Audit Committee Topic Suggestions from Residents

a/o September 8, 2023 (5 more responses received for a total of 45)



What ward do you live or work in? 1.



2. What district council represents you?

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Downtown (District Council 17)

l do not know. I prefer not to say.



4. What department are you interested in?



	Mayor's Office	22
•	City Council/City Clerk	11
	City Attorney's Office	6
•	Emergency Management	2
	Financial Empowerment	8
	Financial Services	7
•	Fire and Paramedics	1
	Human Resources	3
	Human Rights and Equal Econo	6
	Library	6
	Neighborhood Safety	17
•	Parks and Recreation	17
	Planning & Economic Developm	14
•	Police	9
	Public Works	19
	Safety of Inspections	6
•	Technology and Communications	2
	Water	3
	Citywide	10
	l don't know.	0

pg. 2 (Audit Committee Topic Suggestions from Residents Responses a/o 09-06-2023)

What question would you like the Saint Paul City Council Audit Committee to explore? (5 new response; highlighted in yellow)

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

1. Performance audit of the city of Saint Paul's human rights and equal opportunities office. I am curious about what MEASURABLE impacts this department has had on the city of Saint Paul. 2. Performance audit of the city of Saint Paul's Mayor's office. I am curious about the spending of his office and if cuts can be made to positively impact the cities budgets. I also am curious to learn about the effectiveness of his large advisory counsel and if they actually produce measurable results.

Why a raise in sales tax?

Audit of street maintenance, plowing, repairs, sweeping, etc.

How is it not a conflict of interest between Husband-and-wife team, Council president Brendmoen and head of Park and Rec when filtering money around?

Performance audit of the city council and Mayor

Audit of mayors office and city council

Why are they not completing Flandrau street between Wilson and Old Hudson?

City's transparency and response time when faced with requests by citizens for public data.

Performance audit of the City of Saint Paul's street maintenance.

Street maintenance

The examples listed just say "performance audit of..." I don't know what that means. I would like to see a comparison between several cities in the U.S that are similar in size to see how much money was spent on the departments that I have selected.

New options for Public Works regarding plowing and potholes--we're going to continue to get weird winters, we need to be prepared. Equity review of Parks and other infrastructure projects (why is a \$100million bike path project in summit being pursued before building equitable access in Frog Town, for example) Similarly, the CIB process is depressing. All 17 dcs have to fight over \$1million when we all have projects needed to help out most vulnerable neighbors--Highland Park is a pretty wealthy neighborhood, but we also have an area of concentrated poverty. Addressing the housing crisis.

Performance audit of the mayor's office

I would like to know when Mayor Carter is going to stop being a community services person and realize he is running an entire city. We all pay taxes

Why doesn't the public works department listen to the residents when they attend meetings, and why to they tell lies when they are asked a direct question. Why don't they hold the private contractors accountable for the terrible work they do?

Restructuring the trash pickup. And the lack of customer service from WM.

When will the pot holes in our streets be dealt with?

pg. 3 (Audit Committee Topic Suggestions from Residents Responses a/o 09-06-2023)

What is the City willing to do in order to restore growth Downtown - residential and commercial.

Performance audit of equal economic opportunity work focusing on long term financial benefit provided to residents vs cost to implement and cost imposed on the community.

I would like to view ALL the job description the Mayor is hiring and the departments they are hiring for. I want the Mayor's budgets audited for new personal and how the money is spent.

Why isn't more money going to take care of our youth. We need a totem town back. Ask anyone educated in youth problems and they will tell you they need to be incarcerated for 6 months in a drug abuse program away from their bad friends and relatives. Give them a focus in life. So many blue collar workers will pay and train young people just to get workers...

Performance audit public works

Performance and audit of the city attorney's office.

Homeless

1) How is it the city employees from each department I listed above can give it citezens the runaround when I reached out them for service and don't seem compeld to serve its citizens? HOW DO WE GET ACCOUNTABLITY? 2) Why can I only ask only 1 question? 3). How can I find out what percent of city employees are residence of St. Paul? 4) How many employees work for St.Paul? 5). What is the city doing to let unions that represent city employees know thier members are failing the citizens they serve? 6) As a union member myself, I recognize the union looks after its members more than the citizens its member are paid well to serve? 7) What leverage does city leadership have over unions unwilling to work with us to address citizens dissatisfaction for inadequate service? 8) What is city leadership doing to fill city job vacancy with qualified city residents? 9) Why isn't the contact information for all city department heads readily available so as a citizens I can have direct contact to them without going though a general info line or DSI?

Performance Audit of the City of Saint Paul's police department

Clear, transparent justice system statistics granular by race. How many people are stopped? Searched? Arrested? Convicted? Incarcerated? How long?

Performance Audit of Public Works.

The cost/benefit of separated bike lanes (located on/along streets, not in parks or along the river) versus on-street bike lanes. How much more do separated lanes cost? Is there evidence on increased safety in St Paul? Is it being tracked? Is there evidence of increased use? Is ti being tracked? What is the percentage the transportation mode share?

audit parks and recreation audit public works

Safety and development

Performance Audit of the City of Saint Paul's Recreation Department and Public Works Department

What recommendations can the Audit Committee provide to restore public transparency and trust when the culture of city staff suggests the city doesn't care what it's residents want.

Performance audit of Public Works and Parks and Recreation

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Performance audit of the City of St. Paul's Public Works Department. Performance Audit of the City of St. Paul's Parks and Recreation Department.

Interdepartmental performance of climate justice goals

Performance audit of the Mayor's office & budget. Performance audit of the Public Works budget.

What are the impediments and obstacles to the construction of affordable housing in St. Paul?

Neighborhood safety

Why are there no consequences for juvenile criminals in St. Paul? Totem Town was closed and nothing opened in its place. Juveniles taunt police and say they'll be out again to steal vehicles. This doesn't shock you? So taxpayers have to risk our safety, property and vehicles because these kids have zero consequences. Their parents want something done, they say they don't know what to do anymore. They're asking for help. Sheriff Fletcher has voiced options, but deaf ears from the city. Why do we pay taxes when this is one of the BIGGEST safety issues in our city and nobody is doing anything!? We lose good residents AND businesses every year because of the city's lack of action.

It is our collective belief that the closure of the Union Depot platform would be an appropriate and necessary step towards ensuring the safety and well-being of our community. By shutting down the platform, we can mitigate the risks associated with criminal activities and work towards restoring the trust and confidence of residents in the local authorities and public spaces. We understand that the closure of a transportation facility will have its consequences, affecting those who rely on it for their daily commutes. However, we strongly believe that the safety and security of our community members should take precedence over convenience. To mitigate the impact on commuters, we urge you to consider the following measures: 1. Alternative Transportation Arrangements: Explore options for providing alternative transportation methods to ensure that commuters are not unduly inconvenienced by the closure of the Union Depot platform. This may include increased bus routes, shuttle services, or improved connectivity to nearby transit stations. 2. Enhanced Security Measures: Allocate additional resources to bolster security in and around the Union Depot area. Increase the presence of law enforcement personnel, install surveillance cameras, and implement effective lighting systems to deter criminal activities and provide a safer environment for commuters and residents alike. This has been tried and failed repeatedly 3. Community Engagement and Education: Launch comprehensive awareness campaigns to educate residents about personal safety measures and reporting procedures. Encourage community involvement and establish programs that promote a sense of ownership and vigilance among residents to actively contribute to the security of the Union Depot area. 4. Collaborative Efforts: Foster partnerships between local law enforcement agencies, community organizations, and stakeholders to develop strategies for crime prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation. By working together, we can address the root causes of crime and establish a safer environment for everyone.

Performance Audit of Public Works Services penalized by Law Enforcement

Please review fire ordinance.

Performance audit of the city's Safety and Inspections department

I would like to know if there is any excess, unnecessary, or under spending/budgeting in any of the above areas.

6. Why do you think this question should be explored? (5 new response; highlighted in yellow)

<u>45 Responses</u> [Blank fields are not reflected in total responses.]

Significant expenditures are made in these offices with little to no public facing reports of measurable impact to the community.

It seems like a raise in sales tax would unfairly effect people who don't have cars to go across city lines to buy goods at a lower tax rate.

Services have declined since this Mayor came into office. They only budget for a handful of snow emergencies....this is MN! It snows a LOT here and there were times when it snowed above the amount for a snow emergency and yet they did not plow. We sat with 12" of snow on our street for weeks wait8ng for it to melt because they decided not to plow. It's ridiculous!

Rumors over the past few years from someone that works closely and knows of some issues.

How much money is being spent on personal aids that are working for these departments. Why so much wasted tax payers money on special committees that aren't making a difference?

Crime is way up , roads are junk , taxes increased but nothing to show for it. I have 3 city lights burnt out for weeks now. My vehicle is being broken in to. Safety is 0

It would complete the flandrau bikeway in 1 block instead of having people travel up to Kennard

See the 2022-2023 data requests related to the "proposed" Summit Avenue bike trail that the City's planners seem to be actively and aggressively avoiding in order to push through a predetermined political agenda.

The streets are not regularly maintained, they are in terrible condition right now and snowplowing has been terrible for the past several years. Some say we don't have the right equipment. What needs to be done to get on track?

The potholes are terrible.

I feel that Saint Paul spends too much money on departments. This is reflected in the year over year percent increase in property taxes which is disproportionate to like sized cities elsewhere in the country.

See above

Too many new initiatives and not enough creative use of existing resources and program

Because our roads are a disaster, not enough police to deal with gangs, people are afraid to go into the city, and he wants to.raise taxes. I would also like an audit of the directors he has appointed. Cut his own staff that must bs a million plus.

Because public servants should actually SERVE the public, honor those who pay for their work and be truthful about how tax dollars are spent. Public servants should also hold the private contractors they select accountable for quality work.

The fact we have to pay out of pocket for a service that we can't control, pick my own garbage service. This should be included service just like recycling.

Pot holes in our streets are a danger to vehicles as well as pedestrians.

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Because it is critical for Saint Paul and any US City and because there is a Downtown crisis that has gone unrecognized by Saint Paul's current government.

To build confidence in government systems it is necessary to have easily quantifiable metrics to judge performance. HR & EEO is an area that is historically based on personal judgement and tends to lack well defined performance metrics. The proposed audit would work to change that by showing the value it provides to residents.

I have lived in St Paul my entire life. I believe the Mayor is out of control on all the personal he has hired. It's more than any other Mayor.

Because we closed Totem town and the new place in Richfield never came to fruition...they need a place to be incarcerated for 6 months to stop all the horrible behavior.

Audit public works. - snow removal and road repair

I want to know there is consistency in who gets charged, for what, with what evidence, and who is offered plea deals based on what information.

Because we need help

Because without finding the answers to them, you will not make a positive deference and this city will soon become unlivable for me personally. I have lived here my whole live. 53 of my 62 years have been in the same home.

Everything that has been happening in the metro and beyond in recent years.

It's hard to fully the causes of justice system inequities when the data is so fragmented and much is missing or too aggregated to compare to other data.

The condition of the City's roads suggests a systemic problem in how the City has approached maintenance and rebuilding of the road network.

The City is increasingly pushing for very expensive bike facilities (raised separated trails) without showing that exceptionally higher cost is justified. The current bike plan (2015) lists the cost of bike lanes as 30,000 per mile and separated raised trails as 1,500,000 per mile. This is 50x difference (3:150). Standard bike lanes are more cost effective, allow more miles to be built out, appear to have similar safety outcomes. Moreover, by creating a larger network of bike facilities per dollar spent, they would appear to increase biking mode share by serving more communities. On-street lanes can also be plowed with the streets (e.g. for free) with some added supportive additional plowing for small snow falls. The additional plowing would result in a much lower cost overall than maintaining a fully separate system. The potential maintenance cost of plowing hundreds of miles of separated bike lanes (as suggested in the 2023 Draft Bike Plan) would be incredible expensive, and serve a very small portion of transportation needs, given that winter biking is <0.1% of transportation mode share.

The city infrastructure is a mess. Why is the city of Saint Paul so bad at plowing the streets in winter? The streets in West Saint Paul - Dakota County are plowed beautifully. How is the public works budget being spent? Does the money go to projects invented to hire friends and relatives? Where did all these massive bike trail plans come from? Minnesota is NOT a climate conducive to biking as transportation. Who is making money from bike trail construction? What happens to the big trees that are cut down? Are they sold? Are they disposed of?

Crime is rising and street/infrastructure are deteriorating

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I'd like to see the priorities for both departments, an explanation as to why our basic services are not being handled like street maintenance and safety at park centers. Why instead do they choose to focus energy on a bike trail for Summit Avenue? Why not build bike paths in neighborhoods that don't have any bike paths? SAVE TREES at all costs. We have lost too many to Ash Borer. Do not put any more at risk.

St Paul is broken. Streets are a mess, public safety is deteriorated, and people are leaving the city

Excessive bureaucracy

Both of these departments seem to not be performing to meet the needs of the residents of the City.

Climate justice is an overarching priority that demands the focus of all departments. How are departments coordinating and accountable?

There seems to be a lot of spending with not much to show for it. Better clarity about how budgeting decisions are made would be helpful.

Homeless families in St. Paul

Neighborhood safety

Obvious reasons. Find a solution for these juvenile delinquents now.

I believe that the closure of the Union Depot platform should be explored because we as residents see it as a necessary step to ensure the safety and well-being of our community. I believe that by shutting down the platform, we can mitigate the risks associated with criminal activities and restore trust in local authorities and public spaces. While acknowledging the impact on commuters, we propose several measures to address the inconvenience: 1. Alternative Transportation Arrangements: Exploring options such as increased bus routes, shuttle services, or improved connectivity to nearby transit stations to minimize the inconvenience for commuters. 2. Enhanced Security Measures: Allocating additional resources to bolster security in and around the Union Depot area, including increased law enforcement presence, surveillance cameras, and effective lighting systems. 3. Community Engagement and Education: Launching awareness campaigns to educate residents about personal safety measures and reporting procedures, promoting community involvement and vigilance. 4. Collaborative Efforts: Fostering partnerships between law enforcement agencies, community organizations, and stakeholders to develop strategies for crime prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation. It's important to note the failure of previously attempted security measures an a need for reassessment and improvement in implementing these strategies.

As an example, moving vehicles for snow emergencies, street cleaning, etc are important things that citizens need to do to enable public works. On many streets, these are dictated by no-parking signs on a certain day. Often, public works does not execute the service, but the enforcement happens anyway. The fines are also not transparent, nor nominal. I believe that enforcement is important when it's required, but when services don't happen and residents are charged anyway, it appears as a money-grab from the city, and not a small one.

My neighbors burn recreational fires starting at 1am and going past 3am. I would like a fire curfew like Minneapolis, Maplewood, and North Saint Paul. Especially with the size of our city lots, the fires impact everyone and there's nothing we can currently do besides noise complain. I would like parity with our neighboring cities.

Our city's propertys, empty lots, vacant buildings are not being kept up as they were a few years ago. Grass is so overgrown in areas onto sidewalks and gutters that rain water floods streets, trash is clogging storm drains- city mows their lots and does not pu trash, they mow right over and leave storm drains and gutters full of trash (and this also

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causes people to continue to litter). Shotty upkeep is leading to safety issues to the public (empassable or dangerous sidewalks from protruding trees weeds, grass growing in the cement cracks and corner cement where people cross the street), drawing crime to these areas, attracting drug use, prostitution, rodents, garbage/trash dumping and lastly, it makes our city look like a glorified dump. When the city keeps things up, residents and business are much more likely to do suit. We've tried it in our neighborhood and it works. In addition, it cuts down on easy areas for criminal activity, thus cutting down on crime/drug use and police calls. There is clearly a bias towards certain areas of the city, like FROGTOWN. Just because lower income people reside there does not mean they don't deserve the same services other parts of the city receive. They have the right to safe city sidewalks/streets, clean city areas, etc. I see a lot of our services ignored or done shotty as compared to other parts of the city. And if we complain we are given the brush off or greatly rudely as if we are asking for the moon. We pay tax dollars just like everyone else-

I want to know that my tax dollars are being utilized to their fullest potential as well as see the city succeed and grow.

7. Please tell the Audit Committee what the city is doing well. (4 new response; highlighted in yellow)

<u>38 Responses</u> [Blank fields are not reflected in total responses.]

The city is doing well at increasing bike lanes, trying to reduce car traffic/slow it and revitalize areas (Vandalia Towers, etc.)

Police dept does a good job under tough conditions.

I can't think of one thing they are doing well. City services are a failure!

If our police department had all the recourses it needs, it could be able to deal with more calls and issues for public safety than what is able to do now.

From being a business owner and seeing the decline in the city, I can't think of anything the city is doing well.

Honestly nothing

Plowing, ticketing and towing vehicles this winter.

Smokescreen tactics.

Affordable housing projects.

Removal of fallen tree branches from the April storm

Attempting to be fair, honest, open and transparent and provide good government.

Happy to see a lot of pedestrian improvements going in, investment in infrastructure. Excited about the Rondo Reparations efforts. Will be happy to see the 1-4unit infill zoning adopted, but needs to come with encouragement to build more diverse housing options

Some. New trees

Garbage pick up

The city maintains the parks and recreation facilities beautifully.

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Parks. Fire.

Not much. the are lack with the audits. We pay more and more on taxes and the services get worst. Why does the Mayor need more taxes for his personnel wants? I would like to see evaluation of all the departments. Yes, it will take a while but this is needed. All nonprofits are audited yearly if not more. The Mayor need provide answers.

Spending money on rocks on Johnson Parkway

Planting trees

The city is getting better to seek public input from residents.

I have been let down by every department I contacted or worked with for City services over life time living in St. Paul.

Having park security around

I've had several inspectors come to my home lately and they have been courteous and efficient. I especially appreciated them wearing N95 masks in my home as I have requested them to.

The City obviously recognizes the problem since the Mayor has proposed an increased sales tax to address the problem. But how /why do we find ourselves in this situation when it has been an obvious issue for at least 20 years, if not longer?

I am very glad to have an audit committee. Thank you for doing this work. Our budget just keep growing and the tax payers can't handle the property tax increases.

You say you are willing to do an audit. That is a step in the right direction.

Conducting this audit is a big step in the right direction.

The city has great and does not execute well.

Not a lot at the moment.

New initiatives -- guaranteed income, college savings account

St. Paul has great schools, parks, etc. and in general local government works pretty well.

Not sure

Small business support

Replanting trees, removing diseased ones.

Don't know. We are focused on making sure our community is safe and sound.

The city has an excellent communication protocol for snow emergencies. I always know when one happens and the expectations.

The city excels at helping those in need with services. The city's police department is stellar (the only place they lack is where the city has tied their hands in what they can do and what the city prosecutes, thus creating a criminals play land).

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The committee is doing a great job reaching out for community involvement.

8. Please tell the Audit Committee what the city needs to do better. (4 new response; highlighted in yellow)

<u>38 Responses</u> [Blank fields are not reflected in total responses.]

Taxes are increasing at rates that are unsustainable for most families. This needs to be addressed or we could face a crisis of higher earning tax payers fleeing the city (their costs are increasing while services are not being administered i.e. streets are not being maintained, crime is increasing, school outcomes are reducing all while St. Paul pays some of the highest tax rates)

Increase value to those paying taxes.

The city's main function should be safety. We have fewer cops; fewer fire fighters and more criminals being released with no consequences! Stop with all the social justice nonsense and start locking up criminals!

I alone with many others believe that most the departments in our city need to be audited.

Needs to make the city a safer place.

Maybe get out in the REAL community and see what's going on day to day. Don't just hide behind a desk

Hire more workers/laborers to keep up with the demands of the existing infrastructure

Listening to and actually incorporating ideas from community members.

Basic services -- streets, plowing, more policing.

street Maintenance

Making tough decisions about where to cut costs. It would be ideal to give unlimited raises and fund every need in the city but it is not realistic. Cuts need to happen.

Safety. Ground level businesses

Service all members of St Paul.

Repair the roads, not impose new and unwanted concrete into neighborhoods, protect the trees and add more trees.

Keep the citizens better informed of plans for addressing issues.

Getting more performance out of the Police Department without their asking for budget increases

Cleaner/simpler explanations for continuous increases in property tax when no improvements are made of an area that requires improvement

Put some control on the Mayor, who does he answer too, if not the citizen of St Paul.

Focus on people not rock and Rondo etc.

Snow removal and road repair

pg. 11 (Audit Committee Topic Suggestions from Residents Responses a/o 09-06-2023)

Manage money better. This city's tax burden on residents is to much especially for low income and seniors.

It appears to me, based on a lifetime of experiences, city employees are not accountable to its citizens and as a citizen I live with the consequences. I was reluctant to get involved by filling out these forms because a positive change has never been the results from my past involvement.

Fix the roads. They're so so bad.

I wish I had a clear understanding of how what the state legislature is doing affects me as a resident of the city.

Emphasis on "back to the basics" -- we need taxes to pay for our roads, especially deferred maintenance and invest in basic services: fire, police, libraries. We need less TIFF and pet projects. Smaller "cabinet" of highly paid support staff for the mayor. No 1% sales tax.

Rethink the paradigm of what it means for a city to be successful. Tax give aways to multi national corporations DON'T WORK. Real estate developers ARE NOT our friends.

Transparency. Accountability. LISTEN to the taxpayers, listen to the residents. And act on what the larger majority wish for our city.

Citizens have lost trust in staff and elected representatives. The city is run by insiders and those with connections - staff hold 'listening sessions' and then ignore what they hear.

Transparency

Be more transparent. Listen to the residents. Fix the streets. Cut some bureaucracy and make sure our streets are safe.

Focus on the basics: crime, roadways & street maintenance.

Address homelessness in St. Paul

Neighborhood safety

SAFETY is the #1 issue here. Too many are moving out because they are tired of crime.

It is our collective belief that the closure of the Union Depot platform would be an appropriate and necessary step towards ensuring the safety and well-being of our community. By shutting down the platform, we can mitigate the risks associated with criminal activities and work towards restoring the trust and confidence of residents in the local authorities and public spaces. We understand that the closure of a transportation facility will have its consequences, affecting those who rely on it for their daily commutes. However, we strongly believe that the safety and security of our community members should take precedence over convenience. To mitigate the impact on commuters, we urge you to consider the following measures: 1. Alternative Transportation Arrangements: Explore options for providing alternative transportation methods to ensure that commuters are not unduly inconvenienced by the closure of the Union Depot platform. This may include increased bus routes, shuttle services, or improved connectivity to nearby transit stations. 2. Enhanced Security Measures: Allocate additional resources to bolster security in and around the Union Depot area. Increase the presence of law enforcement personnel, install surveillance cameras, and implement effective lighting systems to deter criminal activities and provide a safer environment for commuters and residents alike. This has been tried and failed repeatedly 3. Community Engagement and Education: Launch comprehensive awareness campaigns to educate residents about personal safety measures and reporting procedures. Encourage community involvement and establish programs that promote a sense of ownership and vigilance among residents to actively contribute to the security of the Union Depot area. 4. Collaborative Efforts: Foster partnerships between local law enforcement agencies,

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community organizations, and stakeholders to develop strategies for crime prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation. By working together, we can address the root causes of crime and establish a safer environment for everyone.

Align enforcement to actions, or remove enforcement for things that won't be actioned. In the public works example above, this could be as simple as removing the restricted parking signs.

Get control of the homeless epidemic. It is really taking over our city. Perhaps it is our abundance of services and benefits that draw them here. And we need to clean up our city overall- it looks unloved and uninviting and it's becoming more and more dangerous.

Ensure that city council meetings, decisions, and actions are transparent and accessible to the public.

9. Preferred Pronouns





10. How do you identify? Please check all that apply.





Questions 11-13 are contact information.

14. Are you interested in learning more about serving on the Audit Committee?





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