

Audit Committee Topic Suggestions from City Staff

a/o September 8, 2023 (1 more response received for a total of 61)

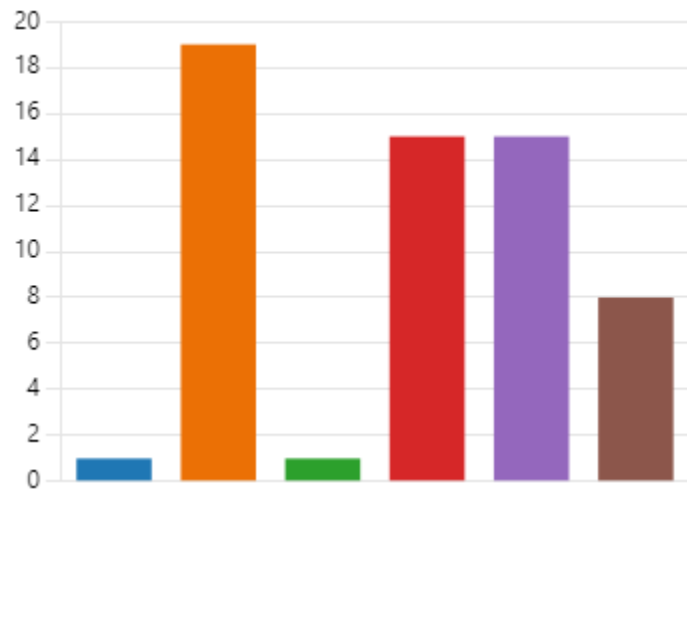
1. What is your length of service?

● 0-4 years	23
● 5-10	9
● 11-20	14
● 21-30	11
● 31+	4



2. What job do you hold in the city?

● Department Director	1
● Front Line Staff	19
● Customer Service Representative	1
● Administrative	15
● Technical	15
● Ward 1 or Ward 2 Ward 3 Ward 4 Ward 5 Ward 6 Ward 7	



3. What question would you like the Saint Paul City Council Audit Committee to explore?

(1 new response; highlighted in yellow)

53 Responses [Blank fields are not reflected in total responses.]

Performance Audit of the City of Saint Paul's Labor Relations Activities (1999)

Audit of adequate compensation for employees

I don't understand this question.

Performance Audit of the City Attorney's Office Performance Audit of the Procurement Department

law enforcement

work rules

How efficient is the City's processes for paying vendors/invoices?

Performance Audit of the LEP plan in all Saint Paul departments

Performance Audit of the City of Saint Paul's Labor Relations Activities

pay and benefits

Audit of the "Office of Financial Empowerment" to include breakdown of budget, salaries and fringe by position, source of all funding, what results have been achieved, and cost per person helped.

Looks like the Parks & Recreation could get an update.

Performance Audit of the City of Saint Paul's finance and budget office

I would like to see an audit of Department functions with employees working in the office vs departments that are working remote. Are public projects taking longer with a displaced work force

- Audit the City's committees (how outreach is done, how committee member appointments are decided, how recommendations are utilized, how members are held accountable for attendance and biases)

Staffing study of civilian positions held at the Police Department

Not sure, links not active so not sure what type of questions to ask.

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Audit of the utilization of and effectiveness of the city's dedicated bike lanes and the impacts on pedestrians and vehicle traffic.

Audit the mayor's staff (Chief Equity Officer, Chief Resilience Officer, Director of Intergovernmental Relations), and on and on. For the sake of transparency.

performance audit if the city of saint Paul's Recreation centers

Upkeep and safety of the skyways.

Performance Audit of the City of Saint Paul's Directors

53 Responses [Blank fields are not reflected in total responses.]

Who are area managers and what are their races and responsibilities.

Labor Relations Activities specific to union representation for AFSCME District Council #5-Clerical #2508; addressing the pay disparities and inequities.

Audit of PCIARC

How many dollars are invested in increasing future revenues versus one time costs, where the money is lost forever to provide a service?

All of the above are good to audit. However, it is too hard for an auditor to find out discrimination related to nepotism and other favoritism since officers know they have to fulfill all requirements in a process of employment. So, critical observation is necessary. For example, all required procedures might have been met. However, a critical person can ask for the list of all applicants for a job and see merits against requirements, and then may find discrepancies that may be subjectively expressed while objective facts are available.

Audit of all administrative offices for wasteful spending

Audit of the City of Saint Paul PW-Street Maintenance Division

Do staff have work management tools they need to be as productive as they can be. This could include accommodations for tasks employees find difficult and office tools to keep track of open requests and actions staff need to take to get work done.

Performance audit of the Office of Neighborhood Safety

In my experience, the hiring process with the City's Human Resources Department is extremely challenging. It takes a very long time, new rules seem to be applied or rules change each time I go through it, and the engagement/support from HR does not support effective recruitment. How effective is the City's Human Resources Department at hiring for vacant positions? How consistent and standardized is their application of civil service rules and union bargaining agreements when helping departments navigate the hiring process?

Performance audit of Public Works' street maintenance funding and public facing outcomes (i.e. how do we evaluate the quality of service relative to the amount of funding/resource inputs)

Evaluate the police

Hiring St. Paul residents for St. Paul jobs

Performance audit on road maintenance

n/a

Performance audit of individuals hired and given preferential treatment just because they are a minority in the police and fire service.

Cost benefit of using higher-quality, longer-lasting, pavement materials to improve the quality of our streets and cut down overall maintenance costs on a long-term basis.

Audit of tracking work performance, efficiency and completion/outcomes of work done.

53 Responses *[Blank fields are not reflected in total responses.]*

Performance Audit of the City of Saint Paul's Hiring, Firing, and Promotional Practices within Saint Paul Recreation Centers

Performance audit of City Fire Operations.

Performance Audit of the Saint Paul City Council

Audit of the HART Team activities and budget

There are a couple of audits that would be helpful. An audit of the amount of turnover and the costs related to turnover. This is likely data that is available, but not looked at on a regular basis. I also imagine that this is why the HR department is attempting to change its processes. Another audit is the costs associated with housing actions. There are three departments that touch on housing, but also outreach that seems to have topic overlap. If we are working with similar partners in different departments, it seems that surveys or outreach or engagement could be combined. For example, if the goal of departments is to increase education and engagement, that could be developed collaboratively instead of each department working on their own initiative or program. Audit of the City website, its mapping, and actual usage. I have had a number of people tell me it is not user friendly. The fact that it is not user friendly does not match with radical hospitality.

Traffic Operations

Performance Audit of the City of Saint Paul's Labor Relations Activities (1999)

Please audit the HR Hiring process. It takes entirely too long to post, interview and hire new hires. There has to be a faster way to get positions filled which will help with employee burnout.

I'm very new to the City so any information I put forth might embarrass me should I look at it in year....some ideas that come to mind are: - Equity initiatives/goals/work across departments/City - Digital services [From Granicus: Digital government services (also called e-government) are defined as service delivery within government — as well as between government and the public — using information and communication technologies. Common digital services range from filling tax returns to renewing a driver's license to applying for a pet license. Nearly any government form or service can be offered digitally.]

Audit of hiring process / pipeline drop out related to equity-

Not sure how to answer. Not enough information about what is entailed in an audit.

Small pay increases 1-2% to firefighters while chief officers get double digit pay raises and expensive take home vehicles.

4. Why do you think this question should be explored? (1 new response; highlighted in yellow)

51 Responses [Blank fields are not reflected in total responses.]

The city doesn't treat all employees fairly.

The minimum wage has been increasing. Skilled employees wages have not increased. Skilled workers should get paid correctly for what they do.

Can't answer this without understanding prior question.

Because it is impossible to get timely help from either of these two departments. They either have other priorities or do not have the staff to provide the support we need.

transparency

schedule flexibility is a big issue in the post-Covid world and there's a real problem with turnover in the city workforce ... you could keep some of the good people you have on staff if the work rules were loosened up a little bit, particularly with scheduling

Experiencing ongoing issues with contractors not getting paid on time; The city's lack of centralized automated billing/payments might be outdated compared to other local governments

Saint Paul says that we are a city that works for all but most departments do not know how to follow the LEP plan and how make their resources and materials available for the communities in other languages. Social media posts are lacking, building signs are only in English, and our vital forms are in English. We do not have our own translation/interpretation team. So many missed opportunities!

Seems like negotiations for several contracts have been going poorly, entering mediation, or voting to strike. Labor Relations seems to be performing more poorly than in recent history (20 years).

city staff retention seems to be diminishing and pay & benefits is probably a source. Saint Paul maybe behind in pay and benefits for comparable positions from other local government agencies. According to recent Impulse surveys city staff and dept staff results both highlight pay.

Because I have not seen or heard of any outcomes from this new dept, and as both a taxpayer and employee, I don't know what these people do.

Are some locations worth keeping as is or exploring other options. Might be a new complex or tear down & convert for different recreational use.

I feel like there is tax payer money being wasted and could be reevaluated and used in better ways.

Because I believe our tax payers deserve more than what they are getting with the work force displaced. They have to communicate by voice message or email and I think that is a rude way to handle our citizens that are paying our salaries.

There are many committees tasked with informing the City's decision-making, but many of them are understaffed, have members who regularly fail to attend, or make recommendations that are simply dismissed by departments. How to ensure the meaningful impact of these committees and commissions?

Some civilian-supported areas are understaffed, where others are over-staffed.

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51 Responses *[Blank fields are not reflected in total responses.]*

Because the bike lanes are underutilized. Business owners complain that they have lost street parking and do not see the lanes used.

Why is there so much wasteful spending by his office and personal on things that cannot be measured? As a city resident over 15 years and soon to move out of the city, I'm curious to this answer. Maybe create a policy so the mayor and his staff wear body cameras. You know, for upmost transparency.

the upper management what their job is? I have worked for the City of St Paul for over 30 years and when I started there was only one top person and 4 managers who looked over the center. and in 2023 we have so many, and I would like to know what their job is.

I have worked in Downtown Minneapolis for a few decades. Their skyways are super clean and for the most part, I always felt safe in their skyways. I can't say the same about Saint Paul (especially as you enter the old St. Paul Athletic Club area and towards Town Square.

We have had multiple organizations explore leadership issues and concerns from Management.

Accountability, room for improvement, sincere intentions.

It is just not right and needs to be changed.

Seems like a conflict of interest that the director is setting the direction of the committee va the citizen commissioners being allowed to set the direction and discussions

Increasing costs have led to financial hardships for the city.

I believe there is a hidden corruption that no naive auditor can find it running a broad way.

to find the money to fix or replace the roads

The condition of our streets

As more and more work is assigned, some tasks are deprioritized. With automation and tracking tools, we can do more in less time and track our work in ways that enable managers to manage important resources like employee time and project scope plans.

It is a new office and there has been little said about what is being done and how effective it has been.

I think this question should be explored to determine how the City can improve HR's effectiveness in hiring and supporting departments in getting their vacant positions filled with quality staff that can move the City forward in providing quality service to the residents.

Because the public asks about this dynamic - especially after the difficult 2022 / 2023 year (snowplowing, pot holes, policy change in how street maintenance is funded due to legal action, etc.) It would be really helpful to have a comprehensive audit to understand this dynamic and communicate it to the public.

The police get too much money.

City taxes and fees should stay in the city. Suburban people are terrible at understanding urban citizens' wants and needs. Subsidizing the suburbs by paying suburbanites to serve the city is stupid.

This city should get the basic services correct before spending money else where.

51 Responses [Blank fields are not reflected in total responses.]

n/a

There are unqualified individuals being hired because of their race/ethnicity and they aren't able to do the job they are required to do.

Because the state of our infrastructure affects every aspect of all St. Paul citizens' and visitors' lives. Who wants to live in, work in, or visit a city that ruins vehicles and makes all transportation more dangerous, whether you are a pedestrian who isn't seen because the driver is watching for potholes or you drive your own vehicle.

Inefficiency and ability to bypass accountability in the current system.

I haven't been with the city long, but I started entry-level with a previous background in upper-management. In the last year I've worked consistently at three different sites and in two different 'areas.' In all of these postings, there were some pretty consistent and foundational 'complications' to the staffing model.

Rates of non retirement separations and PTSD are rising. Retention and morale concerns.

The Council enacts ordinances contrary to legal advice and in violation of both the state and federal Constitutions. They waste time and money enacting such municipal laws, only to lose in court. Legislation through litigation is a terrible waste.

The amount of tax dollars being used on homeless population and how it is being used may be a surprise to taxpayers

An ecosystem needs to be built around common goals. I'm not sure there are common goals. If most people who work in the City love the City, that is not enough to create said ecosystem. Intentionality needs to be built in.

It's a toxic environment.

City hiring practices and promotion of staff to the next level.

The hiring process takes entirely too long, and we are losing potential hires as well as existing employees due to burnout.

- Understand the equity work that is part of everyday business for each department, plus learning about goals/where departments want to go. As the most diverse City in the most diverse county in Minnesota, I think it's important to highlight the work that is going to be transformational in evolving our staff demographics and backgrounds to better match that of the City we represent. - How do the digital services offered in Saint Paul compare to those of similarly sized cities? How is each department impacted by having enough/not enough support to provide the digital services needed to meet the City's needs? What digital services do we need to revamp or improve, what digital services are no longer working for us as a whole, and what do we want working with the City to look like in 2030?

we should be able to determine particularly where diverse candidates drop out of our hiring process (application, interview, etc.) how is our incredibly long and often delayed hiring process impacting our ability to actually hire a diverse workforce long before we even get to the interviews

Losing experiences firefighters to other departments at an alarming rate!

5. **Are there any areas of risks within the City or your department that the Audit Committee should explore?** (1 new response; highlighted in yellow)

39 Responses [Blank fields are not reflected in total responses.]

promotional procedures

Employee theft of equipment, protection from 3rd parties accessing our devices and taking data, poor performing accounting software which could lead to inaccurate reporting

Purchasing Software

city policies surrounding sick/safe leave & why those w/children are prioritized

library workers are mandated reporters but the Skinner room at Central Library has no security camera

Not being in compliance of the LEP Plan

no

The payroll dept. is dangerously understaffed in terms of actual payroll processors & turnover is high. There is something wrong in that dept.

financial

Residents are regularly able to harass their neighbors by making repeated unnecessary complaints to code enforcement. How do we intervene when code-enforcement is being weaponized in this way?

Due to understaffing, quality of customer service can suffer. Also, not meeting statutory deadlines for public data requests.

This is my first year of government employment in a +25 year corporate career and I am pleasantly surprised as a Saint Paul resident that city development projects are strategically planned to provide high quality solutions through the long term. I anticipated a less efficient operation than I am realizing.

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Audit every penny the mayor spends.

what are some of the upper managers jobs.

It's very sad to see the skyways deteriorate like this. Saint Paul is a historical city -- one I've always been proud to be a part of. We risk watching it go further downhill if we don't do something about it very soon. I walk the skyways for exercise, and I patronize the shops that are still open. It would be expensive to hire a few more maintenance & security men and women, but in the end, I think you'd save money since you wouldn't have to keep repairing, repainting, etc. Retailers might be more apt to come back as well. They have painted, but when the cat's away, the mice will play and there is trash left on the ground, urine, graffiti, etc. It smells really bad! It might sound silly but maybe having somebody aggressively cleaning & pushing a mop around with a security guard in site the entire time the skyways are open would deter people from trashing our skyways.

not sure

Conflict of interest by the director

39 Responses [Blank fields are not reflected in total responses.]

How much money is spent on tax exempt entities?

Maintenance: All purchases or procurements might be complete with invoices and receipts. However, I do not see any controlling mechanism to check if an item has been used appropriately or taken away illegally for personal use. At one time a machine that is allocated at the facility that I work was taken away for certain number of days and returned later. I do not know where it was in use.

no

A consolidated city-wide fleet maintenance program

Some departments have work management tools to see a dashboard for their workload and know what they have to prioritize for the week. Can we learn from those existing processes and scale that level of productivity across the City?

n/a

Explore the impact the large number of vacancies across the City has. My department currently has 9 with more expected this year due to retirements. T

grants management/compliance across the city - greater risk as we manage more federal grant dollars

department staffing numbers

Hiring, constant expansion of middle management roles.

police service: not sending a squad to a burglary, but we send squads to dog complaints, noise complaints, and parking complaints. Yup that is correct

impound lot

POLICE AND FIRE UNQUALIFIED/UNFIT PERSONNEL

The safety of people and property is at risk with dangerous road conditions.

Department performance, Regulatory and Compliance - Human Resources

No.

Using the umbrella of equity or racial equity to discriminate against other groups because it's allowed and frankly encouraged

None that I've seen

Traffic Operations

Cybersecurity is a huge risk to the City, and we have two full-time staff now focused on it (up from 1!); we are working to strengthen our borders and infrastructure, but at the end of the day, humans are still the #1 risk when it comes to breaches/attacks.

Loss of life and reduced service to citizens due to lack of experience in the streets

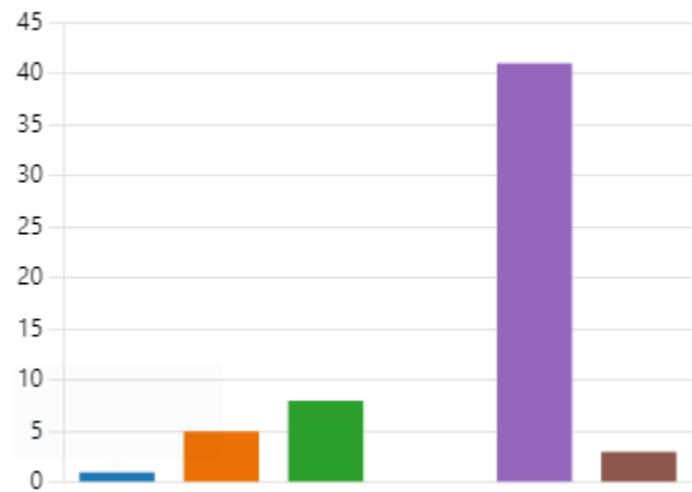
6. Preferred Pronouns

● she/her/hers	35
● he/his/him	13
● they/them/their	1
● Other	6



7. How do you identify?

● American Indian	1
● Asian or Pacific Islander	5
● Black (African-American)	8
● Hispanic	0
● White (Caucasian)	41
● Other	3



Questions 8-10 are contact information.