

Center Cities Competitiveness Project

Action Plan

The Minneapolis Saint Paul Economic Development Action Strategy Project was launched by a coalition of regional partners (the Coalition) (– or whatever we choose to call ourselves – update this language throughout) to increase job creation and capital investment in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, including special attention to Minneapolis’s Northside and Northeast neighborhoods and Saint Paul’s East Side and Midway neighborhoods (“target geographies”). Coalition members include the two cities, GREATER MSP, Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, the Saint Paul Port Authority, the Minneapolis and Saint Paul Chambers of Commerce, MN Philanthropy Partners, and the McKnight Foundation. The Coalition worked with a consultant, TIP Strategies, to provide data and best practice research to inform this Action Plan, which will build on the solid foundation of the existing work of Coalition members.

The Action Plan will evolve over time. Because the Working Group acknowledges it may take five years of *new work* to realize *real* change, this Action Plan contemplates and prioritizes work over the first XX months. The focus is on growth industries in Minneapolis and Saint Paul; includes targeted approaches to maximize the development potential in both cities that can serve as models for urban economic development for other parts of the region; and defines roles and actions of Working Team members.

The Coalition is firmly committed to working together in new and innovative ways to achieve better jobs and capital investment outcomes in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. The Work detailed below includes both transactional and transformational tactics organized around four key goals: Market-Ready Sites; Build the Brand; BR&E; Close More Deals.

The Coalition will also determine who will lead each goal and/or strategy, and devise an accountability mechanism to ensure progress, effective and mutual problem solving, and critical information sharing.

(Each of the strategies below could be flushed out by lead: tasks; needed resources; timeline)

Center Cities Draft Goals
(presented in McKnight Foundation Proposal)

Goal 1: Build the Brand to increase private sector awareness, and consideration, of investment opportunities in Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

- a. Identify unique assets of center cities and target geographies; establish clear messages.
- b. Develop easy-to-use marketing/communication tool box to target key audiences, e.g., brokers, site selectors, young talent, etc.
- c. Conduct familiarization tours
- d. Capture testimonials from respected leaders about doing business in the center cities; secure them as on-call ambassadors to communicate the brand.
- e. Ensure visits by key coalition members to strategic national and international markets.

Goal 2: Business Retention & Expansion Visits to create source of real-time, continual insight to challenges and opportunities for growth by existing businesses; responsive strategic action to retain businesses and assist with expansion.

- a. Visit growing companies, particularly in strong industry clusters, anchor institutions, and target geographies; monitor leadership change, investments, employment changes, etc.
- b. Develop, and adhere to, follow-up process to visits noted above (e.g., data analysis, action steps, etc.) to ensure retention and assist with potential expansion.
- c. Develop process to connect workforce demand with supply, e.g., MSP Win, WIBs, Real Time Talent, etc.
- d. Visit start-ups to ensure they have the support necessary to grow their companies and retain their center city location.
- e. Develop a deep understanding of supply chains for existing industry clusters, and subsequently target vendors for recruitment.

Goal 3: Create Market-Ready Sites to increase in availability of market-ready sites for brokers, site selectors, and businesses.

- a. Create an accurate inventory of existing, and create new, market-ready sites
- b. Maximize job creation and capital investment potential of strategic sites (e.g., Ford; Prospect North; sites along Green Line).
- c. Create joint Minneapolis-Saint Paul site certification system.
- d. Identify chronically vacant buildings and move to either demolish or invest to make marketable.
- e. Support place-making and neighborhood stabilization efforts to ensure target markets have amenities attractive to potential investors.
- f. Conduct joint advocacy for financial and other land redevelopment programs at both the state and local levels

Goal 4: Close More Deals to increase tax base, job opportunities, and resident and business confidence in target geographies. Increased local, national, and global awareness of successes and opportunities.

- a. Develop and maintain a list of potential, active, and completed deals; track public sector support, private sector investment, and job creation.
 - b. Convene Economic Development staff from center cities to devise joint strategies to address common challenges and opportunities
 - c. Develop a common definition of 'incentive;' create complete list of available 'incentives;' and ensure the value of, and process to access, incentives are clearly articulated to key audiences.
 - d. Cultivate and maintain meaningful relationships with brokers and site selectors, ensuring regular communication about investment opportunities and available support.
 - e. Ensure elected officials (city council, mayors) are strong partners for business clients up to, during, and after the deal-closing process.
 - f. Work with GREATER MSP Business Investment team to identify 'speed bumps' along the path to closing deals.
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POSITION TITLE

Center Cities Strategy Director

SUMMARY

The Center Cities Strategy Director will work with a coalition of regional partners to support the implementation of the Center Cities Action Strategy and related initiatives. The coalition includes the Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, the Minneapolis and Saint Paul Regional Chambers of Commerce, the Saint Paul Port Authority, GREATER MSP, Minnesota Philanthropy Partners, and the McKnight Foundation. The director will support the coalition in meeting their current and long-range goals through the diligent focus on accelerating investment and job creation in Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

PRIMARY DUTIED

- Nurture strong, constructive relationships with coalition members as well as major employers, anchor institutions, philanthropic organizations, nonprofit organizations, and higher education institutions.
- Collaborate with the coalition to establish and implement the Center Cities Action Strategy.
- Develop, implement, and maintain an effective structure and system to support the coalition and its work to achieve the goals of the action strategy.
- Facilitate communication and information sharing across the coalition.
- Ensure coalition members are working together towards the same goals.
- Serve as a critical connector between initiatives in the urban core.
- Move forward economic development projects and initiatives as defined by the coalition and the action strategy.
- Work with investors, real estate brokers, site selectors, and developers to enhance their understanding of the competitive positioning of the center cities and related investment opportunities.
- Serve as a point of contact for prospects looking for a center city location.
- Bring together necessary stakeholders to move center city deals and projects forward.
- Work with coalition to develop coalition member accountability metrics, and report on implementation progress and other, pre-determined sets of metrics.

EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

The ideal candidate will be a charismatic leader with strong communications skills who possesses thorough knowledge of economic development. The candidate will be responsible for creating a collaborative work environment that encourages clear and open communication. He/she should demonstrate a proven and quantifiable track record in the planning, implementation, and completion of complex economic and community development projects, business negotiations, and organizational management. Experience may come from a variety of backgrounds such as: serving as program director within a progressive and comparably-sized economic development-focused organization or related significant business association. Significant experience leading large numbers of stakeholders or partners is strongly desired.

A combination of both private and government sector work experience is preferred. The candidate should have experience collaborating with established public sector delivery systems and private sector resources. The candidate must have experience in economic development that has led to measurable results in terms of private sector investment, job creation, and community improvements. A Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Financing, Urban Planning, Economics, Public Policy or other closely related field and at least five years of related experience is required. A Master's degree in Business Administration, Finance, Public Administration, Urban Planning or Architecture is preferred.

INQUIRIES

Send cover letter and resumes to: **[INSERT CONTACT INFORMATION]**
