

Commercial Real Estate

St. David's Center to transform ex-YWCA facility in downtown Minneapolis (rendering)



St. David's Center is building out its facility at the former YWCA Minneapolis location along Nicollet Mall in downtown Minneapolis.



By [Caitlin Anderson](#) – Senior Reporter, Minneapolis / St. Paul Business Journal
Nov 14, 2024 **Updated** Nov 14, 2024 2:41pm CST

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The nonprofit that's taken over the former YWCA Minneapolis' Nicollet Mall location has begun construction on the high-profile facility.

Minnetonka-based St. David's Center for Child and Family Development [announced earlier this year](#) its plan to purchase the 124,000-square-foot facility at 1130 Nicollet Mall. The nonprofit is now working on the first phase of its buildout, aiming to complete construction by the end of 2026.

Being able to turn the underutilized fitness center into a “state-of-the-art assessment, early education and intervention center right in the urban core ... was just an opportunity we couldn't pass up for the sake of our community,” CEO Julie Sjordal said in an interview. The project is expected to cost \$30 million, based on initial estimates.

YWCA Minneapolis announced last year that it was shutting down its Uptown and downtown locations [due to shifting priorities](#). As part of the deal to purchase the downtown building, St. David's Center will lease back to YWCA Minneapolis about 11,000 square feet of space for its Early Children Education center. St. David's purchased the property, which will be its administrative headquarters, for just over \$4 million in July.

St. David's Center currently serves 6,500 children, parents and adults with special needs. The new facility will allow the nonprofit to serve an additional 2,000 children, Sjordal said.

The first phase of the project includes consolidating most of the YWCA programming onto the second level of the building and adding a partition in the gym, according to Hans Schmidt of St. Paul-based Pope Design Group, the architect on the project.

The second phase involves breaking up open former fitness spaces on the main level for treatment rooms and creating a new entry on 12th Street with a drop-off-only zone, intended to provide safer access to the building for people coming to the facility, Schmidt said.

The final phase includes filling in what was space for the pool and adding classrooms and treatment spaces. The nonprofit also plans to add administrative offices, staff amenity spaces and community services, like a teaching kitchen and resource center, on the lower level.

St. David's also proposes to add a small pool to the building for aquatic therapy, Schmidt said.

The building is recognizable for its brutalist-style concrete exterior, which the architects wanted to still be visible but with a touch of warmth, Schmidt said. The result is an over-cladding that “allows lights to dance and play for users and passerby,” he said.

"It's always been a building that served the community, but I love the idea of making it even more accessible," said Amy Maldonado, also of Pope.

St. Paul-based McGough Construction is the general contractor on the project.