



# DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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The Saint Paul Downtown Alliance seeks the services of a consulting team with broad experience in economic development, economic impact analysis, market analysis, visioning, urban design, mobility, and community engagement for the creation of a Downtown Development Strategy for Saint Paul. The consultant will work closely with the Downtown Alliance, staff, members of the Downtown Development Strategy Steering Committee which includes representatives from a variety of economic development, and community partners.

## 2. BACKGROUND

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The Saint Paul Downtown Alliance was formed in 2018 with a focus on growing jobs and vitality in downtown Saint Paul. Through engagement and research, the Alliance articulated a long-term vision of growing the residential population to 30,000 (an increase of 20,000 and a level that would comprise 10% of the city's population), increasing the number of jobs by 20,000 workers (totaling 75,000 and comprising 50% of city-wide jobs), and increasing the number of visitors to 10,000,000 per year (an estimated increase of 20%).

Job growth has been stagnant over the past 20 years, dramatically lagging that of downtown Minneapolis and the region as a whole, leading to high vacancy rates and the degradation in quality of commercial space which has exacerbated the challenge of attracting talent and employers.

The dramatic changes brought on by COVID-19 introduce entirely new challenges to the health of downtown Saint Paul. Through our small business storefront tracking, we estimate that we have lost approximately 25% of our street level businesses and more than 60% have significantly reduced their hours and staffing. Recent shifts in work patterns due to COVID-19 including prolonged work from home policies and the acceleration of hybrid and fully remote office environments further strain downtown office demand and threaten to reduce the number of jobs in the most significant jobs center in the East Metro.

The City, Housing and Redevelopment Authority, County, and Metropolitan Council each own sites in downtown and each have proposed ambitious projects near the Mississippi River. A large portion of the St. Joseph's Hospital Campus (closed during the pandemic due to financial hardships) needs to be repurposed. Existing private economic development opportunities, transit projects and infrastructure proposals could help us become a better and stronger downtown, but **as of now, there is no unified vision, no consensus on strategy, and we have not organized our resources in a cohesive way.**

A Downtown Development Strategy would set a course of action with shared focus, goals, and priorities. Each core partner would have clarified roles, but we would all be pulling on the same rope in the same direction.

### 3. PARTNERS

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- City of Saint Paul/Saint Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority
- Ramsey County Housing and Redevelopment Authority
- Saint Paul Port Authority
- Saint Paul Area Chamber (of Commerce)
- Saint Paul Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA)
- Visit Saint Paul (Convention and Visitor's Bureau)
- Capitol River Council (Residents' Organization)
- Knight Foundation
- Metropolitan Council
- Saint Paul Downtown Alliance (and key private corporations who are members)
- Possibly others

### 4. DELIVERABLES

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- Meetings, focus groups, electronic input, workshops, and/or other engagement with internal and external stakeholders
- An implementable 5 year development strategy toward a downtown with dramatically increased density, vitality, and desirability, beginning with a prioritization of 3 to 5 projects and/or initiatives based on stakeholder input, economic impact analysis (job creation, tax base, etc.), market analysis (as applicable)
- Clear outline of partner roles and accountability within their respective mission
- Guidance for implementation through the operating plans of each partner institution.

## 5. SCOPE

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- Kickoff meeting with steering committee to review and make any final adjustments to the scope and timeline
- Collect and review all relevant downtown planning work over the past 20 years
- Conduct an internal and external scan to assess current landscape and trends
- Solicit input through a variety of methods – in-person, electronic or other
- Identify current conditions and project market demand for office, institutional, commercial, retail, and housing development within the project area.
- Perform an economic impact analysis (job creation, tax base, etc.), market analysis (as applicable), and other necessary analysis on potential projects and/or initiatives to inform a recommendation on the prioritization of those projects and/or initiatives.
- Collect, summarize, and present data and other information collected through the process (including any massing, modeling, data visualization and/or illustrations).
- Produce a Downtown Development Strategy document with an executable 3–5-year implementation plan, outlining the roles and responsibilities of each partner.

## 6. ASSUMPTIONS

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The Downtown Development Strategy will be created in a manner which:

- Builds on the planning work previously completed by partner institutions
- Uses the Steering Committee in an advisory capacity, soliciting direction for themes, bringing strategy elements to them for review and feedback
- Builds on the best practices of downtowns from across North America
- Creates and sustains buy-in for a strategy that will be implemented over a 3-5 year period through organizational operational plans
- Provides direction, clarity and motivation for partner institutions, developers and investors

## 7. SUBMISSION DEADLINE & PROPOSED TIMELINE

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- Friday, November 23 - Electronic proposals due by 4:00 pm
- Week of December 5 - Steering Committee interviews selected consultant finalists virtually.
- Week of December 12 - Steering Committee notifies consultant(s) of selection.
- Week of December 23 - Finalize consultant(s) contract and begin contract(s).

## 8. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

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Proposals should demonstrate a commitment to providing a high level of service, experience, passion and enthusiasm for the project and provide sufficient detail to enable the Steering Committee to thoroughly evaluate and compare it with other proposals. Proposals should include the following components:

1. Letter of interest
2. Evidence of ability to execute the outlined scope, including past experience with similar projects
3. List of proposed team members, including biographies, billing rates and level of participation in the account
4. Proposed work plan and timeline. Include an estimated start date, with a detailed phasing timeline and key task list, estimated completion time of each task with the target completion date
5. Itemized, not-to-exceed cost breakdown, including total travel and material expenses as separate line items and breakouts by consultant. The Saint Paul Downtown Alliance staff will work with the selected firm to minimize time and expense related to data collection, scheduling meetings, public engagement opportunities, etc. Please also include estimated staff hours and cost in relation to objectives and methodology for project. Consultants are encouraged to provide as much detail and breakdown of hours and costs as possible for the various scope items.
6. References

## 9. EVALUATION

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### Selection Process

1. The Steering Committee will serve as the Selection Committee and review the submitted proposals based on evaluation criteria as identified below.
2. Each proposal submitted within the deadline will be reviewed to ensure all required materials have been submitted according to the guidelines set forth in this RFP.
3. The qualifications of each consultant and all submitted materials will be evaluated for compliance with the requirements and conditions contained in this RFP.
4. After the Steering Committee completes its evaluation, finalists will be selected to take part in an interview process. This interview process will include a brief virtual presentation by the consultant and a question-and-answer session led by the Steering Committee.

### Evaluation Criteria

- Proposed approach and scope of work, understanding of project and deliverables
- Project team qualifications, related experience
- Proposed workplan and timeline (including engagement strategies and timeframe, and capacity to successfully execute the project as outlined)
- Proposed fees and costs
- Demonstrated familiarity with national trends and local context
- Commitment to an inclusive outreach and engagement process
- Overall fit and approach as a partner

All proposals submitted will become the property of the Saint Paul Downtown Alliance. All candidates will be notified of status, regardless of the outcome. The Steering Committee will consider applicants based on qualifications and without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, veteran status, disability, and any other legally protected status. The Downtown Alliance and partners reserve the right to not move forward with hiring any consultant for any reason.

## Steering Committee

- Christophe Beck (co-chair), Ecolab
- Chris Hilger (co-chair), Securian Financial
- Mayor Melvin Carter, City of Saint Paul
- Trista Matascastillo, Ramsey County Board of Commissioners
- Todd Hurley, Saint Paul Port Authority
- B Kyle, Saint Paul Area Chamber
- Tina Gassman, Saint Paul Building Owners and Managers Association
- Charlie Zelle, Metropolitan Council
- Terry Mattson, Visit Saint Paul
- Jon Fure, Capitol River Council
- Rebecca Noecker, Saint Paul City Council
- Jai Winston, Knight Foundation

## Staff Support

- Joe Spencer, Saint Paul Downtown Alliance
- Emma Burns, Saint Paul Downtown Alliance
- Nicolle Goodman, Planning and Economic Development, City of Saint Paul
- Kari Collins, Community and Economic Development Director, Ramsey County

**Proposals are due November 23, 2022 by 4:00 pm. Any proposal received after the deadline will not be considered.** Proposals should be submitted via email to:

Emma Burns  
Saint Paul Downtown Alliance  
[emma.burns@stpdowntownalliance.org](mailto:emma.burns@stpdowntownalliance.org)