

2026 Legislative Top Priorities Summary

Arena Complex & Surrounding Entertainment District Investments

The City supports seeking State financial partnership for the Arena Complex and surrounding entertainment district to advance equitable economic development and deliver broad community benefits. State assistance may include, but is not limited to, capital bonding, direct cash funding, annual appropriations, extension of authorized local sales taxes, forgivable or interest-free loans, and sales tax exemptions related to construction and will leverage other public and significant private sources, which is under active negotiation. Any State investment will support growth of the larger entertainment district, ensure workforce participation, local and disadvantaged business involvement, state-wide economic vitality, and long-term public benefit.

The ask from the Legislature will be inclusive of funding for Grand Casino Arena, RiverCentre, RiverCentre Parking Ramp, Roy Wilkins Auditorium, and the Eastbound Kellogg Bridge. This ask is inclusive of an expansion of the social district authorization.

Amend the Definition of Natural Disaster to be Inclusive of Cyber Attacks

Amending Minnesota Statutes to treat qualifying cyber incidents identically to natural disasters. This would unlock a 100% cost-share reimbursement for the impacted entity. This would align state policy with current reality that cyber-attacks are likely to continue.

Create a State Reimbursement Program for Law Enforcement Agencies that Respond to Protests and Demonstrations at the Capitol Complex and Governor's Residence

There are a significant increase in the number of protests and actions at both the Capitol Complex and the Governor's Residence in the City of Saint Paul over the last five years. The Saint Paul Police Department has jurisdiction and responsibility for every area beyond the lawn of the Capitol Complex and the Governor's Residence in these circumstances. This could take many different forms of reimbursement.

State and Regional Investments into the West Seventh Corridor

The West Seventh Corridor between Downtown Saint Paul and the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport is a crucial commercial and transit zone. Through a partnership between the City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County, the Met Council, and led by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the corridor will see investments in a long-term repair of West Seventh Street between Wabasha Street in downtown Saint Paul and the Mississippi River with improved safety, traffic, sidewalks, accessibility, transit, and stormwater drainage within the project limits. This first-of-its-kind coalition of partners necessitates significant state-level investments through a multi-year process.

Federal Disruption and Impacts

The City, its residents, and businesses have experienced major disruption and is hindered from meeting economic, health, safety, and basic needs due to federal actions under Operation Metro Surge. We are seeking state support to assist with ongoing urgent needs and long-term community recovery, including:

- Funding for immediate resident support and economic relief, including: rental assistance, small business assistance, food assistance, and mental health supports
- Funding for long-term recovery and resiliency needs
- Unanticipated public safety, public works, emergency management and other city costs incurred due to Operation Metro Surge

Incentivizing Downtown Redevelopment through Creative Financing Tools

These tools include the expansion of Tax Increment Financing, historic tax credits, and the Catalyzation of Underutilized Buildings (CUB) credits to include conversions of office space to another use, which could include housing, child-care, medical, or entertainment.

Additional City of Saint Paul Legislative Priorities

Capital Investment Projects

The City of Saint Paul supports a robust bonding bill that addresses the growing backlog of local public infrastructure needs and invests in important regional projects. The City is seeking General Obligation Bond dollars to support the following publicly owned infrastructure projects:

- Mississippi River Learning Center (Phase 2)
- Como Zoo Big Cat Exhibit renovation
- Randolph Avenue Bridget reconstruction
- Saints Ballpark Stadium Upgrades & Improvements
- Historic Walnut Steps on Summit Avenue
- Kellogg Avenue Bridge reconstruction

Parks and Recreation / Saint Paul Public Libraries

The City of Saint Paul has world-class parks and recreation and library system resources that deserve investment by the State of Minnesota, a few priorities that we will be advocating for at the State Legislature include:

- Reinstating state funding for regional parks, Saint Paul is estimated to be missing out on is around \$5 million per year.
- State funding to design the new Duluth & Case Community Center located on the Eastside
- Advocating for state funding for construction of a new playground and park at The Heights development on the Eastside
- State funding for reconstruction of Central Village Park in the Rondo community
- Modify state school bus safety requirements to require bus drivers do a post-trip inspection to ensure all children have exited the bus
- State investment in the renovation of the Riverview Library

Public Safety

The City of Saint Paul is committed to functional, comprehensive views of public safety that would be enabled by legislation at the Capitol. The following priorities are ones we will be advocating for at the State Legislature:

- Repeal state law preempting local governments from enacting and enforcing common sense gun violence prevention measures
- Authorize local governments to prohibit handguns and other weapons in sensitive spaces including public buildings, facilities, parks, libraries, swimming pools, municipal liquor stores, and at city-sponsored youth activities, and require clearly displayed signage
- Designate libraries and recreation centers as “drug free zones”

- Adding Saint Paul to the Traffic Safety Camera Pilot Program using cameras to ticket speeding vehicles
- Extend funding for non-fatal shooting program.
- Extend funding for the juvenile trades program within St. Paul Police department.

Other

The City of Saint Paul will also be advocating to:

- Reinstating Local Cannabis Aid, additionally change the formula to be based on sales of products and not by number of stores. This funding is crucial to cities to help cover costs associated with required inspections, licensing, zoning, and enforcement
- Additional funding for the replacement of lead service lines through Saint Paul Regional Water Services
- Enact next steps on copper wire theft by requiring scrap dealers to participate in an online database where product sold is entered daily into the database, create a business license to accompany with an individual identification or driver's license when an individual through their employer is trying to sell scrap copper and other at-risk scrap materials, and clarify definition of scrap copper
- Support city authorization to create land value taxation districts as an effort to spur economic development
- Support state authorization of local governments to protect labor standards complainants and witnesses upon closure of a case to protect those individuals from future retaliation in the workplace
- Support extending the same subpoena power authority to the City of Saint Paul as was extended to Minneapolis for human rights and labor standards investigations
- Support the Saint Paul Port Authority's request for financial assistance at The Heights to allow for construction to begin on multifamily affordable housing properties on the northern section of the site
- Support state allocations to provide mitigation funds to businesses, nonprofits, and other community-serving entities adversely impacted by MnDOT street reconstruction projects, including the Robert Street corridor on the West Side. These funds would provide direct, short-term financial assistance to entities experiencing access, parking, or visibility disruptions during construction.

Support Items in Legislative Platform

The City of Saint Paul's platform includes numerous policy statements declaring the priorities of the City at the Legislature and allowing for City Intergovernmental Relations staff to partner with other organizations:

- Increased city funding through Local Government Aid (LGA)

- Direct property tax relief
- Support of additional financing tools to increase affordable housing supply
- Support for those experiencing unsheltered homelessness
- Continued support for tenant protections and renter's rights
- Supporting New Americans
- Advancing racial equity
- Economic justice and inclusion
- Access to clean water
- Advancing resilience and climate investments
- Expansion of the regional transit system and support for complete streets
- Support for parks and recreation funding
- Climate and resiliency initiatives including weatherization, geothermal planning, transit funding, and renewable energy support
- Further support for mitigating the harms of PFAS in the water supply
- Supporting aligned components of partners' agendas:
 - Saint Paul Port Authority
 - Ramsey County

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