

Greg Windfeldt
Mayor's St Cloud Downtown Taskforce
628 Roosevelt Road
St Cloud, MN 56301

RE: SF0768

I am President and CEO of Preferred Credit, Inc. a 250 employee family-owned consumer finance company headquartered in St Cloud, Minnesota. I grew up in St Cloud and have resided here most of my life. I am also a partner in Granite City Real Estate, LLC that manages over 4000 multifamily apartment units, 50 commercial properties, commercial brokerage and maintenance. My partners and I have developed several properties in St Cloud as well as Willmar, Melrose, Litchfield, and Annandale.


In 2023 I agreed to lead former Mayor Dave Kleis's Downtown Revitalization Task Force. Like most downtowns, St Cloud has seen neglect, office buildings that are mostly empty and lack of progress in developing anything. The Taskforce was formed to identify areas that can be improved. Through this and the efforts of many community members the St Cloud Downtown Alliance was formed with seed commitments of over \$400,000 per year of funding to enhance the downtown. As of this spring the Downtown Alliance will contract to have safety ambassadors, cleaning crews and boots on the street. We are also having more community events and community engagement in our downtown.

One thing downtown St Cloud does not have is housing. There are numerous vacant office buildings and storefronts in downtown. These properties have been underinvested in for several years leaving them undesirable for tenant. The Downtown Alliance has identified that there is a need for a Community Development Fund. This will be a private fund with accredited investors who are willing to invest in our community. The goal of the Community Investment Fund is to acquire properties, make capital investments and get them occupied. Once occupied there will be a desire to sell the buildings to the other investors and recycle the funds to more properties.

As you are aware construction and financing costs have increased significantly over the last 4 years. The proposed legislation for both the CUB Credit and the waiving of sales tax on building supplies would be a tremendous boost to the effort of the Community Investment Fund. Converting existing office and other property to housing has significant cost and risk. There are currently 4 properties listed in downtown St Cloud that could meet the criteria, with 4-6 more being listed soon.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Windfeldt', followed by a long horizontal line.

Greg Windfeldt