



2019 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Revenue, Taxes, and Finance

Local Government Aid Increase

The City of Saint Paul supports increasing the Local Government Aid (LGA) appropriation to address cities' unmet need as defined by the LGA formula, as well as increases in the LGA appropriation to account for inflation. The Minnesota Department of Revenue calculated that the state-wide unmet need in the LGA formula for 2019 is \$814.6 million. However, the current funding is capped at \$534.4 million. The City of Saint Paul supports increasing LGA to fund this statewide unmet need of \$280.2 million adjusting for inflation.

The City of Saint Paul uses state-allocated LGA to fund critical city services and to stabilize property taxes. LGA remains a key variable in the city's ability to provide basic services, accounting for 23% of the city's general fund. The City strongly opposes freezes to the LGA appropriation or reductions of LGA for balancing state budget deficits. The City also opposes targeted reductions to specific cities as well as reductions or offsets for local policy or expenditure decisions.

Local Control

The City of Saint Paul urges the state to oppose initiatives that erode the ability of municipalities to make their own governing decisions. The increasingly complex and costly requirements necessary for cities to provide services to their residents require a strong partnership between federal, state, and local governments. This partnership should be based upon a shared vision for Minnesota and should allow individual communities to tailor that vision to the unique needs of their communities. The state should not enact laws that undercut or "pre-empt" city officials from exercising their own authority.

Other Revenue, Tax, and Finance Items

- The City of Saint Paul supports the fiscal disparities program as an important tool in providing a common level of services among cities;
- The City of Saint Paul 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;
- The City of Saint Paul supports the Saint Paul Visitor and Convention Bureau's request to increase the lodging tax by 1 percent;
- The City of Saint Paul supports simplifying the process to receive the sales tax exemption for construction materials, as well as extending the sales tax exemption to materials purchased by third party officials on behalf of the City;
- The City of Saint Paul opposes elimination of the Solid Waste Management Tax;
- The City of Saint Paul supports legislation to ensure adequate funding for the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) through continuation of the 2 percent health care provider tax scheduled to sunset at the end of 2019.

State Bonding Priorities

3rd Street/Kellogg Boulevard Bridge - \$48 million

The Third Street/Kellogg Boulevard Bridge is a critical connection from Saint Paul's east side neighborhood to Lowertown and the downtown Entertainment District. It is the City's longest bridge and was built in 1982. This new bridge will improve safety, enhance access to numerous state and local destinations, and help connect workers to jobs. This is part of the City's broader effort to expand revitalization of and economic development in our East Side community. It will also expand the regional transportation network including the Gateway BRT line which better connects our entire East Metro area.

RiverCentre Ramp and Bridge

The RiverCentre Ramp, along with the adjacent portion of Kellogg Boulevard bridge, has reached the end of its useful life. This vital statewide asset serves visitors from around the world and is critical to the vitality of the Xcel Energy Center, RiverCentre, Science Museum, Ordway Theatre, surrounding businesses, attractions, and employment hubs. The City has spent \$2.3 million in 2018 to repair, stabilize, and reopen the ramp. To ensure we do not lose this important infrastructure that anchors our downtown businesses, work is underway to evaluate all options for replacing the ramp, including public-private partnerships.

Housing Needs

Housing is a basic and fundamental human need. The City of Saint Paul will advocate for state and local government tools to address housing of all types, innovative proposals to increase access to housing opportunities such as reforms to the rental application process and will monitor foreclosure prevention and remediation activities. The City is focused on three strategies to meet the housing needs: 1) Production - Creating new affordable housing; 2) Preservation - Maintaining existing affordable housing; and 3) Protection - Ensuring all of us can have safe affordable homes.

In 2019 city budget, Saint Paul established a \$10 million Housing Trust Fund and an ongoing \$2 million annual investment. Combined with existing city and federal resources, the City plans to make over \$71 million in housing investments over the next three years.

The City of Saint Paul supports legislative efforts to:

- Establish matching state funds for Local Housing Trust Funds;
- Finance rehabilitation of older housing stock in low and moderate-income Census tracts;
- Address the demand for housing to address long-term homelessness;
- Provide additional state resources to help construct much needed affordable senior housing;
- Provide adequate care and housing for veterans, including the replacement of 150 beds at the Minneapolis Veterans Home;
- 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.

Community-First Public Safety

The City of Saint Paul is committed to developing and implementing community-driven best practices to address our city's public safety needs. The City is committed to dismantling the cradle-to-prison pipeline, ending mass incarceration by utilizing restorative justice, and providing a pathway to success for returning community members. Under its Community-First Public Safety strategy, the City is taking steps to improve public safety and trust

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between law enforcement and our residents. The City's approach includes undertaking essential reforms to current police practices to increase accountability and trust, implementing innovative community policing strategies, and making the investments our community needs to prevent crime before it starts. The City supports policies and investments that promote gun violence prevention and reform our criminal justice system.

Restore the Vote

Minnesotans convicted of any felony offense are not allowed to vote while they are incarcerated or in the community on probation. About 63,000 Minnesotans - 1.5 percent of the voting age population - are unable to vote due to a felony conviction. Everyone should be encouraged to be civically engaged and have every opportunity to participate in the democratic process. The City supports efforts to allow for individuals who are released from incarceration to vote.

Gun Violence Prevention

The City is committed to supporting efforts to reduce gun violence, including background checks on all gun sales and purchases and gun violence protective orders.

Fines and Fees

The City also supports reforms that reduce the collateral consequences for low level driving offenses. The City supports efforts to end the cycle of amassing fines for these offenses and providing opportunities instead for diversion and restitution to enable people to access better jobs, work more hours, be reliable employees, and take better care of their family.

The City of Saint Paul also supports:

- Legalization of cannabis for recreational use, expungement of non-violent marijuana related drug offenses, and dedication of new tax revenues toward education and community wealth building programs;
- Probation reform and civil Asset Forfeiture Reform;
- Efforts to reduce sex trafficking, protect victims and support survivors; and,
- Safe, fair, and accountable legislation to regulate transportation network companies (TNCs).

Support Our New Americans

Our nation has a proud tradition of welcoming immigrants and refugees into our communities, and Saint Paul is no exception. Minnesota's first large group of immigrants came from European countries of Norway, Sweden, Ireland, and Germany. Today, Minnesota's immigrant and refugee populations are from across the globe including Central and South America, Southeast Asia, East Africa and South Asia. Nearly 20 percent of our residents are foreign-born. Nearly 30 percent of our residents speak more than one language. In all, over 100 languages are spoken in our city.

Protecting the human rights of residents of the United States, including the City of Saint Paul, is not just a moral imperative rooted in the founding principles of our nation but also essential to ensuring future economic opportunity and prosperity for all who live, work, and conduct commerce within Minnesota and the City of Saint Paul. Regardless of immigration status, an individual is endowed with the same universal and inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The City supports legislation that welcomes and supports our new American communities.

Driver's License for All

The City of Saint Paul supports efforts to ensure that all Minnesota residents have access to driver's licenses. Many Minnesota residents cannot access a state driver's license because of their legal status even though they are established members of our communities. Their children are U.S. citizens and

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Minnesota is their home. The inability to obtain a driver's license inhibits their ability to provide for their families and contribute to the economy.

Post-Conviction Relief Exceptions

Under current Minnesota law, a person who has been convicted of a crime cannot file a petition for post-conviction relief after two years of the entry of judgement. The City of Saint Paul supports legislation that will allow individuals to file for post-conviction relief outside of the two-year limitation when their past criminal conviction becomes the basis of an unknown collateral consequence.

Eliminate Language Barriers to Voting

Minnesota law provides that voters who are unable to read English or have a physical inability to mark a ballot may seek assistance from election officials or any other individual who is not the voter's employer or union. However, under current Minnesota law, interpreters are limited to only assist up to three individuals per election. The City of Saint Paul supports legislative changes that will help ensure that voters have adequate access to voting assistance.

Emergency Responders

As part of the Community First Public Safety strategy, in 2019 the City of Saint Paul is making investments in our emergency responders to ensure they have the resources to respond to the wide variety of health and safety needs across the city. Investments include the expansion of investigative capacity and mental health response in our police department as well as expansion of non-emergency medical response and overtime coverage for personnel on military leave in its fire department.

In alignment with these local investments, the City of Saint Paul supports:

- State funding to help cover costs associated with filling temporary personnel gaps created by firefighters who are called to military duty for training or combat;
- Funding the Minnesota Fire Safety Account with a standing appropriation to fund critical services and the Department of Labor and Industry efforts to transfer authority for adoption of the state fire code to the state Fire Marshal;
- Maintaining current state statutes related to fireworks sales and use;
- Changes to rules regarding reimbursement to local law enforcement for bomb squad services provided outside their home jurisdiction;
- Adding concealing criminal proceeds § 609.496 and engaging in business of concealing criminal proceeds § 609.497 to the list of forfeitable offenses and monitoring other legislative changes to the state's forfeiture laws;
- Increasing the crash reporting threshold above the \$1000.00 currently in statute;
- Amending §152.021-152.025 to assign weights to marijuana derivatives;
- Legislation related to flame-retardant chemicals that reduces health risks to firefighters and other emergency responders;
- Expanding § 609.2231, sub. 6 to include code enforcement officials allowing for escalated charges for assaults perpetrated while performing official duties; and

Lifelong Learning

In the City of Saint Paul, we believe that everyone should have the opportunity to learn and grow, no matter their age. This includes providing quality learning opportunities for people of all ages in our community, from infants and toddlers to our aging adults.

College Savings Account Pilot

Post-secondary education is one of the keys to ensuring that young people have the greatest opportunity to succeed. It also plays a central role in ensuring our region and state have a workforce that will continue to compete in the global economy. Research shows that low and moderate-income children who have even a small amount of money saved for college are three times more likely to attend.

In 2020, the City of Saint Paul will launch the first College Saving Account (CSA) program led by a city in the state of Minnesota. The City spent the last year designing the program with community partners from the private, public, and nonprofit sector. The City created an Office of Financial Empowerment and will hire staff to support the development of the CSA program. The City seeks additional support from the State to begin investing \$50 in an account for every child born in Saint Paul.

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 of Saint Paul supports new state public funding for competitive grants for afterschool and summer programs targeted to youth below 185% of poverty.

Youth Jobs

The Department of Employment and Economic Development Youth at Work competitive grant program provides key funding for the City's Right Track youth jobs program. These funds support jobs for over 600 Saint Paul youth from low-income families each year. Right Track is Saint Paul's pipeline for youth career development and building a diverse workforce. Right Track brings together the City, businesses and community organizations to provide employment opportunities for youth.

The City of Saint Paul supports legislation that:

- Increases the amount of funding available for the Youth at Work competitive grant and Minnesota Youth Program;
- Promotes the timely announcement of grant awards to maximize annual program preparation;
- Prioritizes organizations that demonstrate an ability to manage funds and partnerships that support alignment across systems;
- Bases funding decisions on factors including the number and percentage of youth in poverty, youth of color and the youth unemployment rate; and
- Encourages greater private sector participation.

Workforce Training

The City of Saint Paul 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 MNWin for Jobs initiative to address racial disparities in employment and to prepare for future worker shortages;
- The Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Program; and
- Tax incentives for companies that hire and retain disadvantaged workers.

Libraries

The City of Saint Paul supports legislation that will ensure that the Saint Paul Public Library has the resources necessary to provide high quality educational tools and programming. The City supports funding for Regional Library Basic System Support (RLBSS), Regional Library Telecommunication Aid (RLTA), and continuing access to Legacy/Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund for public library programs.

Economic Justice and Inclusion

To build a city that works for all of us, Saint Paul is committed to ensuring that everyone has safe, healthy neighborhoods to live in and raise a family, access to high-quality education, and the opportunity of good paying jobs. In 2019 the City of Saint Paul will be making investments to make it easier to start and grow a business, support growth of the city's cultural business districts, support the right mix of housing options for people of all ages and income levels, and ensure equity in city jobs and contract opportunities. The City will also establish a new Office of Financial Empowerment that will elevate efforts to connect families with financial education and wealth building resources available from the government, non-profit, and private sectors. The City supports legislation that will expand economic opportunity for families and workers.

Working Families

People are working harder than ever, but many families are still struggling to make ends meet. The City of Saint Paul recognizes that strong families create strong communities. The City supports responsible statewide solutions that help individuals make a better life for themselves and their families such as paid parental leave and family medical leave.

Statewide \$15 Minimum Wage

The City supports a statewide \$15 minimum wage to ensure that no one working full time has to live in poverty. With the recent passage of a \$15 minimum wage ordinance, the City is committed to working families and supports legislation that will ensure that workers with disabilities are paid the full minimum wage.

Statewide Earned Sick and Safe Time

The city supports a statewide policy guaranteeing earned sick and safe time for workers to ensure that all Minnesotans can achieve the best possible health and safety outcomes for themselves and their families.

Emerald Ash Borer and Workforce Development

As cities across Minnesota continue to address Emerald Ash Borer, the City of Saint Paul seeks state funding to incorporate workforce training and development efforts into ongoing mitigation efforts. Through this innovative approach, cities can mitigate the risks to health and safety presented by the continued spread of this invasive species while equipping individuals with the skills involved in identifying, removing, replacing, and treating impacted trees.

The City of Saint Paul supports Economic and Community Stability Items that:

- Increase funding for brownfield site remediation programs;
- Dedicate State funding for programs at the Department of Employment and Economic Development focusing on cultural corridors, women and minority-owned businesses, redevelopment areas and transit improvement areas;
- UFCW efforts to create a fund for construction of grocery stores in underserved neighborhoods in urban and rural areas;
- Streamline the zoning amendment process for cities of the first class;
- Preserve a local municipality's ability to set the fees necessary to protect and promote public health within their community;
- Funding for design and construction of a land bridge over I-94 in the Rondo Neighborhood;
- Statewide registration or licensure of massage therapists and opposes legislation that would restrict the ability of cities to regulate massage therapy establishments; and
- Efforts to increase flexibility in the way that cities contract for large scale, complex infrastructure projects.

Streets, Sidewalks, and Bikeways

The City of Saint Paul spends \$45 million annually to rebuild and maintain its streets. In 2019 the City of Saint Paul will make an additional \$5.5 million in new investments in milling and overlaying city streets. The City of Saint Paul has also committed \$1 million for sidewalk repairs. Nevertheless, 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 new resources and funding tools needed to meet growing demand.

City Streets

The City of Saint Paul supports new dedicated revenue outside of the constitutional formula for city streets. The City also 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. Additionally, the City supports improving safety, reducing crashes, and enhancing livability by enabling municipalities to set lower default speed limits consistent with local priorities and plans. The City supports a statewide effort to educate motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians about the rules of the road and best practices to increase safety and decrease crashes, injuries, and fatalities.

Transit Investments

The City of Saint Paul supports additional funding for transit projects across the region, including a sales tax increase for metro transit. To build a 21st century transit system, any new transit funding from the state must recognize the need for a geographic balance across the Metro Area. This includes projects like the Gateway Corridor, Riverview Corridor, Rush Line, Red Rock, and Robert Street.

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.

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

The City of Saint Paul 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 TIF from the districts to assist in the development of affordable housing.

Railroads

The City of 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. The planning and coordination required for response operations 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

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. 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.

Parks and Recreation Centers

The City of Saint Paul is committed to providing a parks and recreation system that provides opportunities for health, safety, and life-long learning. As part of the City's Community First Public Safety strategy, the city will spend \$300,000 to triple its investment in free out-of-school time recreational programming to ensure that young people can connect with caring adults. The City will also spend \$2.5 million to continue mitigating the harmful effects of Emerald Ash Borer. The City supports legislation that will invest in programs and resources that align with its investments in outdoor spaces and youth development.

Urban Forest Invasive Species Mitigation

The City supports funding to assist cities with urban forest management and meeting the costs of preparing for, and responding to, catastrophic urban forest problems. Specifically, cities need additional funding for the identification, removal, replacement, and treatment of trees related to management of Emerald Ash Borer. The state should establish an ongoing grant program with annual funding that is usable for those activities.

Legacy Funding

Legacy resources are used to supplement and support projects and programs including regional parks, libraries, Como Zoo, improvements to the Mississippi River, and a host of other items.

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 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 fish, game, 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 and Como Zoo and Conservatory.

Parks Funding

Local parks and trails support the economic vitality needed to attract and retain a dedicated and qualified workforce. Investment in local parks is important to the future of economic growth, both to keep pace with the needs of those who live and work in Saint Paul and to attract future development opportunities. The City of Saint Paul supports the dedication of resources that can be invested in these local assets. Local parks and trails are not constitutionally eligible for Legacy funds, therefore the City supports the dedication of other resources that can be invested in these local assets.

The Saint Paul Parks Department is 1 of 10 implementing agencies in the Metropolitan Council's Metro Regional Parks System. The City works closely with those nine other implementing agencies to ensure an equitable funding formula for the Parks and Trails Fund and to increase the operations and maintenance funding, required by state statute to be 40 percent, currently funded at less than 9 percent. The City supports fully funding the Metro Regional Parks biennial budget, opposes cuts and allowing the Metropolitan Council to maximize investments in capital assets.

Funding for Como Park Zoo and Conservatory

A centerpiece of Como Regional Park, Como Park Zoo and Conservatory is a world class destination that has played a vital role in meeting the recreational needs of visitors from all over Minnesota. The City of Saint Paul supports efforts to increase resources to meet the growing needs of its visitors.

Funding for Changsha Garden

The Minnesota China Friendship Garden on the East Side of Saint Paul is a community collaboration celebrating the City of Saint Paul's 40-year sister-city relationship with the City of Changsha, China. The City of Saint Paul supports legislation to continue expansion of this cultural landmark.

Resilience

By focusing on resilience, cities like Saint Paul can mitigate the harmful effects of climate change and other long-term challenges. The City of Saint Paul is committed to becoming a carbon-neutral community by 2050 and being a leader on clean and efficient energy, sustainable transportation systems, land use, and solid waste systems.

The City of Saint Paul supports additional state resources and policies that will assist City of Saint Paul in creating a sustainable environment for all, including:

- Incentivizing the manufacture of green products to be used in construction and assist manufacturers in incorporating green practices in their production of goods;
 - The City of Saint Paul supports the Metropolitan Council as a regional governmental agency and planning organization;
 - Improving energy efficiency goals and activities by investor owned utilities;
 - Preparing for the impacts of climate change on infrastructure, natural systems and human health;
 - Increasing distributed generation technologies, such as solar photovoltaic, solar thermal production, wind, combined heat and power for both public and private entities;
 - Encouraging legislation and amendments to rules to expand source separated composting efforts;
 - Increasing 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.
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City of Saint Paul Supports

Bonding Items:

- ❖ Battle Creek Winter Recreation Construction, \$2.126 million
- ❖ Completion of the Trout Brook/Gateway Trail, \$600,000
- ❖ Eastside Freedom Library HVAC Modernization, \$1.2 million
- ❖ Environmental Learning Center at Watergate Marina, \$3 million
- ❖ Improvement of the Police Shooting Range in Maplewood, \$3.8 million
- ❖ Riverview Corridor, \$2 million
- ❖ Rush Line Corridor, \$2 million
- ❖ YMCA at 360 Osborne, \$7 million
- ❖ Victoria Theater, \$3 million
- ❖ International Institute, \$5 million
- ❖ Playwright's Center, \$4 million

Community partners and coalition legislative priorities for 2019:

- ❖ Ramsey County;
 - ❖ Saint Paul Port Authority;
 - ❖ Saint Paul Public Schools;
 - ❖ League of Minnesota Cities;
 - ❖ Metro Cities;
 - ❖ Homes for All Coalition;
 - ❖ Second Chance Coalition;
 - ❖ Restore the Vote.
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For more information about the City of Saint Paul's 2019 Legislative Agenda, please contact:

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