non-parking uses.

LEVEL OF SERVICE AND FUNCTIONAL DESIGN

An appropriate Level of Service (LOS) should be provided so that parkers and pedestrians experience a parking environment consistent with project expectations and goals. With this in mind, it is recommended that, at minimum, a LOS ‘C’ be provided of any replacement facility.

Design should provide adequate flow capacity during morning, daytime, evening and event operation. The functional design should maximize ‘flat’ or non-ramping floors, and may consider use of non-parking (express) ramps between floors where appropriate. Additionally, two-way traffic should be considered to improve flexibility for events.

Minimum Level of Service (LOS) Design Parameters

Level of Service	C
Stall Width	8’-6”
Spaces on Flat Floor	30%
Clear Height	7’-8”
Max. Distance to Open Side	200’
Max. Walking Distance	900’
Express ramp slopes	13.3%
Express ramp lanes	10’-6”
Clearance to an Obstruction	1’-0”
Turning Bays clear between obstructions:	
One lane	15’-2”
Two lanes	25’-8”
Turning Radius (centerline of axle)	27’-0”
PARCS Lane Width	9’-4”

Source: *Parking Structures*, 3rd Ed., Walker Consultants.

Standard stalls should be sized to conform to the zoning minimum dimensions, typically 8’-6” wide x 18’-0” deep, and without use of compact stalls. Wider spaces (up to 9’-0”) may be considered in areas to improve ingress/egress of vehicles and enhanced customer perception.

Floor-to-floor heights should provide a nominal 8’-2” clearance, which is satisfactory for ADA van navigation, through the entire facility. A long-span structure should be anticipated for efficiency, but is also recommended improved perception and user comfort.

PARKING TECHNOLOGY

Per a recently conducted traffic study of the facility¹, vehicle arrival/departure rates are 64% from Kellogg Blvd and 36% from Eagle Parkway for daily users, and 60% from Kellogg Blvd and 40% from Eagle Parkway for events. These arrival/departure rates are not expected to change significantly with the new facility. Lanes and gates should be provided appropriately to support anticipated volumes.

Equipment and parking technology should be considered to support not only the RiverCentre Ramp, but also other parking ramps managed in conjunction with RiverCentre and Xcel Energy Center activities, such as the Kellogg Underground, Smith Avenue Ramp and others.

¹ *Traffic Impact Study, RiverCentre Parking Ramp, Saint Paul, Minnesota, Spack Consulting, May 12, 2017.*

SITE AND PARKING ACCESS

The site is anticipated to remain the present ramp property, located south of Exchange Street / Kellogg Boulevard, west of the Science Museum, north of Chestnut Street and east of Eagle Parkway. This constrained site presents little space for construction logistics and offers limited parking during demolition or construction.

Representation of a potential replacement parking facility footprint 450' x 190' is represented at the aerial view

Aerial View of Site



Source: Google Earth

of the site.

Access for parkers is anticipated to be provided to/from Kellogg Boulevard and Chestnut Street. Additional entry/exits may be contemplated at Exchange Street, but this would require further coordination with the City of Saint Paul.

Further coordination with the City of Saint Paul is also needed to explore opportunities for additional turning lanes and other access to/from the RiverCentre Ramp relative to Kellogg Boulevard.

Additionally, the site has little expansion potential to the south or toward the Science Museum. Use of the area west of the existing helixes may be contemplated, but would require relocation of utilities.

Event operation would continue to require substantial police / security presence exterior to the ramp, as traffic volumes from parkers attending the Xcel Energy Center and/or the RiverCentre are anticipated to overwhelm ordinary street operation surrounding the complex. However, during ordinary day times and non-event evenings, sufficient flow capability of the ramp is needed so that staff is not required to manually direct traffic and parkers can engage with ordinary street operation.

NON-PARKING BUILDING OPPORTUNITY

With its close proximity to downtown and the RiverCentre and Xcel Center, the site has substantial opportunity for development. Any parking facility should consider future non-parking building(s) that may be constructed atop or adjacent parking. Specific parameters of a development proposal are not known at this time, but accommodation through augmentation of foundations, superstructure, lateral-load systems and other future expansion provisions should be considered.

Future provisions should consider means to reduce impact on the on-going parking operation during construction, thus reducing parking stress to adjacent properties and RiverCentre users.

These provisions will provide Saint Paul and the RiverCentre with greater long-term flexibility in exploring public or private development in this vibrant downtown location.

RIVER BALCONY

Providing a publicly-accessible pedestrian connection from the riverfront to Kellogg Boulevard has been identified as a proposed project opportunity. The existing topography and built infrastructure currently presents separation between the Mississippi River and downtown. The 2017 River Balcony Master Plan² calls for reconstruction of RiverCentre parking ramp as an opportunity to integrate the River Balcony into new development. Any replacement project should consider vertical connections to link the existing vertical separation between downtown and the riverfront.

SCHEDULE AND TIMELINE

Demolition, site and utility preparation, and construction of a new facility is believed to take approximately two and a half years. During this time, parking for the entirety of the existing ramp will be unavailable. Feedback from RiverCentre staff indicates a preference to have facility demolition and construction activities be limited to two complete, consecutive NHL seasons. Partial season interruptions would be more disruptive to event operations than a full season.

² *Saint Paul River Balcony*, Adopted by Saint Paul City Council as an amendment to the Great River Passage Master Plan, June 21, 2017.