



Recycle food scraps with **organics recycling**



No extra cost!

[Learn how to participate](#)



[NEWS](#)

[FOCUS](#)

[VOICES](#)

[MORE](#)

News



Inside the U.S. Bank Stadium. Photo by Sarah McKenzie

Inside the U.S. Bank Stadium

By **SARAH MCKENZIE**

JULY 12, 2016

UPDATED: JULY 13, 2016 - 3:04 PM

The rise of East Town

From some vantage points, the new U.S. Bank Stadium looks like a massive ship that has docked downtown.

From the front, its glass doors — the largest operable doors in the world — reflect the city's skyline.

Inside, the stadium is designed to feel like you're outside with natural light pouring through the transparent roof and gigantic glass doors.

At 1.75 million square feet, it's twice the size of the Metrodome, the Vikings' former home. The \$1.1 billion project — the largest construction project in state history — has also been one of the most controversial with many critical of the financing plan.

The Vikings have pledged to pay for 53 percent of the stadium (\$577 million) through private financing and seat licenses. The State of Minnesota is contributing \$348 million and the City of Minneapolis \$150 million. The city is financing its portion by issuing bonds that will be repaid by tapping a portion of Convention Center taxes.



The new stadium reflects the city's skyline. Photo by Sarah McKenzie

The stadium's food service provider Aramark and SMG, the stadium operator, are contributing the remaining \$12 million.

The Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority (MSFA), a local governmental unit of the state, owns and operates the stadium. A grand opening celebration for the venue will be held Saturday, July 23 and Sunday, July 24, following an official ceremony and ribbon-cutting event on July 22.

Free tickets are required to tour the stadium for the opening weekend. Outdoor events planned for the weekend include family activities on the plaza, a 3D chalk art installation, live music, movies in the new Commons park and giant-sized Connect Four and Jenga games.

The first event at the stadium is the 2016 International Champions Cup soccer match Aug. 3 featuring AC Milan v. Chelsea FC. The Vikings will play their first game in their new home Aug. 28 — a preseason contest against San Diego.

U.S. Bank Stadium will also host the Super Bowl in 2018 and the NCAA Men's Final Four in 2019.

The new stadium is also opening in a dramatically different neighborhood than the one that used to surround the Metrodome. East Town, as the area is now called, boasts the Commons park, the new Wells Fargo towers, new housing development and other major construction projects promising to further revitalize the area that used to be defined by an abundance of surface parking lots.

Michele Kelm-Helgen, chair of the MSFA, said she's thrilled to see all of the new development surrounding the stadium. She credited former Mayor R.T. Rybak with pushing for Wells Fargo to build their headquarters near the stadium.

"I can't tell you how important it is to me that before our building even opens, already under construction in this area is \$1.2 billion in private economic development," she said.

A dramatic design

The stadium, designed by Dallas-based HKS Architects, has a unique asymmetrical design that is nearly 30 stories tall at its highest point and features an angular roof

designed to shed snow in the winter.

It seats 66,200, but is expandable up to 70,000. There are 131 suites and 8,200 club seats, including field-level suites. The concourses that wrap around the field are also wider than they were in the Dome.

The transparent roof is made up of ETFE panels, which let in natural light and have a 30- to 50-year life expectancy, according to a stadium fact sheet. The stadium will also be the first in the NFL built with LED lighting.

Two massive HD video boards also flank the field and another 2,000 HD flat screen TVs are spread throughout the building.



One of the stadium's massive video boards. Photo by Sarah McKenzie

The exterior of the building also features zinc metal panels.

Bird advocates have been very critical of the project for failing to have bird-safe glass. Stadium planners are expected to launch a study with the University of Minnesota to determine if the building needs special film added to the windows to protect migratory

birds.

The five large glass doors at the stadium's entrance are perhaps the most unique design element. The doors — 95-feet high at their tallest point — take between five and eight minutes to open. They swing out to a nearly 3-acre plaza.

Kelm-Helgen said stadium planners were very “intentional” about making sure the building would be very different from the Metrodome.

“The old Dome was an unattractive building. It kind of sat like a spaceship — you couldn't see in, you couldn't see out,” she said. “It was surrounded by parking lots and fences. It was never connected to the neighborhood. This building is an amazing iconic architecture piece in and of itself that really brings that whole area of town to life. It is totally connected by bike trails, sidewalks.”

Construction took two and a half years and more than 8,000 workers completed more than 4 million hours on the project, according to the MSFA. The project was finished six weeks ahead of schedule.

John Wood, senior vice president at Mortenson Construction, the contractor for the project, called the building the “premier stadium in the NFL.”

“The stadium stands as a testament to the dedication, expertise and hard work of so many in the local construction industry,” Wood said.

The stadium has also exceeded goals set for equity. The minority workforce goal was 32 percent and the project reached 36 percent participation, said Jennifer Hathaway, director of communications for the MSFA. The women workforce goal was 6 percent and the project reached 9 percent.

“These numbers when they were originally laid out, no one had ever come close to hitting these kind of numbers on the project,” Kelm-Helgen said. “We were very intentional when we started this program to have a process in place to help with outreach, recruitment and training should any of the subcontractors not have the workers to meet the goals.”

Stadium planners worked with Summit Academy on training and outreach to ensure a diverse workforce.

“It just became the culture that it was not an option not to meet the goals and everybody really came through,” Kelm-Helgen said. “We not only met the goals, we far exceeded the goals.”

Other stadium attractions

U.S. Bank Stadium has also announced an impressive culinary roster, including noted chefs Andrew Zimmern and Gavin Kaysen of the North Loop’s Spoon and Stable.

Downtown’s Ike’s Food and Cocktails and Revival, a popular Kingfield restaurant, will also be part of the dining program.

Aramark is the stadium’s exclusive hospitality and dining services provider.

Vikings owner and president Mark Wilf said he’s excited to see local flavors be featured.

“The dining experience is a crucial component of our commitment to providing a memorable game day, and these prominent culinary partners, along with Aramark’s robust menu and the innovative ways in which we serve our fans, will significantly enhance the hospitality experience during Vikings games,” he said.

Zimmern and Kaysen are collaborating on AZC Hoagies for the stadium, which will feature Italian meatball, sausage, beef and roast pork sandwiches, along with bomboloni (Italian donuts.) Zimmern’s other location, AZC Rotisserie, will feature a wide variety of sandwiches.

“I grew up watching the Vikings and to think I am now able to have a hand in creating an incredible experience for the fans is a dream come true,” Kaysen said.

Ike’s Food & Cocktails will be serving up its famous Bloody Marys and steak sandwiches and Revival will be featuring its popular fried chicken sandwiches.

The stadium will also have a craft beer program spotlighting offerings from the Northeast Brewers and Distillers Association. Featured breweries will include Fair State Brewing Cooperative, NorthGate Brewing, Insight Brewery, Sociable Cider Werks, Bauhaus Brew Labs and 56 Brewing.

As for art, the Vikings and MSFA have selected 34 local artists to commission artwork for the stadium's collection.

Outside on the plaza in front of the stadium, Medtronic has contributing funding for a new art sculpture called The Horn. The sculpture design will have two flowing ribbons making the shape of a Gjallarhorn — a Vikings symbol that is a nod to Nordic mythology.

Once completed, the sculpture will be 107 feet long, 25 feet high and 30 feet wide. It will feature mirror finish stainless steel and painted metal panels. At night, it will be lit with LED lighting.

>>

By the numbers: U.S. Bank Stadium

Size: 1.75 million square feet (twice the size of the Metrodome)

Construction cost: \$1.1 billion

Seats: 66,200 (expandable up to 70,000)

High-definition TVs: 2,000

Suites: 131

Highest point: 30 stories tall

Upcoming events

- U.S. Bank Stadium Open House: Saturday, July 23, 9 a.m.–6 p.m. & Sunday, July 24, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. (Free tickets are required to tour inside the stadium.) There will be family-friendly activities on the plaza, a 3D chalk installation, live music and much more. For more information, go to usbankstadium.com
- International Champions Cup: Wednesday, Aug. 3, 8 p.m. The first major event at the stadium will be a soccer match featuring AC Milan vs. Chelsea FC.
- Luke Bryan: Kill the Lights Tour, Friday, Aug. 19.
- Metallica: Saturday, Aug. 20.

- Vikings first preseason game: Sunday, Aug. 28

Stadium tours

The stadium will be offering 90-minute guided tours of the building. Tickets range \$7-\$19 (children under 5 can tour for free.) To purchase tickets and schedule information, go to usbankstadium.com/tours

More in **News**



An East Town evangelist



Boosters want to build buzz for the Commons



Stadium construction ahead of schedule

BROWSE EAST TOWN, U.S. BANK STADIUM



Start the discussion...

Be the first to comment.

ALSO ON THE JOURNAL

Police should carry insurance

1 comment • 2 months ago •

Buster — Long overdue.

Reconstruction work begins on Nicollet Mall

1 comment • a month ago •

Peter Dyer — Hopefully this phase will stop the loss of a driving lane on every east/west artery through downtown. ...

HCMC to open North Loop clinic, pharmacy

1 comment • 3 months ago •

Paul Prins — This is a huge deal. It was an source of amazement to me that with thousands of residents ...

Levy-Pounds calls for Park Board president's resignation following ...

1 comment • 2 months ago •

Buster — Levy-Pounds is a self-promoting professional agitator. My family has lived in North ...

✉ Subscribe

Ⓓ Add Disqus to your site Add Disqus Add

🔒 Privacy



Most Read

1 ↗ development rises in East Town



2



Inside the U.S. Bank Stadium

3



Boosters want to build buzz for the Commons

4



East is the new black

5



Tour through East Town's new development

NEWS

FOCUS

VOICES

MORE

Search ...

Search

About Us

Contact Us

Community Calendar

Contribute

Find A Copy

Careers

Advertise

© Minnesota Premier Publications

Terms of Use

Privacy Policy

Sign In