City of Saint Paul

City Hall and Court House
15 West Kellogg
Boulevard
3rd Floor

Meeting Agenda

Audit Committee

Councilmember Rebecca Noecker, Chair
Councilmember Molly Coleman
Councilmember HwaJeong Kim

Stephanie D. Dilworth, Community Advisor
James T. Farnsworth, Community Advisor
Jeremy Lostetter, Community Advisor
Noah McVay, Community Advisor

Tuesday, November 18, 2025 | **4:00 PM** | **City Hall, 3rd Floor**

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 13D.02, Committee Stephanie Dilworth, will participate remotely via interactive technology.

Roll Call

Discussion

SR 25-250	1) Data Practices Study Scope of Work Update (Dr. Heather Britt)
Attachments:	Wilder Research_Data Practices Study Revised Scope of Work.pdf Wilder Research_Revised Scope of Work PPT.pdf
SR 25-251	2) Community Engagement with district councils, community organizations and city departments (Community Advisor Noah McVay and All)
Attachments:	Community Engagement and Topic Ideas Gathering (September 2025) Community Engagement Slide Deck (Updated 2025)
SR 25-252	3) 2026 Topic Selection Process (All)
Attachments:	2026 Performance Audit Topic Selection Process
SR 25-253	4) Community Advisor Appointment Timeline (All)
Attachments:	Community Advisor Application 2025 Timeline to appoint Community Advisor (Nov - Dec)

Adjournment

City Hall and Court House
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Phone: 651-266-8560

City of Saint Paul

Master

File Number: SR 25-250

File ID:	SR 25-250	**Type:**	Staff Report	**Status:**	Agenda Ready
Version:	4	**Contact Number:**		**In Control:**	Audit Committee
				File Created:	11/12/2025
File Name:				**Final Action:**	

Title: 1) Data Practices Study Scope of Work Update (Dr. Heather Britt)

Notes:

Sponsors:		**Enactment Date:**	
Attachments:	Wilder Research_Data Practices Study Revised Scope of Work.pdf, Wilder Research_Revised Scope of Work PPT.pdf	**Financials Included?:**	
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1) Data Practices Study Scope of Work Update (Dr. Heather Britt)

Wilder Research & St. Paul Audit Committee
Project #3: Data Practices Process
Revised Scope

Purpose

Key Research Questions

1. GovQA Capabilities & Internal Use

- What standard capabilities does the GovQA data request management system provide?
- How has the City of Saint Paul configured or customized GovQA for its purposes?
- How is GovQA's use documented for City staff (e.g., procedures, training materials, process maps)?
- Does GovQA provide sufficient management controls to efficiently and effectively process data practices requests?

2. Reporting & Data Trends

- What reports are available to City staff through GovQA?
- Which reports are vendor-provided, and which were created specifically for the City?
- What do aggregate GovQA reports reveal about request volumes, trends, timeliness, and patterns since GovQA's implementation?

3. Resident-Facing Portal & User Experience

- What online portal does City residents use to submit data practices requests?
- How does the portal function, and how do residents receive correspondence and data from the City?
- What is the experience of residents/end users when navigating the online portal?
- How do frequent "low-need, high-use" requesters perceive the City's system compared to other jurisdictions they routinely interact with?

4. Policies, Training & Compliance

- What training programs and guidance are provided to City staff responsible for processing data practices requests?
- Are these training programs and guidance adequate to ensure compliance with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act?
- How do City training programs and guidance compare with model forms, procedures, and guidance issued by the Minnesota Department of Administration's Data Practices Office (DPO)?

5. Comparison With Other Jurisdictions

- What are the data request processes, policies, and procedures used in other Minnesota jurisdictions (e.g., Hennepin County, Ramsey County, Minneapolis, Bloomington, Duluth)?
- What request management tools and online portals do they use?

- What publicly available data (e.g., logs, statistics, performance measures) exist regarding their request handling?
- What peer-reviewed or gray-literature best practices exist for municipal public records programs nationwide?

Key Owners of the City's Data Request Process

- Mayor's Office
- City Attorney's Office
- Office of the City Clerk
- Office of the City Council
- Department staff responsible for processing data practices requests across all divisions

Key Stakeholders

The Audit Committee has agreed that members of the public should be included as key stakeholders in the audit, and that consultation with the Minnesota Office of Data Practices and Minnesotans for Open Government will strengthen the scope and methodology.

- **City of Saint Paul**
  - City Clerk's Office
  - Council Committee Staff
  - Frequent requestors to Department of Safety & Inspections through the City online portal

- **State & External Entities**
  - Minnesota Department of Administration – Data Practices Office (DPO)
  - Office of the State Auditor (OSA)
  - League of Minnesota Cities (subject matter resource and best-practice expert)
  - Other Minnesota jurisdictions (Hennepin County, Ramsey County, Minneapolis, Duluth, Bloomington)

Data Collection Approach

1. Document & System Review

- Review of the City's website, online portal, and publicly available information
- Examination of GovQA training materials, process documentation, and procedural guidance
- Review of aggregated GovQA performance data from system inception to present
- Review of the MCFOA record retention schedule followed by the City (See, https://www.mcfoa.org/resources/Documents/2021_Retention_Schedule.pdf)
- Review of model policies/templates from the DPO

2. Literature & Benchmarking

- Review of peer-reviewed literature and gray literature
- Collection and review of publicly available data request documentation from other municipalities
- Examination of precedent audits (e.g., Milwaukee 2018 public records request audit; Nashville 2022 public records request audit)

3. Stakeholder Engagement

- Brief survey with external requesters regarding user experience
- Interviews with City staff responsible for data request processing
- Interviews with staff from other Minnesota jurisdictions to understand comparative practices
- Consultation with the League of Minnesota Cities and the Minnesota Department of Administration (DPO)

Timeline

- **November:** Finalize scope in partnership with City staff
- **December:** Document & data review, interviews scheduled & started, survey developed, literature search
- **January:** Document & data analysis, interviews completed, survey implemented, literature synthesized
- **February:** Draft report available
- **March:** Presentation to Audit Committee, finalization of report

Wilder Research & St. Paul Audit Committee Project #3: Data Practices Process Revised Scope

Heather Britt

November 18th, 2025

AMHERST H. WILDER FOUNDATION
Here for good.

Wilder Research.

Our Discussion Today

- Scope update & refresh

- Refreshed purpose of our work in this 3rd project together:
  - To assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and compliance of the City of Saint Paul's data practices request processes, tools, policies, and user experience, with a focus on the City's use of GovQA and its alignment with Minnesota Data Practices Act requirements.

Overview

- Key Research Questions
- Key Stakeholders
- Data Collection Approach
- Timeline

A1: GovQA Capabilities & Internal Use

- What standard capabilities does the GovQA data request management system provide?
- How has the City of Saint Paul configured or customized GovQA for its purposes?
- How is GovQA's use documented for City staff (e.g., procedures, training materials, process maps)?
- Does GovQA provide sufficient management controls to efficiently and effectively process data practices requests?

A2: Reporting & Data Trends

- What reports are available to City staff through GovQA?
- Which reports are vendor-provided, and which were created specifically for the City?
- What do aggregate GovQA reports reveal about request volumes, trends, timeliness, and patterns since GovQA's implementation?

A3: Resident-Facing Portal & User Experience

- What online portal does City residents use to submit data practices requests?
- How does the portal function, and how do residents receive correspondence and data from the City?
- What is the experience of residents/end users when navigating the online portal?
- How do frequent “low-need, high-use” requesters perceive the City’s system compared to other jurisdictions they routinely interact with?

Q4: Policies, Training & Compliance

- What training programs and guidance are provided to City staff responsible for processing data practices requests?
- Are these training programs and guidance adequate to ensure compliance with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act?
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A5. Comparison with Other Jurisdictions

- What are the data request processes, policies, and procedures used in other Minnesota jurisdictions (e.g., Hennepin County, Ramsey County, Minneapolis, Bloomington, Duluth)?
- What request management tools and online portals do they use?
- What publicly available data (e.g., logs, statistics, performance measures) exist regarding their request handling?
- What peer-reviewed or gray-literature best practices exist for municipal public records programs nationwide?

Key Stakeholders

- **City of Saint Paul**
  - City Clerk’s Office
  - Council Committee Staff
  - Frequent requestors to Department of Safety & Inspections through the City online portal
- **State & External Entities**
  - Minnesota Department of Administration – Data Practices Office (DPO)
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  - Other Minnesota jurisdictions (Hennepin County, Ramsey County, Minneapolis, Duluth, Bloomington)

Data Collection Approach

- Document & system review
- Literature & benchmarking

DC1. Document & System Review

- Review of the City’s website, online portal, and publicly available information
- Examination of GovQA training materials, process documentation, and procedural guidance
- Review of aggregated GovQA performance data from system inception to present
- Review of the MCFOA record retention schedule followed by the City
  - see https://www.mcfoa.org/resources/Documents/2021_Retention_Schedule.pdf
- Review of model policies/templates from the DPO

DC2. Literature & Benchmarking

- Review of peer-reviewed literature and gray literature
- Collection and review of publicly available data request documentation from other municipalities
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- Brief survey with external requesters regarding user experience
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Version:	1	**Contact Number:**		**In Control:**	Audit Committee
				File Created:	11/12/2025
File Name:				**Final Action:**	

Title: 2) Community Engagement with district councils, community organizations and city departments (Community Advisor Noah McVay and All)

Notes:

Sponsors:		**Enactment Date:**	
Attachments:	Community Engagement and Topic Ideas Gathering (September 2025), Community Engagement Slide Deck (Updated 2025)	**Financials Included?:**	
Contact Name:		**Hearing Date:**	
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2) Community Engagement with district councils, community organizations and city departments (Community Advisor Noah McVay and All)

Community Engagement & Idea Gathering: Strategies to Gather Topics for 2026

Background

CP Noecker expressed concerns that the current surveys may be insufficient for gathering meaningful community input; additional outreach efforts may be necessary.

Response rates to ongoing staff and resident “evergreen” surveys have significantly declined compared to 2024.

Strategies Identified (from September 2025 Meeting)

1. Expand Outreach to District Councils - Six district councils remain unengaged, according to 2024 notes. Suggested upcoming meetings for 2025 engagement include:

D3 – West Side Community Organization
• November 24 | 6:00–8:00 pm
• December 25 | 6:00–8:00 pm

D9 – West 7th / Fort Road Federation
• November 10 | 7:00–9:00 pm
• December 8 | 7:00–9:00 pm

D10 – Como Park District
• November 19 | 7:15–8:30 pm (Hybrid)
• December 17 | 7:15–8:30 pm (Hybrid)

D11 – Hamline Midway Coalition
• November 25 | 6:15–8:00 pm (Hybrid)
• December 23 | 6:15–8:00 pm (Hybrid)

D15 – Highland District Council
• November 6 | 7:00–8:30 pm

D16 – Summit Hill Association
• November 24 | 7:00–8:00 pm (Hybrid)
• December 29 | 7:00–8:00 pm (Hybrid)

2. **Engage Non-District Community Groups** - Include organizations such as **Saint Paul Strong** that offer critical feedback to the city.

3. **Clarify the Committee’s Role**

- Ensure departments and community members understand that the committee is conducting **performance audits**, not **financial audits**.

- Department representatives can help frame this distinction during outreach.

4. **Leverage Internal City Knowledge**
   - Invite the City Attorney's Office to share insights on frequently litigated case types.
     – This may help the committee identify focus areas for future performance audits based on potential risks.

   - **Request input from Councilmembers and their staff**, who often hear directly from constituents about recurring concerns and issues.

Saint Paul City Council Audit Committee

Informational Presentation

Agenda

- Introductions
- Mission and function
- Membership
- History
- How topics get chosen
- What we’re doing now
- Your feedback

Mission and Function

- **Mission:** The Saint Paul City Council Audit Committee's mission is to evaluate the financial and program performance of City departments to build public trust and ensure outstanding service delivery, transparency and accountability.
- **Charge of the Audit Committee:** With input from the community and city staff, the committee will select a topic based on the potential impact an audit could have on improving the City's efficiency and effectiveness, interview and select consultants to perform the audit, and monitor the work of the consultants throughout the process. The Audit Committee will present a final report to the City Council and Administration on its findings. The Committee may, from time to time, request an update from the Administration on its progress toward recommendations from previous audits and update the Council accordingly.

Committee Membership

- Voting Member (3):
  - Councilmembers Rebecca Noecker (W2, Chair),
  - Councilmember Molly Coleman (W4), and
  - Councilmember HwaJeong Kim (W5)

- Non-voting Member (Advisory Group - 4):
  - Stephanie Dilworth, Ward 1 Resident
  - Jeremy Lostetter, Ward 1 Resident
  - Noah McVay, Ward 3 Resident
  - Community Advisor (vacant)

History

- 1990's audits
- Councilmembers Prince and Noecker joining the council and spearheading the re-formation of a City Council Audit Committee
- Per **Res 20-1110**, the City Council voted at its August 12, 2020 meeting to establish the creation of a Saint Paul City Council Audit Committee

How do audit topics get selected and pursued?

Selection: In consultation with the Mayor’s Cabinet, city departments, district councils, community partners, and a broad group of stakeholders; through online survey; with regular, rolling reviews of ideas.

RFP/RFQs are broadly circulated to consultants with appropriate timeline.

Currently, the committee has a master contract with Wilder Research to conduct up to 2 studies annually with cost not to exceed $50,000.

Purpose:
• Enhancing accountability of city operations
• Improving efficiency and effectiveness of city operations; and
• Demonstrating to the public the City Council’s commitment to efficiency and positive outcomes

The Committee reports and shares its findings with the public and Administration, including working with department partners to conduct studies and the Administration to implement recommendations based on audit findings.

Audit Committee Studies

- 2024
  - Department Efficiency and Collaboration Study between Parks and Recreation and the Public Library completed

- 2025
  - Saint Paul Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) Process Assessment Study completed
  - Saint Paul's Data Practices Process Study underway

We want your feedback!

- https://www.stpaul.gov/department/city-council/audit-committee
- Scroll down to “Topic suggestions from residents”
- We review survey responses on a rolling basis to inform the work of the committee

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Title: 3) 2026 Topic Selection Process (All)

Notes:

Sponsors:		**Enactment Date:**	
Attachments:	2026 Performance Audit Topic Selection Process	**Financials Included?:**	
Contact Name:		**Hearing Date:**	
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3) 2026 Topic Selection Process (All)

2026 Performance Audit Topic Selection Process

Purpose
To identify and select performance audit topics that provide the highest value to the City, strengthen accountability, and address areas of risk, inefficiency, public interest, or legal obligation.

1. Collect Topic Suggestions
Sources include:
- Audit Committee members
- City Council and Mayor's Office
- Departments and staff
- Members of the public
- Performance data, complaints, emerging risks referred from City Council, Budget Committee, or Organizational Committee meetings
- Prior performance audit study follow-ups

NOTE: All suggestions are logged into the topic tracker.

2. Initial Screening
Each suggestion must:
- Meet the Committee's Mission;
- Be within the Committee's Authority;
- Enhance accountability of City operations to performance expectations outlined in adopted codes, policies and budgets;
- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of City operations; and
- Demonstrate to the public of the City Council's commitment to efficiency and positive outcomes, especially as it contemplates tax increases.

NOTE: Topics not meeting criteria are documented and deferred.

3. Evaluation Criteria (Scoring)
Eligible topics are scored 1–5 in each category:
- **Risk & Impact:** financial, compliance, equity, service delivery, reputational
- **Feasibility:** data availability, complexity, resource needs
- **Strategic Alignment:** alignment with City priorities or legal responsibility
- **Value Added:** potential cost savings, performance improvement, innovation

NOTE: Scores guide prioritization but do not solely determine the final selection. Areas of considerations may examine:

- High-risk areas
- Community or equity impact
- Operational efficiency or modernization

4. Stakeholder Consultation
Before final selection, staff consult:
- Relevant departments
- Legal counsel
- Community stakeholders (if applicable)

- Subject-matter experts

NOTE: Wilder Research will be consulted to help refine scope but does not determine topic selection.

5. Committee Review & Approval
Audit staff present:

- Draft Scope of Work

Audit Committee Members and Advisors:

- Recommend and refer top two topics to the City Council
- Evaluation and rank topic selections

NOTE: The Audit Committee discusses, amends, and approves up to two **audit topics for further study** annually. Wilder Research will prepare a final report for presentation and distribution.

6. Flexibility for Emerging Issues Consideration
Through the 2026 cycle:

- New legal or compliance risks
- Major service disruptions
- Significant public concern
- Time-sensitive opportunities

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Title: 4) Community Advisor Appointment Timeline (All)

Notes:

Sponsors:		**Enactment Date:**	
Attachments:	Community Advisor Application, 2025 Timeline to appoint Community Advisor (Nov - Dec)	**Financials Included?:**	
Contact Name:		**Hearing Date:**	
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4) Community Advisor Appointment Timeline (All)

City of Saint Paul Audit Committee - Community Advisor Application (Due: December 3, 2025)

Purpose of the Audit Committee: The Saint Paul City Council Audit Committee was formed in August 2020 per Res 20-1110. Its mission is to evaluate the financial and program performance of City departments to build public trust and ensure outstanding service delivery, transparency, and accountability. Annually, the Committee will solicit input from the community and from within the city government to audit the performance of City departments, programs, and services.

Member Role & Description: With input from the community and City staff advisors, the Committee will select an audit topic each year based on the potential impact an audit could have on improving the City's efficiency and effectiveness. The Committee will then interview and select a consultant to perform the audit and monitor the consultant's work throughout the process. The Audit Committee will present a final report to the City Council and Administration on its findings. The Committee may, from time to time, request information from the Administration on its progress toward recommendations from previous audits and update the Council accordingly.

Annual Deliverables:

1. Select audit topic.
2. Select a consultant to perform the audit.
3. Monitor consultant's work.
4. Present audit findings and recommendations.
5. Participate in ongoing community engagement efforts to ensure visibility and awareness of the work of the committee.

Committee Membership (*subject to change*):

- **Councilmember Rebecca Noecker**, Ward 2 (chair)
- **Councilmember Molly Coleman**, Ward 4
- **Councilmember HwaJeong Kim**, Ward 5

Community Advisors

Stephanie D. Dilworth *(Term: April 2022 to April 2025; Reappointment Term: April 17, 2025 to April 17, 2028)*
Jeremy Lostetter *(Term: December 2023 to December 2026)*
Noah McVay *(Term: June 11, 2025 to June 11, 2028)*
vacancy

Terms: 3-year term

Saint Paul Residency: Required

Meeting Calendar: The Audit Committee meets regularly once a month or as needed for a 1-hour meeting. Meeting dates and times are determined at the end of each year for the following year's calendar. *(subject to change)*

Meeting Location(s): (in-person meeting) City Hall, Council Chambers, 15 W. Kellogg Boulevard, Saint Paul, MN 55102 *(subject to change)*

Stipends: $40.00/meeting

Staffing: The Audit Committee will be supported by Council Research staff.

Ideal applicant:

- Is able to attend a majority of the meetings.
- Has a strong interest in improving Saint Paul.
- Experience providing organizational oversight and/or conducting audits is helpful.

Application and Selection Process: All applications must be **received by Wednesday, December 3, 2025, at 4:30 p.m**. to be considered. **Applicants will be informed by December 30, 2025,** regarding next steps. Please be aware that if you are selected, you will be interviewed at the Audit Committee's regularly scheduled meeting on December 16, 2025, at its 4:00 PM meeting. Interviews will be held in Council Chambers. Questions can be directed to Nhia Vang at 651-266-8566 or CCAuditCommittee@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

Please fill out the application as completely as you can to help the Audit Committee in its deliberation. If you would like to also include a cover letter or a copy of your resume, please email CCAuditCommittee@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

* Required

1. **First Name** *

2. **Last Name** *

3. **Middle Name or Initial**

4. (optional) **Pronoun preference.** Please check all that applies to you.

- ☐ she/her/hers
- ☐ he/his/him
- ☐ they/them/their
- ☐ Other

5. **Home Address** (Please also include city, state and zip code.) *

6. **What ward do you live or work in?**

*(You can go to **https://stpaul.maps.arcgis.com/apps/InformationLookup/index.html?appid=8d3e5bc01c624dcbb4542fc4db9d920c** to find out what ward or district council that you live in.)*

- ◯ Ward 1
- ◯ Ward 2
- ◯ Ward 3
- ◯ Ward 4
- ◯ Ward 5
- ◯ Ward 6
- ◯ Ward 7
- ◯ I do not know.
- ◯ I prefer not to say.

7. **Telephone/Mobile Phone** (no dashes or spaces needed) *

8. **Email** *

Reasons for your interest in serving on the Audit Committee

Please provide any relevant experience that may be useful to help the Audit Committee in their consideration of your candidacy.

9. **What interests you about becoming a part of the Audit Committee?** *

10. **What skill sets and lived experiences do you have that will contribute to the committee?** *

11. **How do you define a successful audit?** For example, is it when a detailed report or chart is produced, a narrative leads to policy change, participants see the outcomes of their contributions, or when the audit results are used and referenced to guide future work? *

12. **What do you hope to gain from being on the Audit Committee?** *

Demographic Information

The Audit Committee strives to ensure that community members on the committee reflect the City's diversity. Your response is strictly voluntary.

13. **What group do you associate with?** Please check all that applies to you.

- [ ] American Indian
- [ ] Asian or Pacific Islander
- [ ] Black (African-American)
- [ ] Hispanic
- [ ] White (Caucasian)
- [ ] Other

14. **What language(s) do you speak, and do you need a translator?**

Special Accommodations

Special accommodations (i.e., large print materials, sign language interpreters, assistive listening device, etc) at a meeting.

15. **We are committed to ensuring that all members are able to participate fully. Please let us know how we can meet those needs.**

Tennessen Warning

The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13) governs the City's use of the information contained in this application. Some of the information sought in this application is private data under the Act. The requested information will be used by the appointing authority to carry out the City's official appointment responsibilities. You are not required to provide any information. However, failure to answer the application questions may cause the appointing authority to reject your application. The majority of items contained in this application are public, including name, address, telephone or email, employment, skills, training and experience, and are therefore available to anyone requesting it. The remaining items on the application form are classified as private. The private data is available only to you and to other persons in the City who, because of work assignments, reasonably require access to the information.

2025 Timeline of Community Advisor Appointment

	2025			2026	
Task	**11/19 to 12/3**	**12/16 Audit Committee Meeting OR TBD**	**12/30**	**1/14**	**1/20**
Post and send press release for announcement of Community Advisors vacancies and assemble Community Advisors applications ***(2-week posting)*** Press Release and Application goes live at 8:30AM on 11/19; Application closes at 4:30PM on 12/3.		**NOTE: Solicit appointment by end of April for first introduction at the 5/20th AC meeting. Need members and Councilmembers to share this vacancy.**			
Interview and select Community Advisors Candidates **(2-week following closing period: rank and select candidates for interviewing by 12/8 and notifying candidates for interview by 12/10)**					
Email Selected Candidate and prepare resolution appointing final candidate to Audit Committee for a 3-year term (January 2026 to January 2029) **(1 week before next Council Meeting)**			**Email candidates of committee decision by 12/30 and prepare resolution by 1/7**		
Council Action - Approving Appointments				**1/14 Council Approval of Appointment**	
New member seated for January 2026 Audit Committee meeting					

NOTE: New member seated for January 20th Meeting.