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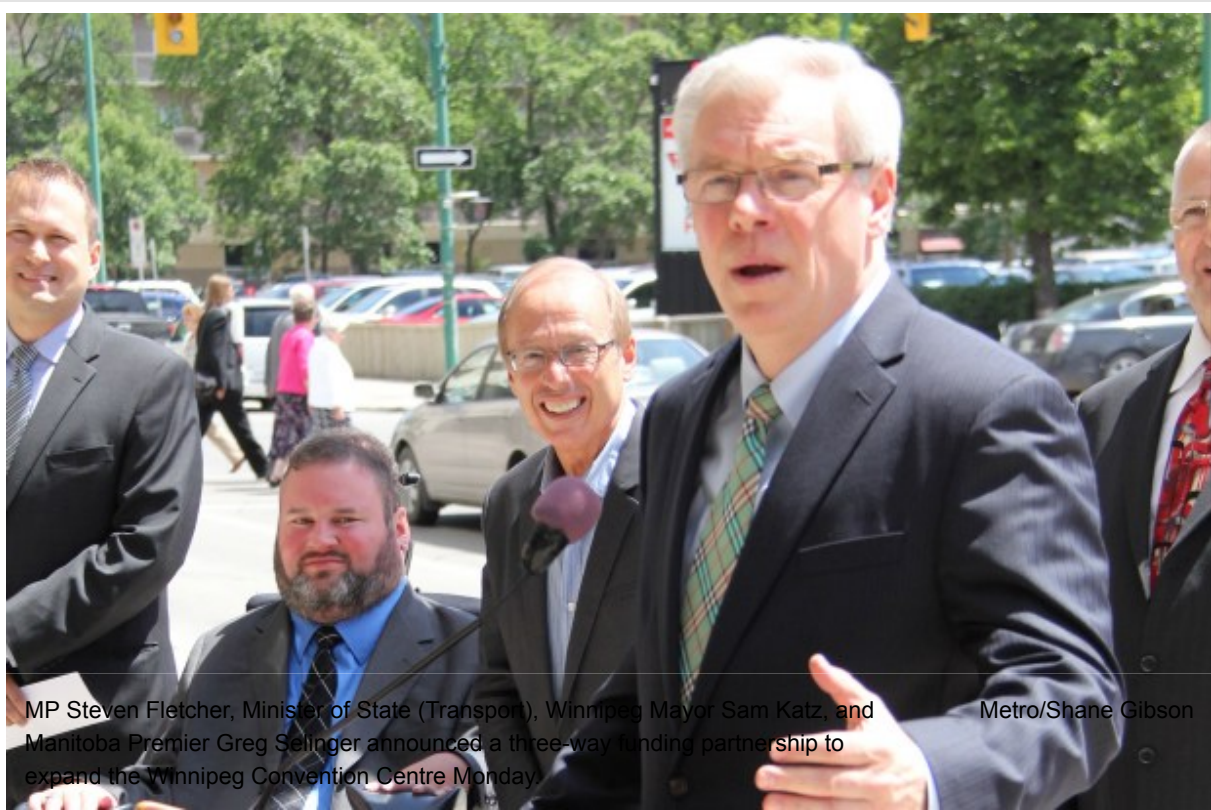
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Winnipeg Convention Centre to double in size



(<http://metronews.ca/author/metroshane/>)By [Shane Gibson](http://metronews.ca/author/metroshane/) (<http://metronews.ca/author/metroshane/>)
Metro Winnipeg



MP Steven Fletcher, Minister of State (Transport), Winnipeg Mayor Sam Katz, and Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger announced a three-way funding partnership to expand the Winnipeg Convention Centre Monday. Metro/Shane Gibson

The City of Winnipeg has partnered with the provincial and federal governments to expand the Winnipeg Convention Centre.

The three levels of government are kicking in a combined total of \$149 million for the project expected to cost more than \$180 million. The work will see the convention centre expand into the parking lot across from of the original building's front door on York Avenue.

“A lot of people ask and don’t understand the phenomenal impact that a convention centre has on your city and on your province,” said Mayor Sam Katz at the partnership’s formal announcement Monday afternoon. “Our entire hospitality industry benefits from these types of projects.”

Although architectural drawings of the planned expansion weren’t available at the announcement, a press release said the project would double the size of the Winnipeg Convention Centre.

The new facility will include multi-purpose divisible space, additional underground parking and main floor public assembly space, according to the release.

The facility’s third floor will house a new exhibit space that will connect to the existing building to create more than 147,000-square-feet of “contiguous, pillarless trade and consumer show space.”

Convention centre president and CEO Klaus Lahr said the building’s current maximum of about 1,200 people for conventions has meant larger conferences have had to choose other cities in the past.

He says the new space will also allow their current conferences and tradeshow customers to grow and allow the centre to hold multiple events at the same time.

“If the third floor goes ahead as we are planning it will seat almost 10,000 people,” he told Metro.

The federal government has promised \$46.7 million, the province has committed \$51 million and the city will also put in \$51 million, while the convention centre itself will raise roughly \$17 million.

New taxes generated from the project are expected to top off the funding, and Premier Greg Selinger said he hopes to see the new building finished within three years.



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