



# City of Saint Paul 2016 Legislative Agenda

## PRIORITY ITEMS

### **Local Government Aid (LGA)**

Local Government Aid remains a vitally-important program for the City of Saint Paul by helping to provide needed public services while stabilizing property taxes. Even after the needed LGA increases in the 2013 and 2014 legislative session, however, LGA is still nearly \$14 million less than the amount certified for the city in 2003, and approximately \$47 million less than the 2003 certified amount after adjusting for inflation. This shortfall puts a significant and continued strain on city resources and creates instability in city budgeting.

The City supports full funding of LGA to at least the 2003 certified funding level and the addition of an annual adjustment growth factor to account for the continued rising costs of providing city services and reduce the year-to-year volatility of aid levels that cities receive.

### **Transportation Financing**

The availability of transportation funding resources continues to significantly lag behind need, including for local units of government. As our transportation system continues to deteriorate, our costs will only increase and our service levels decrease. This includes costs to our local roads, bridges, transit service, and alternative modes of transportation, including bikes systems.

The City supports a new comprehensive transportation financing package that invests in roads, bridges, and transit, and gives cities the resources and funding tools they need to meet their growing needs. This should include a new, dedicated revenue stream for city roads; an increased investment in transit in the East Metro to help build a 21<sup>st</sup> century transit system; and an infusion of resources to help repair and replace deteriorating bridges, including the Kellogg/3<sup>rd</sup> Street bridge in Saint Paul.

## **Capital Investment Bonding**

The City supports the following priority capital investment bonding projects during the 2016 legislative session:

1. Reconstruction of Kellogg/3<sup>rd</sup> Street Bridge - \$48 million
2. Great River Passage Environmental Learning Center - \$19.5 million
3. Como Zoo Habitat Preservation Exhibit Renovation - \$14.5 million
4. Wakan Tipi Center at Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary - \$3 million

## **Equity Statement**

Minnesota needs to be a state where race does not predetermine opportunities in education, employment, housing, health and safety. Working on issues of equity must entail both institutional and systemic changes and personal awareness and commitment by top leaders. This includes understanding how deeply embedded inequities may be in current policies and practices. The City of Saint Paul encourages the governor and legislature to view all legislative action through an equity lens and that legislation proposed and passed avoid further marginalization and continuing disparities.

## **REVENUE, TAXES AND FINANCE**

### **Local Government Aid (LGA)**

The City of Saint Paul uses state-allocated Local Government Aid to fund critical city services and stabilize property taxes. While the total share of the city budget dependent on state payments has dropped significantly since 2003, the future of Local Government Aid (LGA) remains a key variable in the city's ability to provide basic services, accounting for 24% of the city's general fund.

Since late 2008, the state unallotted or otherwise reduced LGA by more than \$43 million over a four year period, which caused a series of budget challenges and the reduction of important city services. Recent increases approved during the 2013 and 2014 legislative sessions were a good step toward renewing a more balanced and predictable state/local fiscal relationship. Even after these increases, however, LGA is still nearly \$14 million less than the amount certified in 2003 and approximately \$47 million less than the 2003 certified amount after adjusting for inflation. Without a continued investment in LGA in the future, cities will continue to face the prospect of having to choose service reductions or above-inflation increases in property taxes, or both.

The City supports full funding of LGA to at least the 2003 certified funding levels, as well as the addition of an annual adjustment growth factor to the formula. Should the state not increase critically-needed funding for Local Government Aid, it must provide local governments with options to generate additional revenue to reduce reliance on local property taxes.

### **Midway Site Redevelopment**

The Snelling-Midway site located at on Snelling Avenue between Interstate 94 and University Avenue is a vital economic development site for the Midway neighborhood. Of the superblock generally known as a major retail shopping district, 10 acres have sat vacant since 2002. Announced in October of 2015 this site has been selected as the future home of a professional soccer stadium. The City of Saint Paul strongly believes in the catalytic economic development effect this \$120 million private investment will bring to the surrounding 25 acres as well as the Midway community as a whole. Accordingly, the City supports legislation to keep the 10 acres of the stadium site property tax exempt. The city also supports legislation allowing for sales tax exemption on construction materials used to build the stadium.

### **Ford Site Tax Increment Financing**

The open Ford site in Saint Paul represents a unique opportunity to design and develop a 21<sup>st</sup> century community that will add vitality and tax base to the region. In order to maximize this opportunity, flexibility is needed in regards to development financing options, including tax increment financing for infrastructure. Accordingly, the City supports legislation to authorize

the ability to create multiple TIF districts on the 144 acre Ford site to assist the redevelopment, and to extend the timeline for creation and certification of each TIF district beyond 2016.

### **Other Revenue, Tax and Finance Items**

- Support the fiscal disparities program as it's an important tool in providing a common level of services amongst cities
- The City does not support state-sanctioned levy limits which undermine the relationship between local officials and residents in determining the appropriate balance of taxation and service delivery
- Support simplifying the process to receive the exemption for construction materials, as well as extending the exemption to materials purchased by third party officials on behalf of the City
- Oppose elimination of the Solid Waste Management Tax

## **TRANSPORTATION FINANCING**

The availability of transportation funding resources continues to significantly lag behind need, especially for local municipalities. The City supports a new comprehensive transportation financing package that gives cities the resources and funding tools we need to meet our growing needs.

### **City Streets**

Current funding to city streets is inadequate, leading to growing unmet need. The Transportation Finance Advisory Committee identified \$400 million as the investment needed in local roads for the state to be economically competitive. Accordingly, new funding distributed outside of the constitutional formula is needed in order for cities to be able to perform the necessary treatment, maintenance and reconstruction to their systems. The City supports new dedicated revenue to city streets. The City also supports at least a \$200 million bonding appropriation to the Local Road Improvement Program.

The City of Saint Paul supports funding for the statewide Complete Streets policy; ensuring streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. The city also supports a statewide effort to educate motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians about the rules of the road and best practices in order to increase safety and decrease crashes, injuries, and fatalities including funding such an initiative as well as an increase in penalties to those causing injuries and fatalities.

## **Bridges**

The City supports funding for a new Kellogg/3<sup>rd</sup> Street bridge to return this critical artery to full capacity and functionality. The current bridge has been deemed structurally deficient by today's standards. Reconstruction allows for the bridge to serve growing and changing capacity and modes of transportation, including the Gateway Corridor. Kellogg Boulevard is an arterial roadway that handles approximately 9,900 vehicles per day, and the bridge spans railroads, city streets, the Bruce Vento Trail, and Interstate 94. Bridges across Minnesota need repair and replacement the City supports the creation of a big bridge account and an investment of at least a \$100 million in bonding for that account as well as \$100 million in bonding for the local bridge program.

## **Transit Investments**

The City supports additional funding for transit projects across the region, including a sales tax increase for metro transit, and strongly encourages a renewed and balanced look at transit projects in the East Metro. This includes projects like the Gateway Corridor, Riverview Corridor, Rush Line, Red Rock, and Robert Street. In order to build a 21<sup>st</sup> century transit system, any new transit funding from the state must recognize the need for a geographic balance across the Metro Area.

The City also supports the implementation of streetcars, including recognition of streetcars as a potential transit way mode for metropolitan regional planning, and the identification of funding for planning, study and construction.

The City of Saint Paul supports the selected preferred alternative and funding of the Gateway Transit Corridor extending from McKnight Road to the Union Depot in Saint Paul as well as Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority in the continued development and funding of the Riverview Transit Corridor.

## **Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for Transit Oriented Development (TOD)**

The City will support legislation that furthers the goals of Tax Increment Financing for Transit-Oriented Development. Further, the City encourages the legislature to include parks and open space development as an eligible expense within any TIF for TOD legislation. The City also encourages the legislature to allow the use of increment from the districts to assist in the development of affordable housing.

## **Railroads**

Saint Paul has 84 active rail crossings and 5 quiet zones, yet has little authority to protect the human and environmental health of our community as it relates to railroads. Our Fire and EMS providers are at the "tip of the spear" conducting response operations, but the planning and coordination required is city and region wide and spans from initial response through recovery.

The City recognizes the important role rail plays in our economy and as a transportation mode for goods, and will monitor all legislative activity related to railroads.

### **Safe Routes to School Funding**

As part of the effort to more fully support the Safe Routes to School Program, the City supports funding for repairing, advancing and upgrading sidewalks. The Safe Routes to School grant funds are used for planning and infrastructure projects that encourage more students to walk and bicycle to school by increasing the walkability of the city and by assuring that curbs are compliant with ADA regulations.

### **Other Transportation Items**

- Oppose any efforts to increase the speed limit on I-35E through Saint Paul, as determined by a federal lawsuit settlement
- Support MnDOT's efforts in continued maintenance funding and other additional resources to better meet the department's needs
- Support legislation allowing for funds to be raised through a per space parking surcharge that would be invested in a defined downtown area for a specified list of value add initiatives
- Support changing state law to give local governments the ability to reduce the default speed limit on residential streets from 30 mph to 25 mph in all cases.
- Support Minnesota Commercial Railways proposal to MnDOT to forgive a construction loan for the repair of the railroad bridge located at approximately Highway 280 and Como Avenue

## **CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC STIMULUS**

The City of Saint Paul will support and advocate for the following priority projects in the 2016 state bonding bill:

1. Kellogg Bridge Reconstruction ~ \$48 million  
This request is for \$48 million in design, engineering, and construction funding for reconstruction of the Kellogg –Third Street Bridge. Kellogg Boulevard is an arterial roadway that handles approximately 9,900 vehicles per day, and the bridge spans railroads, City streets, the Bruce Vento Trail, and Interstate 94. Under today's code standards, however, the bridge's cantilevers cannot support any pedestrian or traffic loads. Reconstruction allows for the bridge to serve growing and changing capacity and modes of transportation, including the Gateway Corridor.
2. Great River Passage Environmental Learning Center ~ \$19.5 million  
This request is for \$19.5 million in state funding to design and construct a regional

education and environmental center along the Mississippi River in the Crosby Farm Regional Park, along with site improvements. This project will integrate environmental education, river access for diverse neighborhoods, and river-orientated recreation, as well as connect trails at Crosby Farm and Hidden Falls Regional Park. The project is the first phase of the Great River Passage, a true connection of all 17 miles of Mississippi riverfront in Saint Paul. Total estimated cost of the project is \$21.3 million.

3. Como Zoo Habitat Preservation Exhibit Renovation ~ \$14.5 million

This request is for \$14.5 million in state funding for planning, design and construction of the renewal of the Seals and Sea Lions exhibit at Como Zoo. The Seals and Sea Lions exhibit has been a fixture at Como Zoo for over 50 years; yet due to changing federal regulatory requirements for marine mammals, asset preservation of the exhibit is needed. The new exhibit will provide year-round use that meets or exceeds all regulatory and collection management requirements. Total estimated cost of the renewal exhibit project is projected to be \$15.6 million.

4. Wakan Tipi Center at Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary~ \$3 million

This request is for \$3 million to design and construct a cultural center at the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary. The center will provide interpretive, educational and visitor amenities and services, landscape improvements, as well as improved trail connections. Total estimated cost of the project is \$6.7 million.

**Other Bonding Support Items:**

- Minnesota Museum of American Art project funding request - \$8 million;
- Minnesota Humanities Center asset preservation and remediation request - \$1.6 million;
- Dorothy Day Revision Phase 2 facility project funding request - \$12 million;
- Science Museum of Minnesota Building preservation request - \$13 million;
- New Roy Wilkins Auditorium and RiverCentre parking ramp request – \$1.9 million;
- Metropolitan Council’s request in state bonds to match funding of Metropolitan Council bonds to improve and expand the Metropolitan Regional Park system;
- Eastside Freedom Library request - \$2.2 million;
- Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission’s request for planning dollars to design an Urban Regional Sports Center;
- The Homes for All Coalition request for legislative funding for affordable housing projects and services, utilizing both housing infrastructure and general obligation bonds.

## **PARKS AND TRAILS**

### **Legacy**

Legacy resources support projects and programs including regional parks, libraries, Como Zoo, improvements to the Mississippi River, and a host of other items. The funds appropriated are to supplement not supplant existing funding.

The City of Saint Paul supports the following positions regarding the Legacy Amendment:

- Overall Fund – Support the equitable distribution of all funds.
- Parks and Trails Fund – Support projects with clear regional or statewide significance and that will ensure equitable funding across metro, outstate, and DNR programs.
- Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund – Support more equitable geographic distribution of this fund, recognizing the unique circumstances the Metropolitan area presents related to gaming, habitats, wetlands, prairies, and forests.
- Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund – Support distribution of the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund in a fair and equitable way. This includes support for the Minnesota regional library systems in order to provide educational opportunities in the arts, history, literary, and cultural heritage of Minnesota and Como Zoo and Conservatory to maintain and expand successful regional education programs such as Residency, Little Explorers, Nature’s Engineers and the Pollinator Exhibit.

### **Regional Parks Funding**

The City of Saint Paul Parks Department is one of 10 parks implementing agencies supported by the Met Council’s Metro Parks and Open Space Commission. The city works closely with those nine other metro regional park implementing agencies to ensure an equitable funding formula for the Parks and Trails Fund, specifically. State statute requires the State to meet Parks financial needs by 40 percent; the current funding level is 11 percent.

The City supports fully funding the Metro Parks biennial budget at 40 percent as well as the distribution of those funds through the current formula. Additionally, it opposes cuts to the budget.

### **Emerald Ash Borer**

The Emerald Ash Borer is an invasive species that is fatal to all untreated ash trees and was first discovered in Saint Paul in 2009. Since then, it has already infested hundreds of ash trees throughout Saint Paul and its spread is expected to kill tens of thousands of ash trees, both public and private, within the next decade. Best practice management strategies designed to reduce or slow the spread of EAB are projected to cost Saint Paul over \$15 million dollars over the coming decade.



The City supports state or other funding designed to help communities slow the spread of EAB and move toward reforestation of their urban forests, including trees that provide millions of dollars in economic, environmental and social benefits.

**Other Parks and Trails Items:**

- Monitor efforts by state agencies to fund Invasive Carp mitigation and population control programs
- Monitor legislative activities regarding the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Areas rulemaking process
- Monitor legislation related to pollinators

**EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE**

**High Quality Early Learning**

Support legislative efforts that increase access to high quality early learning and education opportunities, particularly for families that are the most financially challenged, to ensure all children are prepared to succeed in school and in life.

**High Quality Afterschool and Summer Learning**

High-quality afterschool and summer learning programs have evidence-based benefits that will positively impact the persistent challenges facing Saint Paul’s young people, families, businesses, educators, and communities. The City supports a new state public funding stream to fund competitive grants for afterschool programs targeted to youth below 185% of poverty.

**Youth Jobs**

DEED’s Youth at Work competitive grant program provides key funding for the City’s Right Track youth jobs program. These funds provide jobs for over 700 Saint Paul youth from low-income families each year. As the labor force shrinks and disparities increase, public investment in work experiences for low-income youth, particularly youth of color, are a critical strategy to ensuring the future health of the state’s economy.

The City urges DEED to:

- Increase the amount of funding available for the Youth at Work competitive grant and Minnesota Youth Program;
- Provide information about the Youth at Work competitive grant for potential recipients by late summer or early Fall and announce grant awards in early Spring to allow for better preparation for summer;

- Place a greater emphasis on an organizations demonstrated ability to manage funds and partnerships that support alignment across systems when determining grant award winners;
- Base funding decisions on factors including the number and percentage of youth in poverty, youth of color and the youth unemployment rate; and
- Provide incentives for private sector employers who hire youth interns to encourage greater private sector participation.

### **Workforce Training**

The City supports efforts to increase funding for job search assistance, skills training, childcare, and related programs to help people find and retain employment, including:

- A payroll tax credit for job training programs that invest in skilled employees;
- The Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Program; and
- Tax incentives for companies that hire and retain disadvantaged workers.

### **Other Education and Workforce Items**

- Support the reclassification of the Central Certification Program (CERT) Application Information as non-public and the streamlining of the CERT application process.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, SUSTAINABILITY & ENERGY INVESTMENT**

The City encourages the Governor and Legislature to espouse sustainability policies that benefit cities, including:

- To incent the manufacture of green products to be used in construction and assist manufactures in incorporating green practices in their production of goods;
- To improve energy efficiency goals and activities by investor owned utilities;
- To prepare for the impacts of climate change on infrastructure, natural systems and human health;
- To increase distributed generation technologies, such as solar photovoltaic, solar thermal production, wind, combined heat and power for both public and private entities;
- To encourage legislation and amendments to rules to expand source separated composting efforts;
- To increase state funding for the state solid waste block grant program referred to as SCORE to be used for recycling efforts and expansion of organics collection.

The City supports additional state resources and policies that assist cities in creating sustainable environments for their citizens.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

### **Body Worn Cameras**

The City of Saint Paul supports enacting a data classification under Minnesota Statutes section 13.82 for body-worn camera data that recognizes the privacy interests of victims and witnesses interacting with law enforcement in places where people have a reasonable expectation of privacy while enabling the accountability and transparency that supports a trusting relationship between Law Enforcement and the public we serve.

### **Reducing Gun Violence**

Gun violence is not only an issue of crime but one of public health. Therefore, the City of Saint Paul supports efforts to reduce gun violence including criminal background checks and bans on military-style assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines.

### **Emergency Matching Grants for State Disaster Aid**

The State Disaster Assistance Contingency Fund is to be used to provide the local match for FEMA Public Assistance awards to local government for costs associated with disaster relief. Natural disasters annually deplete the fund. The city supports a biennial allocation of \$6 million per year to build up a fund balance, increasing the reliability of the fund both short- and long-term.

### **Sexual Image Exploitation**

In 2015, the Minnesota Supreme Court struck down the state's criminal defamation statute as unconstitutional. The City of Saint Paul had historically used that statute to prosecute cases of revenge porn. Currently there is no clear path to hold people who engage in this behavior accountable either criminally or civilly. Therefore the city supports the creation of a criminal statute for the unauthorized disclosure of certain intimate images ("revenge porn") and using another's identity to solicit sex. As well as, supports the creation of civil causes of action for nonconsensual dissemination of private sexual images and nonconsensual sexual solicitation.

### **Other Public Safety Items**

- Support the Minnesota Fire Safety Account funding change from a yearly authorization to a standing appropriation to fund critical services
- Support the full implementation of the national fire code for residential sprinklers in Minnesota
- Support adding concealing criminal proceeds § 609.496 and engaging in business of concealing criminal proceeds § 609.497 to the list of forfeitable offenses and monitor other legislative changes to the state's forfeiture laws including removing DUI from forfeitable offenses

- Support increasing the crash reporting threshold above the \$1000.00 currently in statute
- Monitor legislation related to outside investigation of critical incidents
- Support legislation that makes the Driver’s License Diversion pilot program permanent and available statewide
- Support the DWI Task Force recommendation to address expungements during an enhancement period
- Support amending §152.021-152.025 to assign weights to marijuana derivatives such as wax or BHO
- Expand Minn. Stat. § 609.2231, sub. 6 to include code enforcement officials, thus allowing for escalated charges for assaults perpetrated on these public employees while they are performing their official duties
- Support efforts to reduce sex trafficking and protect victims

## **HOUSING, ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY STABILITY**

### **Housing**

Housing is a basic and fundamental human need. While a number of positive measures have taken place to support homeownership, homeowner rehabilitation and renters; there is still a need to address properties in disrepair or properties that have been foreclosed and/or abandoned.

The City will advocate for local government tools to address housing of all types and will monitor foreclosure prevention and remediation activities and monitor legislation related to legal warranty barriers to condo development and financing.

The City supports legislative efforts to:

- Finance rehabilitation of older housing stock in low and moderate income Census tracts;
- Address the demand for housing for the long-term homeless;
- Provide public housing and publicly-assisted low-income housing;
- Provide new housing construction, at a range of income levels;
- Preserve and reinvest in existing aging affordable housing stock;
- Provide additional state resources to help construct much needed affordable senior housing;
- Expand programs to provide low cost financing to improve the energy efficiency of existing homes and buildings, particularly those in low and moderate income communities hit hard by the foreclosure/vacant housing crisis.

## **Lowertown Flood Damage Reduction Project**

The City supports state funding to acquire land, pre-design, design, construct, furnish and equip a new permanent flood damage reduction system for the purpose of minimizing the adverse impacts of flooding in the Lowertown area of Saint Paul. Due to the increase in the conversion of commercial warehouses to residential dwellings, the addition of the regional transit features, and the construction of a significant regional economic asset (CHS Field) the Lowertown area is heavily utilized and highly populated. The increased usage of Lowertown results in a higher risk potential for both people and properties due to flooding events. This has created a need for a flood damage reduction system to minimize the associated risks. Constructing a permanent system would be more cost effective and reliable than continuing to utilize the temporary emergency systems currently available.

### **Economic and Community Stability Support Items:**

- Support land use and economic development incentives to benefit redevelopment and job creation at the Ford Plant Site.
- Support increased funding for brownfield site remediation programs
- Support dedicated State funding for programs at the Department of Employment and Economic Development focusing on women and minority-owned businesses, redevelopment areas and transit improvement areas.
- Support UFCW efforts to create a fund for construction of grocery stores in underserved neighborhoods in urban and rural areas.
- Renewable and Distributed Generation: Support incentives, mandates, and policies that increase distributed generation technologies, such as solar photovoltaic, solar thermal production, wind, combined heat and power for both public and private entities.
- Support legislation to streamline and improve the zoning amendment process for cities of the first class.
- Support legislation creating statewide paid parental leave.
- Support additional clarity in §197.46 on the use of the civil service commission.

## OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

The City of Saint Paul supports the platforms of the following organizations, with the exception of those policies that may be contrary to the interests of the City:

- Ramsey County;
- Saint Paul Port Authority;
- League of Minnesota Cities;
- Metro Cities;
- The Homes for All Coalition;
- Saint Paul Public Schools.

For more information about the City of Saint Paul's 2016 Legislative Agenda, please contact:

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