

# BUILDING EQUITY AND ECONOMICS FOR A RESILIENT TOWERSIDE

## RESILIENT COMMUNITIES PROJECT

### About the Partner

Towerside Innovation District (Towerside) is 370 acres located in the heart of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Located between the University of Minnesota and Highway 280, Towerside is a former industrial site designated “Innovation District” by Minneapolis and St. Paul as a catalyst for economic vitality, and is in early stages of district-wide redevelopment. Towerside is both a geography and an organization; the geography is guided by a civic 501(c)(3) organization. Importantly, Towerside sits on Dakota homeland.



### Project Description

The community-born vision for Towerside focuses on equity, economics, and environment. Towerside aims to concentrate innovation, entrepreneurship, wealth creation, multi-generational / multi-racial / multi-ethnic housing, commercial activity, climate responsiveness, arts and culture, a lively public realm, and healthy living within a community that is transit-rich, green, tech-savvy, walkable, rich with learning and job training opportunities, thriving, and joyful.

In addition, Towerside strives to leverage innovation, technology, cross-sector partnerships, stakeholder engagement, and creative funding to meet the needs of future residents, employers, educators, students, and visitors in the district, while serving as a replicable model of a resilient community.

The Towerside Innovation District is an emerging concept, new to the Twin Cities as a neighborhood and economic model. Unlike innovation districts around the world, Towerside lacks a sustaining funder (a research university, corporation, or municipality) to seed, manage, and sustain innovation. Because Towerside is not anchored by a specific industry sector and lacks a strong government partner, Towerside has been limited in initiating and supporting large societal innovations—specifically around livability, equity, safety, health, economic mobility, digital/tech infrastructure.

This project seeks to answer key questions around district assets and how Towerside can align with potential industry and partners’ goals to guide future strategic planning and attract further investment.

## Key Issues, Questions, and Ideas to Explore

1. What can Towerside learn from other successful innovation districts in the country in terms of how they secured anchor industries, institutional partners, and funding? How have successful innovation districts engaged community and stakeholders?
2. What types of industry are best suited to anchor and fund Towerside to support livability, equity, economic vibrancy, digital/tech infrastructure and environmental sustainability?
3. What assets (built, utilities, mobility, digital and tech) can Towerside offer these industries? What policy, ordinance, or infrastructure changes are needed to accommodate these industries?
4. What key elements does the Towerside vision need to include and focus on, to align with and be of value to the City of Minneapolis and City of Saint Paul (achieving their) 2040 plans? In addition, in what ways can Towerside help the University of Minnesota achieve its strategic plan?

## How Student Work Will Be Used to Build Community Resilience

- To help create an actionable strategic plan that integrates equity and economics
- To build “proof of concept” to attract further investment

## Potential Community Partners or Stakeholders

- University of Minnesota
  - Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC)
  - Minnesota Design Center
- City of Minneapolis and Saint Paul local officials
- Prospect Park and St. Anthony residents
- Smart North
- Wall Companies
- Mississippi Watershed Management Organization
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

## Existing Plans & Reports

- Towerside Key Stakeholder Report
- Towerside Design Guidelines
- District maps and photos

### UofM RCP Contact

Sarah Tschida, Coordinator  
University of Minnesota  
tschi066@umn.edu, 612.625.6550

### Project Lead

Sabina Saksena, Board Director  
Towerside Innovation District  
Sabina.Saksena@cytilife.com, 609.433.7455



## Resilient Communities Project

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