



Capitol Region Watershed District

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Minnesota's First High School, Saint Paul Central High, Transforms its Campus by Adding Beauty and Functionality to Protect the Mississippi River

Central celebrates 150 years by making major improvements

Saint Paul, MN

Please join Central High School staff, students, parents, friends, and partners on September 6 at 8:30 am for a special ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the schools' 150th anniversary. Special guests including Lieutenant Governor Smith, Mayor Coleman, Council Members Tolbert and Thao, Melvin Carter III, Principal Mackbee, Interim Superintendent Thein and Capitol Region Watershed District Administrator Mark Doneux will be in attendance.

Construction recently completed at Saint Paul Central High School prepares the state's oldest high school for a more sustainable future, incorporating stormwater treatment features such as rain gardens, tree trenches, an underground filtration system and porous pavers near the front plaza. In addition to treating runoff from the plaza these features will capture and filter runoff from a portion of the roof and parking lot before it flows into the storm drains in the street and eventually the Mississippi River. Together, the projects will prevent more than 1.4 million gallons of polluted stormwater from reaching the river each year. The project also includes the installation of monitoring equipment so students at Central will learn more about how urban stormwater monitoring programs work.

"This project is a great example of how we can adapt stormwater treatment plans for sites with limited space and offer additional benefits such as improving aesthetics and providing educational opportunities."

-Nate Zwonitzer, Water Resource Project Manager at Capitol Region Watershed District

"I'm excited about the opportunity for my students to access the subsurface diffusion tanks to collect water samples and generate "citizen data"! Students will gather and evaluate water quality data with tools that water quality professionals and researchers use. This project empowers my students to link their community and their choices to national issues such as water quality, shortages, and climate change."

- Lisa Houdek, Environmental Science Teachers at Central High School

Minnesota's oldest high school has plenty to celebrate: countless notable alumni who inspire students to reach for their dreams, a deep tradition of academic excellence that challenges all learners, proud and competitive athletic programs, and a busy campus that is in constant use by community groups every year.

Central High School has been located in four different sites since it was founded in 1866. The school opened in the current location on the corner of Marshall Avenue and Lexington Parkway in 1912. During the 1970s and 1980s the building was reconstructed to its current appearance. However, since 2011, students, parents, staff and community members have been working to improve the attractiveness of this Saint Paul landmark.

"The Transforming Central project comes at an exciting time in the history of Central High School. As we celebrate 150 years of transforming young people through education, sports, and the arts, we look forward to a more inviting and welcoming entrance for our students - one that reflects pride in the impact of our school on the whole community."

-Mary Mackbee, Central High School Principal

As part of this process, a group called Transforming Central was formed. It is a collaborative group of parents, neighbors and staff working together to improve the school.

Our mission is to protect, manage and improve the water resources of Capitol Region Watershed District.



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"This project started simply with improving existing plantings and cleaning up the grounds around the school. From the beginning, there was the belief that the students of this amazing school deserved a beautiful place to arrive at each day to learn - a healthier space, offering students a sense of dignity and pride in their school. The project grew into one including improved student experiences and learning, environmental improvement, and community partnership and engagement."

- Julie Marckel, Parent on Transforming Central

Capitol Region Watershed District awarded Central High School with grant funds totaling \$252,350 to assist with the design and installation of the stormwater treatment practices. The funds also serve as a match to a Clean Water Fund grant (from the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment) of \$175,000 through the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. To find out more about the project, visit the Transforming Central website: <http://central.spps.org/transformingcentral>