

Answers to RiverCentre Solicitation Questions

Revised 11/22/2019

How does this intersect with the county project for the riverfront?

- This is a separate project, also along the downtown Saint Paul riverfront. We anticipate proposers consider other development projects that are in the pipeline as they assess market feasibility of their proposals.

Would the ramp itself be sold to the private market or just the site above it?

- We are open to a variety of ownership approaches.

What if someone wants to buy the air rights but isn't ready to develop it yet?

- We are soliciting development proposals for implementation. The HRA would not recommend a sale of the air rights without a plan to implement a development proposal.

What is the structural capacity of the existing ramp and how are the columns spaced?

- We are amending the solicitation to include the original construction drawings for the ramp for proposers to reference.

Would the City consider a scenario where the City is responsible for financing, constructing, and delivering the 1,400 spaces and a private entity is responsible for the 450 spaces?

- That scenario would be considered.

Who is funding the ramp construction?

- That has not been determined yet. However, the City and HRA have extensive experience financing and constructing parking facilities.

Is there any subsidy available for development?

- The HRA is not offering any subsidy for this development solicitation. Projects that include affordable housing and require public sources of funding for the affordable component will be considered for feasibility.

Who owns the ramp now?

- The ramp is currently owned by the City of Saint Paul.

Who would be responsible for designing the ramp?

- That has not yet been determined.

Why would the City solicit for development now, rather than after a firm plan is in place for the ramp to be rebuilt or substantially reconstructed?

- By identifying a development project now, the ramp project and development project designs and delivery can be coordinated to ensure better outcomes for both.

Wiss, Janney, Elstner, Associates, Inc. is currently undertaking a structural analysis of the ramp. Will that analysis be made available to proposers before the solicitation is closed?

- The HRA is not anticipating releasing the results of the structural analysis prior to the due date for proposals on the development opportunity site.

What is the timing on the Kellogg Bridge project? Are designs complete for the new bridge?

- Demolition of the bridge is planned to start in the summer of 2021 and major construction will last through the 2022 construction season, with some closeout work in the summer of 2023.
- Designs are not complete for the replacement bridge.

Has the City decided if the parking ramp will be fully rebuilt or substantially reconstructed? Is the City open to recommendations on an approach from proposers?

- The City/HRA has not made a decision about a full rebuild or substantial reconstruction of the existing structure. The responses to this solicitation will inform the decision-making on that question along with parking demand needs information and analysis of the existing structure.
- The City/HRA will accept recommendations about rebuild vs. reconstruct in proposals for this development opportunity.

Has a design ever been created for the substantial reconstruction of the existing structure?

- To date, there has not been a design created for a substantial reconstruction.

Will the City/HRA be financing the new parking ramp?

- The City has not decided how the ramp will be financed. Proposals that make recommendations about financing options will be considered. The City and HRA do have significant experience financing parking structures and currently own about a third of the structured parking in downtown Saint Paul.

450 parking spaces are identified in the solicitation for private development. How does that connect to the 1,850 space ramp that is proposed?

- To support private development, the City/HRA has identified that approximately 450 spaces of an 1,850 space ramp could be available to support private development. 1,400 spaces are required to support the convention and event facilities. The actual parking need for a specific development concept may vary, and other capacities of ramp would be considered so long as the 1,400 spaces for public use are provided.

The current ramp has significant entrance and egress capacity. Should similar capacity be anticipated in the ultimate ramp?

- The current ramp is primarily an event ramp, which needs to accommodate significant arrival and departures in close spans of time for events. This capacity is described in the program statement that is attached to the solicitation and should be anticipated to be included in a final ramp design. It is possible that additional entrance and egress points may be considered, such as on Exchange street as it passes under Kellogg Boulevard.

Where should it be anticipated that trash and loading will take place in the new development?

- Depending on how development is laid out on the site there are a variety of ways that trash and loading could be handled. This could also be coordinated with the design of the Kellogg Bridge project and possible modifications to the RiverCentre loading dock exit route adjacent to the ramp underneath the Kellogg bridge.

Describe access to the ramp and site prior to the submission deadline? Do arrangements need to be made in advance?

- Visiting the ramp during operating hours is fine with no advance notice. The facility is open to the public.

How developed do plans need to be for submission to the HRA? Is there additional due diligence time after submission and award of Tentative Developer Status?

- The HRA is looking for a development concept and images such as a site plan and/or massing for this solicitation; there does not need to be a full design prepared at this stage. After a selection process and potential award of Tentative Developer Status, any selected developer will have time to refine the development concept into a full, specific project proposal and undertake due diligence activities. Once a solid development project has emerged, the HRA intends to enter into a development agreement with the developer. There may be additional time and contingencies that will take place before the closing and property transfer such as the developer securing financing. Depending on the nature of the proposed development, the private development could be constructed at the same time as the ramp, or development could follow the completion of construction at the parking ramp.

Are there any known environmental concerns in the parking facility?

- A preliminary inspection geared toward demolition and recycling of structural materials identified ACBMs, lead-based paint, and PCB containing caulk. Additional study will be required.

Can the HRA share drawings and/or information about the existing design of the RiverCentre Convention facility and the skyway?

- Those materials are not being added to the solicitation.

What are you looking for on the site?

- We are open to a variety of uses at the site. There is no identified preference by the HRA for a particular type of development. We are looking to the development market to identify what is viable in this location.

What ownership models would you consider for the ramp?

- We are open to a variety of ownership approaches.

Are there any sustainability requirements for the development project?

- There are presently no base requirements but proposers are strongly encouraged to integrate sustainability measures into their project. Depending on funding sources utilized for the project, sustainability requirements could be triggered. Information on City of Saint Paul sustainability programs is available here: <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/planning-economic-development/economic-development/sustainable-building-policy>

Are there requirements to be district energy connected?

- We encourage proposers to explore connecting to district energy for heating and cooling.

Does the city want hospitality use on the site, housing, etc.?

- We are open to a variety of uses.

Will the city support LIHTC allocations for housing?

- No LIHTC has been set aside for the site, however we would consider a project that proposed to use LIHTC as a source.

Will the city provide redevelopment or housing TIF support, and with what parameters?

- We will not consider a redevelopment TIF at this location. A housing TIF proposal would be considered, but cannot be pre-committed. Support for the use of housing TIF would depend on a number of factors, including the Citywide TIF cap of 10% of market value; number, size, and affordability levels of the proposed affordable units; priority relative to other affordable housing projects in the pipeline.

Would the city support LCDA or other pass-through grant opportunities for the site?

- We would consider supporting applications to the Met Council LCDA and other pass-through grant opportunities from the Met Council and the State of Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. More information on these programs is available here: <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/planning-economic-development/regional-and-state-grants>

Can the HRA share topographic information about the site?

- There is limited available topographic information for the site. New survey work will ultimately need to be prepared.

What groups would be considered stakeholders in the area other than the City and RiverCentre Authority?

- Housing and Redevelopment Authority of the City of Saint Paul
- Ramsey County
- Capitol River Council
- Fort Road Federation
- Friends of the Mississippi River
- Great River Passage Conservancy
- Science Museum of Minnesota
- Minnesota Wild

How much debt remains on the current ramp?

- There is no debt tied to the current ramp.

Is there enough capacity in the existing roadway network around the parking ramp to accommodate a larger parking facility?

- Based on a previous traffic study, the roadway network generally should be able to accommodate a larger RiverCentre Parking Ramp, additional private development, and the expected increases in car trips. There were some identified mitigation strategies including signal phasing modifications to the intersection of Kellogg Boulevard and West 7th Street and some design recommendations for the reconstruction of the Kellogg Bridge adjacent to the ramp, which include adding an exit from the parking ramp to Exchange Street underneath the bridge.

Can the existing ramp support new development on top with its current structural capacity?

- No, the existing ramp structure would need to be modified and augmented to support new development above.

Will the City share the maintenance history and annual structural reports for the existing ramp?

- Maintenance history and annual structural reports will not be added to the solicitation materials. Additional materials, including these types of documents, will be shared with a selected proposer from this solicitation.

Does the generator underneath the Kellogg bridge at Exchange Street serve RiverCentre or the Ramp?

Will that remain after the bridge is rebuilt?

- The generator serves the parking ramp and could be relocated if needed.

Are the transformers that serve the RiverCentre convention facility that are located on the ramp property adjacent to Exchange Street planned remain in their current location? If they need to be relocated, would the City or RiverCentre pay for the relocation of the transformers?

- The transformers are in a current easement held by Xcel energy. It may be possible to relocate the transformers, but any changes would need to be coordinated with Xcel.

How will this affect the Science Museum?

- The Science Museum of Minnesota is on the same parcel as the RiverCentre Ramp, which is owned by the City of Saint Paul. The Science Museum leases their site from the City and there are no changes anticipated to their site or lease as a result of this project. Regarding parking, the Science Museum has their own parking facility, accessible by both Kellogg Blvd and Shepard Rd.

What is the timeline after the solicitation deadline?

- Once the deadline for proposals elapses, there will be three phases for evaluation. During Phase 1, HRA and RiverCentre Convention and Visitors Authority (RCVA) staff will meet with each proposer to share information about goals and objective, and discuss their potential vision for the development opportunity. In Phase 2, HRA and RCVA staff will discuss the concepts with project stakeholders and identify additional conversations needed with the Proposers. Finally, in Phase 3, HRA staff may present a recommendation to elected officials to award Tentative Developer Status.

Will the City share the Convention Center Hotel study that was done a couple years ago?

- In response to the question/request above, the HRA will add to the solicitation materials a study conducted in 2017-18 concerning the feasibility of a headquarters hotel at the RiverCentre Ramp Opportunity Site. The HRA's inclusion of the study is merely in response to requests for the study and the study should be used for informational purposes only. Potential proposers need take specific notice that the inclusion of the study is neither intended to influence and/or narrow the scope of proposed uses/development, nor be viewed as a change in the HRA's stance on subsidy for the opportunity. As stated in the solicitation, it is the HRA's express expectation that private development rights be procured at market values and require no subsidy.