LionCity II, Brussels
50-56 RUE OSSEGHEM 1080 Molenbeek Saint Jean

The site known as LionCity II, is located in the Brussels commune of Molenbeek-Saint-Jean, in the heart of the Osseghem district. It is part of the Brussels Region’s Urban Revitalisation Zone, which includes the most vulnerable neighbourhoods where public investment is being stepped up. It borders the Gare de l’Ouest site, a vast 13-hectare railway brownfield that is part of the Master Development Plan and an Urban Renewal Contract aimed at its development. The proximity of the two sites of Gare de l’Ouest and LionCity II, and the planned links between them should be stressed (in particular the pedestrian link from LionCity II to the Gare de l’Ouest site via the Place Beekkant which is currently being refurbished. The LionCity II site is located in an area with excellent public transport links. More specifically, the site was occupied until 2019 and for almost 150 years by the Ahold-Delhaize group, known for developing and operating supermarkets in Belgium. The site is part of a complex covering around 4.4 hectares acquired by citydev.brussels and comprising two distinct zones (LionCity I and LionCity II). The project aims to redevelop the LionCity II area with a mixed-use programme that is exemplary in terms of sustainability and includes the future Cité du Cirque.

Plot area:
The site to be developed comprises a building ("l’Imprimerie/printing works" ± 3,188 m²) and a car park (±3,123 m²) on a 6,243 m² plot.

Expected Land Use:
Design, develop and partially finance a mixed programme (+ 6,500 m² floors) and open spaces comprising:
- housing (of which 30% to 50% accessible at affordable prices);
- equipment (minimum for the Cité du Cirque/UP Circus & Performing Arts: 1,100 m² for a stage infrastructure and minimum 2,500 m² for a training area);
- shops or other facilities aiming to stimulate circular economy and green services;
- Open spaces that encourage soft mobility and green spaces (private and public, including the pedestrian walkway to Beekkant metro station).

Site Ownership:
citydev.brussels has acquired the entire LionCity II site in March 2020

Type of Property transfer intended:
- citydev.brussels wishes to retain ownership of the land in general and the buildings for the stage infrastructure part of the circus facilities.
- Housing land and shops or others could be transferred under the emphyteusis regime. Further information will be provided in phase II of the competition. The open spaces will be returned to the Commune free of charge.

Deadline for the submission of the Expression of Interest:
5 September 2024 at 14:00 CET
Presentation of the site and development expectations

This project focuses on the so-called LionCity II area (the LionCity I area is already the subject of a separate contract for mixed-use development), with a total plot area of approximately 6,243 m² (plot number: 21526D0191/00Y000). It currently comprises a 3,188 m² building (a former printing works consisting of a ground floor and part of an upper floor) and a 3,123 m² car park, both of which are temporarily occupied by the non-profit association UP Circus & Performing Arts under an agreement. UP Circus & Performing Arts organises circus training and performance activities.

The site extends deep into the block and adjoins the plot of land owned by the social landlord, Logement Molenbeekois, which is also considering the demolition-reconstruction of two housing towers known as the "Machtens Towers".

Figure 1: aerial view of LionCity I and II

Figure 2: Plan view of LionCity II
This prospect opens up the possibility of eventually reconfiguring a large part of the block, including new social housing on the adjacent plot, as well as the creation of a pedestrian/cycle path along the former railway line between Beekkant metro station and the LionCity I area. The Region is therefore considering a large-scale future vision for the whole block. The redevelopment of the citydev.brussels properties will incorporate the start of this pedestrian-cyclist passageway, which will then continue through the adjacent site as far as Place Beekkant.

The Brussels Government commissioned citydev.brussels and perspective.brussels to carry out an exploratory urban planning study, published in December 2020 (see attached Government decision), on the 2 LionCity I & II zones in order to define the programming and guidelines for the development of the site. The results of the exploratory study led to the Regional Government’s approval in 2020 of a series of planning principles to be implemented during the development of the two zones. These principles are summarised in the appendix to this document.

Following the temporary occupation of the LionCity II site and the results of the studies carried out, citydev.brussels wishes to perpetuate the activities of UP Circus & Performing Arts on the site, as the non-profit association’s project meets all the criteria set out in the urban planning analysis by activating the area and mobilising the connection between Beekkant station and the site.

Consideration is already being given to building a stage infrastructure on part of the car park along rue Osseghem, with a floor area of over 1,100 m², to complement the current temporary facilities. This infrastructure project is a real opportunity to create a performance venue in a municipality that has no dedicated infrastructure of this type.

In this context, a collaboration between citydev.brussels and Beliris has been initiated on the public side, with Beliris providing part of the funding for the project. A protocol is currently being drawn up between these two stakeholders and should be signed in the second half of 2024. The overall programme for LionCity II will have to take into account the specifications currently being defined and the collaboration already initiated with Beliris.

In addition to the part devoted to the stage infrastructure (1,100 m²), the overall part of the mixed programme includes (≈ 6,500 m² floor area):
- housing (of which 30% to 50% accessible at affordable prices);
- equipment (relocation of the necessary surface areas (min. 2,500 m²) for the Circus training area, which will complement the 1,100 m² stage infrastructure - the training area will be able to create links with the stage infrastructure in order to reinforce the Circus City effect (spatial, functional, visual connections, mutualisation);
- shops or other facilities aimed at stimulating the circular economy and green services;
- Open spaces that encourage soft mobility and green spaces (private and public, including the pedestrian walkway to Beekkant metro station).

No public funding is planned at this stage for the remainder of the programme (excluding funding for the stage infrastructure).

Particular attention will need to be paid to activating the ground floors to improve conviviality and social control, as well as ensuring the link to be created between the stage infrastructure and the training zone, which together will make up the Cité du Cirque.
Specific planning rules and regulations

The plot is located in a mixed-use zone in the Regional Land Use Plan (PRAS - prescription 4). According to the PRAS, these zones are reserved for housing, public interest or public service facilities, offices and productive activities. See the details and conditions of prescription 4: https://perspective.brussels/fr/outils-de-planification/plans-et-programmes-dinitiative-regionale/pras

The parcel adjoins the Gare de l’Ouest development plan and is therefore not subject to its regulations.

The perimeter is not covered by a Plan Particulier d’Affectation des Sols or a subdivision permit.

The planning regulations in force for this zone are the Regional Planning Regulations, which can be found in the dataroom. There are no local planning regulations for this area.

City climate priorities and environmental challenges

The Brussels Region has adopted a new Air-Climat-Energie Plan (PACE), with a long-term objective: a 55% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and carbon neutrality for the Region by 2050. The PACE proposes new concrete actions and defines key objectives, including energy policy for the management of buildings, public spaces and transport, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, integrated rainwater management, zero waste management, circular resource management, sustainable food systems and biodiversity. The Plan can be found in the dataroom.

In line with the key objectives of PACE and the ten climate challenges identified by the competition framework, the project’s specific ambitions in terms of carbon reduction and environmental performance are as follows:

GREEN BUILDINGS AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- **Energy-efficient design:** See materials section below.
  - Driven by European regulations on the Energy Performance of Buildings (EPB), the construction sector has been working intensively in recent years to reduce the energy consumption of buildings. The TO TEM tool [Tool to Optimise the Total Environmental impact of Materials] has been developed in Belgium to assess and reduce the environmental impact of buildings. This tool is to be used as part of this competition to calculate the environmental cost of the project or any other recognised tools for designing buildings of high environmental quality.

- **Use of green energy:** Solar energy should be used wherever possible, with the installation of photovoltaic panels. The project must include a feasibility study for setting up a heating network.

- **Energy storage:** Proposals expected at site level.

GREEN CONSTRUCTION AND THE BUILDING LIFE CYCLE

- **Materials, circular resources and sustainable waste management:**
  - Rational and harmonious use of environmentally-friendly building materials.
  - Particular attention will be paid to reducing the environmental impact in terms of waste, emissions and discharges, taking into account the efficient use of resources through the choice of materials and construction techniques, and the optimum management of site and operational waste.
  - High content of recycled materials;
  - The material’s suitability for dismantling;
  - Give preference to mechanical fasteners and avoid adhesives (except solvent-free) between building components;
  - Recovery of materials in the event of dismantling or demolition;
  - Choosing materials with a low ecological footprint, limiting the use of resources, reducing the amount of waste.

- **Flexibility/reversibility:**
  - Particular attention will be paid to the long-term flexibility of the interior fittings of the buildings (changing use of the premises over time, with only minor work required). This applies not only to the design of the spaces, but also to the suitability of the materials for dismantling.
  - In order to achieve the objective of reversibility/demontability, the solutions targeted will in particular promote:
  - prefabrication and the use of standard modular components;
  - limiting the number of different components;
  - the ability to separate components;
  - reversibility of connections between façades and structural supports;
  - Layout and use of standard-sized components/materials.
**Sharing spaces** where possible (e.g. in the communal areas of housing, open spaces or the Cirque training area) in order to minimise development costs and maximise the liveliness of open and built spaces.

**LOW-CARBON MOBILITY:**

- Participation in the development of a soft mobility network with the creation of part of the path between LionCity I and Beekkant metro station through the site.

**SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT:**

- Integrated rainwater management:
  
  In line with the studies previously carried out by citydev.brussels on this issue as part of the development of the LionCity I zone, the project will have to develop sustainable water management at both plot and construction level, aiming to return rainwater to the natural environment as far upstream as possible. The project must also provide for domestic use of rainwater and use for watering any green spaces.
  
  In order to reduce drinking water consumption, the project should, as far as possible, recycle grey water on site to supply the water needs of uses that do not require drinking water, such as toilet flushing and building maintenance (consider a separate drainage system).
  
  The project will have to comply with the requirements of the current Regional Planning Regulations, particularly with regard to storm water basins (in good coordination with the systems installed on the LionCity I site).

**CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION - GREEN SPACES, URBAN NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY**

- Drainage of the plot, greening of future open spaces and management of heat islands:
  The green spaces will be designed with a diversity of typologies in mind, as unfragmented as possible, inclusive and accessible to all, allowing for a variety of uses, the animation of spaces and their recreational function.

  - Green roofs (Inaccessible).
    
    Inaccessible flat roofs should be designed as intensive or extensive green roofs in order to enhance biodiversity and optimise the ecopotential of the site. In the case of intensive roofs, a minimum substrate thickness of 30 cm will be provided.
    
    Flat roofs covered with photovoltaic panels are planted extensively with 15 cm of substrate, to avoid shading the panels and facilitate maintenance.

Where the installation of green roofs is incompatible with other technical requirements, white roofs will be favoured.

Roof waterproofing will be chosen to ensure that there is no water/soil pollution as rainwater travels across the site. For example, copper or zinc roof coverings should be avoided.

- Treatment of soil pollution:
  Plots included in categories 0 and 4 of the regional inventory of polluted soils: potentially polluted plot - polluted plot under study or treatment. A risk management project will have to be submitted to Brussels Environment prior to any excavation work in the area of the various spots of contamination or pumping of the groundwater.

**SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

- Citizen participation:
  
  citydev.brussels has developed a protocol for consulting and informing citizens about its development projects - the aim for this project is to incorporate at least the standard procedures put in place by citydev.brussels (additional information will be provided in phase II of the competition) and to aim to set an example in terms of citizen participation on subjects linked to environmental issues.

**Appendix**

**General principles for the development of the LionCity II site resulting from the decision of the Regional Government of 17 December 2020:**

- Integration of studies carried out by citydev.brussels on water management, soil quality preservation and energy management (including studies relating to the implementation of a heating network) and a commitment to setting an example in these areas.
- Green spaces will be designed with a diversity of typologies in mind, as unfragmented as possible, inclusive and accessible to all, allowing for a variety of uses, the animation of spaces and their recreational function;
- Integration into the classic participatory process of citydev.brussels and linkage to other participatory processes in place (where appropriate, with the regional “participation” service);
- Choices to reuse/transform/demolish existing buildings will involve considering optimising the sustainability of the project;
- Incorporation of the three principles of circularity set out in the Government's decision;
- Involvement of the Brussels Environment Sustainable Neighbourhood Facilitator service (including the Be Sustainable tool: https://environnement.brussels/pro/gestion-environnementale/devenir-plus-durable/be-sustainable-realiser-un-projet-de-quartier-durable?highlight=facilitateur%20quartier%20durable) to guide the project;
- Redeveloping the area around and at the foot of the two towers of the Logement Molenbeekois to improve conviviality and social control (introduction of activities open to the public, redevelopment of the parking areas) and to strengthen the green network and the soft mobility connection between the LionCity I area and the West Station site;
- Provision for a mix of functions, leaving a large area for productive activities (particularly in the LionCity I zone) in a layout that allows flexibility in the size of the units, while guaranteeing the quality of life of the housing and the liveliness of the site;
- Reserving sufficient areas for public facilities of regional interest and local public facilities to meet the needs of the district;
- Creation of an activity centre to liven up the public spaces in the LionCity II area (along the planned soft mobility axis towards Beekkant station).