

City of Saint Paul

2014 Legislative Agenda

PRIORITY ITEMS

Local Government Aid (LGA)

The 2013 Legislature and Governor increased Local Government Aid by \$80 million, representing a significant, positive step forward in helping cities stabilize their budgets and restore the state-local government relationship. This additional LGA funding assisted the City in maintaining a flat levy for 2014 without cutting critical services. For 2014, the City supports the continued restoration of previous cuts to LGA, a reduction in the year-to-year volatility of aid levels that cities receive, and the addition of a growth factor to account for the continued rising costs of providing city services.

Capital Investment Bonding

The City supports the following capital investment bonding projects during the 2014 legislative session:

1. Minnesota Children's Museum Expansion ~ \$14 million
2. Como Park Transportation Access & Circulation Improvements ~ \$8.9 million
3. The Historic Palace Theater Renovations ~ \$6 million
4. Twin Cities Public Television Renovations / Media Public Commons ~ \$9 million
5. Regional Public Safety Facility in Saint Paul ~ \$6.5 million
6. Great River Passage Environmental Learning Center (Design) ~ \$1.56 million
7. Como Zoo Habitat Preservation Exhibit Renovation ~ \$13.83 million
8. Dorothy Day ReVision: Emergency Shelter and Connection Center ~ \$18 million

Transportation Financing

The City of Saint Paul supports an increase in state transportation funding to allow for improvements to state and local roadways, bridges and transit service, while also reducing the pressure on local property taxes to pay for needed infrastructure. Additionally, the City supports continued investment in East Metro transit ways, including Gateway, Riverview, Rush Line, Red Rock and Robert Street. Finally, the city supports increasing and diversifying revenue to fund future transit projects in the city including, but not limited to, streetcars and other transit modes.

REVENUE, TAXES AND FINANCE

Local Government Aid (LGA)

The 2013 Legislature and Governor restored \$80 million of Local Government Aid, and updated the LGA funding formula. This new increase and formula change provided an additional \$10.1 million for the City of Saint Paul. As a result, the City was able to stabilize its budget for 2014, resulting in a flat levy without cutting critical services. Without this aid, the combination of service reduction or property tax levy increases would have been approximately \$7-9 million or 7-9%.

However, after adjusting for inflation, the City will still receive over \$50 million less in LGA than it received in 2003. Without a continued investment in LGA in the future, cities will continue to face the prospect of having to choose service reductions or above-inflation increases in property taxes, or both.

The City of Saint Paul is thankful to the Legislature and Governor for this new infusion of LGA, and for their efforts to begin rebuilding a strong relationship between the state and local governments. Moving forward, the state should continue to restore previous cuts to LGA, reduce the year-to-year volatility of aid levels that cities receive, and add a growth factor for the cost of providing city services.

Should the State fail to increase critically-needed funding for Local Government Aid, it must provide local governments with options to generate additional revenue to reduce reliance on local property taxes.

Fiscal Disparities

The City supports the fiscal disparities program, and supports a continued discussion about the importance of fiscal disparities and the need to equalize tax base to provide for a common level of services.

Levy Limits

The City does not support state-sanctioned levy limits which undermine the relationship between local officials and residents in determining the appropriate balance of taxation and service delivery.

Event District Tax Increment Financing

In 2008, the state provided Saint Paul the authority to create an Event Tax Increment Financing District. Increment from this TIF must be used to pay debt service on 1996 Civic Center bonds. The City supports legislation extending use of this increment for repayment of bonds outstanding on the RiverCentre/arena complex.

City Sales Tax Exemption

The City supports the sales tax exemption for all city purchases granted by the Legislature in 2013, and encourages the Legislature to clarify the rules and application of the exemption to ensure all cities receive the full benefit of the sales tax exemption.

Other Revenue, Tax and Finance Items

- Support the removal of property tax exemptions for property of the Metropolitan Airport Commission surrounding the airport at Holman Field.
- Support the Saint Paul Port Authority's New Market Tax Credit initiative.
- Oppose elimination of the Solid Waste Management Tax.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC STIMULUS

The City of Saint Paul will support and advocate for the following projects in the 2014 state bonding bill:

1. Minnesota Children's Museum Expansion ~ \$14 million
 - a. This request is for \$14 million to renovate and expand the Minnesota Children's Museum flagship building. Working primarily within the museum's current footprint, a 50 percent increase in galleries and programming area will create capacity to serve 550,000 visitors annually. Total projected cost is approximately \$28 million.
2. Como Park Transportation Access & Circulation Improvements ~ \$8.9 million
 - a. This request is for \$8.9 million in state funding to pre-design, design, and construct transportation and access improvements to Como Regional Park. Como Regional Park welcomes more than 4 million visitors annually and transportation and accessibility are critical issues.
3. The Historic Palace Theater Renovations ~ \$6 million
 - a. This request is for \$6 million to renovate and restore the Palace Theater in the heart of downtown Saint Paul. A renovated Palace Theater will be an economic development catalyst for downtown Saint Paul, bringing 60 event nights in Saint Paul annually, drawing approximately 130,000 people to downtown in the first year, and increasing each year thereafter. Total projected cost is approximately \$12 million.
4. Twin Cities Public Television Renovations / Media Public Commons ~ \$9 million
 - a. This is a request for \$9 million in state bond funding to construct new public spaces as well as refurbish and equip existing spaces in the current Twin Cities Public Television building. TPT has been serving the state of Minnesota for over 50 years and has an opportunity to reuse its current home to reach more viewers

and bring more awareness to its services. Total projected cost is approximately \$18 million.

5. Regional Public Safety Facility in Saint Paul ~ \$6.5 million
 - a. This request is for \$6.5 million for acquisition, design and construction of a regional public safety facility and indoor firing range in the City of Saint Paul. This fills a need to house a permanent public safety facility site for communications, maintenance, training facilities and narcotics and vice unit. Total projected cost is approximately \$13 million.
6. Great River Passage Environmental Learning Center (Design) ~ \$1.56 million
 - a. This request is \$1.56 million in state funding to pre-design and design a waterfront marina along the Mississippi River. This is a continuation of planning for the Great River Passage, a true connection of all 17 miles of Mississippi riverfront in Saint Paul. Total estimated cost of the project is \$19,783,000.
7. Como Zoo Habitat Preservation Exhibit Renovation ~ \$13.83 million
 - a. This request is for \$13.83 million in state funding for planning, design and construction of the renewal of the Seals and Sea Lions exhibit at Como Zoo. The Seals and Sea Lions exhibit has been a fixture at Como Zoo for over 50 years; yet due to changing federal regulatory requirements for marine mammals, asset preservation of the exhibit is needed. The new exhibit will provide year-round use that meets or exceeds all regulatory and collection management requirements. Total estimated cost of the renewal exhibit project is projected to be \$14.88 million.
8. Dorothy Day ReVision: Emergency Shelter and Connection Center ~ \$18 million
 - a. This request is for \$18 million for a new shelter and daytime service center facility located in Saint Paul to serve homeless individuals from throughout the region and the state. The project also includes a request of \$17 million in Housing Infrastructure Bonds.

Other Bonding Support Items:

- The *Building Jobs Coalition* legislative bonding position for 2014.
- Metropolitan State's Metro State Science Center construction project request.
- Saint Paul College's Culinary Arts Lab and Machine Tool renovation project requests, and the Health and Science Alliance Center addition project request.
- The Ordway Center renovation project request.
- The Minnesota Museum of American Art predesign project funding request.
- MnDOT Bridge Funds for the following projects:
 - Replacement of the Dale Street Bridge over I-94;
 - Replacement of the Aldine pedestrian bridge over I-94; and
 - Betterments and facade improvements to I-94 bridges east of downtown.

- Saint Paul Port Authority's bonding priority requests, including:
 - Saint Paul harbor infrastructure improvements, as part of the Minnesota Ports Association's bonding request; and
 - University Enterprise Laboratories expansion.
- Capital investment appropriation of \$500,000 to predesign, design, and engineer improvements to Pig's Eye Regional Park and Pig's Eye Lake.
- Capital investment appropriation of \$3.5 million for renovation of the Wakan Tipi Center at the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary.
- Metropolitan Council's \$11 million request in state bonds to match \$7.33 million of Metropolitan Council bonds to improve and expand the Metropolitan Regional Park system.
- Ramsey County's bonding request list.
- Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission's request for planning dollars to design an Urban Regional Sports Center.
- The *Homes for All Coalition* request of \$100 million in bonds for affordable housing.
- The Saint Paul Domestic Abuse Intervention Project Violence Center project.

TRANSPORTATION

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

Legislation was introduced during the 2013 session that creates a new type of tax increment financing (TIF) district to finance improvements and cost related to rail and bus rapid transit lines. Increments from the districts may be spent on public and private costs related to transit, such as funding public infrastructure (e.g., station and related improvements, but not the transit line or rolling stock itself) and encouraging private development adjacent to the line (e.g., more dense land uses).

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

Transportation Financing Package and Alternatives

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

The City supports a new comprehensive transportation financing package that gives cities the resources and funding tools they need to meet our growing needs.

Transit Investments

The state must prioritize transit investments across the entire region, including the East Metro. The Union Depot, for example, is a critical hub for transportation in eastern Minnesota, with the Central Corridor serving as a lifeline of that hub. In order 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.

The City supports additional funding for transit projects across the region, including a ½ cent sales tax increase for metro transit, and strongly encourages a renewed and balanced look at transit projects in the East Metro

Streetcars

Streetcars have become an important element in the complement of regional accessibility programs in many regions, with substantial success. Currently, neither C-TIB nor Metro Council/Metro Transit lists streetcar development as eligible activities, so local efforts to develop them are independent activities from regional transit plans and programs. The City supports the implementation of streetcars, including recognition of streetcars as a potential transitway mode for metropolitan regional planning, and the identification of funding for planning, study and construction.

Other Transportation Items

- Oppose any efforts to increase the speed limit on I-35 through Saint Paul, as determined by a federal lawsuit settlement.
- Support additional funding for the transit network in the City of Saint Paul. Saint Paul encourages the Metropolitan Council to maintain much needed bus service during and after the construction of Central Corridor.
- Support MnDOT's efforts in continued maintenance funding and other additional resources to better meet the department's needs.
- Support funding for the statewide Complete Streets policy, requiring that all new and reconstructed streets accommodate all users of those streets, including motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, and people in wheelchairs.
- Support funding of a statewide effort to educate motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians about the rules of the road and best practices in order to increase safety and decrease crashes, injuries, and fatalities. Support an increase in penalties to those causing injuries and fatalities.

PARKS AND TRAILS

Legacy

The Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment (Legacy Amendment) increases the sales tax by 3/8 of 1 percent, and lasts until 2034. Proceeds of the tax are distributed into four funds: Outdoor Heritage, Clean Water, Parks and Trails, and Arts and Cultural Heritage. The fund appropriated approximately \$313 million in FY2013, which are to supplement – not supplant – existing state funds.

Legacy resources 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 works closely with nine other metro regional park implementing agencies to ensure an equitable funding formula for the Parks and Trails Fund, specifically.

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

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

Regional Parks Funding

The City of Saint Paul Parks Department is one of 10 parks implementing agencies supported by the Met Council's Metro Parks and Open Space Commission. This agency is funded by the Legislature. The Minnesota Constitution requires the State to meet Parks financial needs by 40 percent; current Parks funding by the State is at 11 percent.

The City supports fully funding the Metro Parks biennial budget at 40 percent. Additionally, it opposes cuts to the budget.

Emerald Ash Borer

The Emerald Ash Borer invasive species that is fatal to all untreated ash trees was first discovered in Saint Paul in 2009. Since then, it has already infested hundreds of ash trees

throughout Saint Paul and its spread is expected to kill tens of thousands of ash trees, both public and private, within the next decade. Management strategies designed to reduce or slow the spread of EAB are projected to cost Saint Paul over \$15 million dollars over the coming ten years. The City supports state or other funding designed to help Saint Paul and other communities slow the spread of EAB and move toward reforestation of their urban forests, including trees that provide millions of dollars in economic, environmental and social benefits.

Other Parks and Trails Items:

- Monitor efforts by state agencies to fund Asian Carp mitigation and population control programs.
- The Legislature amended the Critical Areas statute during the 2013 session to allow for the restart of the rulemaking process, while also addressing the economic development concerns raised by Saint Paul and other local units of government, as well as other issues. The city is an active participant in the rulemaking process, and will continue to monitor any legislation related to this process.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

Early Childhood Development

Support legislative efforts that increase access to high quality early care and education opportunities, particularly for 3- and 4-year olds whose families are the most financially challenged, to ensure all children are prepared to succeed in school and in life.

Youth Job Corps

The Saint Paul Youth Job Corps has a demonstrated track record in securing funds for youth jobs during both the summer and school year. These funds may only be used for year-round employment opportunities for youth who reside in Saint Paul, who are between the ages of 14 and 24, and are economically disadvantaged, or considered to be “at risk” youth. Saint Paul has consistently employed hundreds of youth with these funds.

The Legislature during the 2013 session maintained the competitive grant process for summer youth jobs funding through the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). Although the City received a grant under this program, the amount was \$110,600 less than the prior year’s allocation for the summer program. The City did not receive a grant award from DEED for their year round program.

The City urges DEED to reexamine their grant allocation criteria and process, and place a greater emphasis on demonstrated ability to successfully manage funds and partnerships that support alignment across systems when determining grant award winners. The City also recommends that DEED base their funding decisions on factors including the number and percentage of youth in poverty, youth of color and the youth unemployment rate.

Workforce Training

Residents of Saint Paul continue to face a challenging employment marketplace as state and national economies move out of the recession. To maintain the City's current job base and attract new employers, Saint Paul must have a well-trained workforce. While the City works with community partners to build opportunities for employment in the manufacturing, health care, and construction industries, the State must increase funding and provide further opportunities for city residents to receive job training that leads to employment in living-wage jobs.

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

- Continued funding for the Job skills Partnership and other workforce training programs administered by the state;
- A payroll tax credit for job training programs that invest in skilled employees; and
- The Regional Competitiveness project, a collaboration of the Regional Council of Mayors and the Business and Workforce Investment Boards with the goal of implementing a regional economic and workforce development competitiveness strategy for short and long-term economic growth.

Green Jobs and Energy Investment

The overarching objective and recommendations from the *Mayors' Green Jobs Initiative* is to recruit and retain green business in the core cities. A second objective is to espouse green manufacturing policies that benefit core cities (i.e., use of existing infrastructure). To these ends, these are supporting objectives:

- To manufacture green products to be used in construction.
- To assist manufactures in incorporating green practices in their production of goods.
- To use green construction products in the development of new businesses or rehabilitation of existing businesses. This would apply both to the buildings housing the business, as well as the equipment within the buildings.
- To provide funding to support these local initiatives.

The City supports additional state resources and policies to encourage green energy investment for revitalizing communities and creating jobs.

Other Education and Workforce Training Items

- Support tax incentives for companies that hire and retain disadvantaged workers.
- Support legislation prohibiting discrimination for school lunch, including no child turned away, no child stigmatized, and no collection agencies for school lunch debt.
- Support efforts to implement the City's *Promise Neighborhood* initiative.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Criminal Trespass Statute

Support legislation to amend criminal trespass statutes to make the third offense a gross misdemeanor when there are two prior convictions within the past 10 years.

Filing Fraudulent Financing Statements

Support legislation setting as a felony the filing of fraudulent or other improper financing statements against a police officer, chief of police, or a Department of Corrections employee, for performing official duties.

Permanent State Funding for the Survivor Resources Program

Survivor Resources has sought permanent funding from the State via the Public Safety Finance bill. Funding has been provided in the past as one-time grants, making it difficult for Survivor Resources to budget and accomplish long-term planning.

Survivor Resources inspires hope, healing and wholeness after a homicide, suicide or accidental death of a loved one. It serves as the liaison between law enforcement and the family by helping them to navigate unfamiliar territory, to understand the criminal justice system, and how and why it works as it does. Long term support is provided through a variety of loss specific weekly groups. The city supports permanent funding for Survivor Resources.

Support Items

- Legislation to allow access to Department of Vehicle Services records, including photos, for processing a permit to purchase/permit to transfer firearms application.
- Legislation establishing a 90-day retention period for Automated License Plate Reader data, in order to balance law enforcement's use of ALPR data for public safety purposes and the public's interest in the protection of their privacy.
- Legislation requiring a half-way home or other government-sponsored housing to report when a person deemed a predatory offender makes an unplanned move to another location away from their documented housing.
- Creation of a model affidavit of the right to sell a scrap vehicle, standards for implementation, and the use of the Automated Property System (APS).
- Legislation to address the challenges with investigating and prosecuting the manufacture, sale, use and possession of synthetic drugs.
- Support a classification for criminal intelligence data consistent with our partners in law enforcement.

- Support inclusion of Saint Paul public safety services in the planning and design of a Statewide Emergency Operations Center, and use of the current statewide plan for regional training centers.
- Support establishment of a Disaster Contingency Fund.
- Support appropriations changes to the Minnesota Fire Safety Account to fund critical services.
- Support initiatives in favor of community policing.
- Support efforts to reduce prostitution and human trafficking, streamline statutes in order to more effectively prosecute prostitution-related offenses, and support legislation designating funding for treatment and creation of transitional housing programs to support prostituted people.
- Support for the driver diversion program.
- Support efforts at the State and Federal levels to reduce gun violence by supporting:
 - The total ban on the sale of semi-automatic weapons which include, but are not limited to, the weapons listed in Minnesota Statute 624.715 Subd. 7 (1), 624.712 Subd. 7 (2), 624.712 Subd. 7 (3).
 - The ban on the sale of any high capacity magazines with larger than 10 rounds.
 - Repealing the preemption provision currently in Minnesota law.
 - Granting further discretionary authority to local law enforcement in the granting or denying of gun permits.
 - More vigorous background requirements and checks for purchasing a gun.
 - The creation of a legislatively – mandated, multi-disciplinary gun violence policy committee to look in-depth at Minnesota’s gun laws, and to make recommendations to the legislature.

Items to Monitor

- Monitor legislation mandating criminal forensic lab accreditation.
- Monitor legislation extending term sentences for electronic communications used in the commission of certain offenses.
- Monitor legislation to allow for use of racketeering statute for prosecution against organized criminal groups.
- Monitor legislation to require termination of a peace officer who has lied or deceived in an official capacity.
- Monitor legislation to authorize/mandate officers to carry naloxone hydrochloride to administer in overdose situations under the Good Samaritan laws.
- Monitor legislation dealing with *Secure Communities* and immigration issues.
- Oppose legislative changes to the state’s forfeiture laws.

HOUSING, ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY STABILITY

Housing Recovery and Foreclosure Prevention

Cities throughout the state continue to bear the brunt of the impact of the national mortgage foreclosure epidemic. While several positive measures have taken place supporting homeowners in an effort to prevent foreclosed and abandoned properties, there is still a need to address properties once they have been foreclosed on and/or abandoned.

The City will advocate for the passage of local government tools to address housing and community challenges brought on by the mortgage foreclosure crisis, including support for more incentives for the mediation and avoidance of foreclosures when feasible.

The City will also support legislative efforts to:

- Implement a foreclosure mediation program to facilitate mutually beneficial alternatives to foreclosure;
- Require that mortgage companies assign struggling homeowners a single point of contact, who knows about the homeowner's loan, has access to decision makers, and will handle the flow of documentation between the homeowner and the mortgage company;
- Allow homeowners a private right of action to sue their banks for wrongful foreclosure or violating the legislation; and
- Protect tenants of foreclosed properties from being unfairly evicted.

Other Housing, Economic and Community Stability Support Items

- Support an increase in the minimum wage of at least \$9.50.
- Support land use and economic development incentives to benefit redevelopment and job creation at the Ford Plant Site.
- Support legislation to grow the micro-distilling industry in Minnesota to allow for both the sale of cocktails and the sale of bottled products on the site of the distillery.
- Support dedicated State funding for programs at the Department of Employment and Economic Development focusing on women and minority-owned businesses, redevelopment areas and transit improvement areas.
- Support UFCW efforts to create a fund for construction of grocery stores in underserved neighborhoods in urban and rural areas.
- Support modifications to liquor laws clarifying a city's ability to impose license restrictions.
- Renewable and Distributed Generation: Support incentives, mandates, and policies that increase distributed generation technologies, such as solar photovoltaic, solar thermal production, wind, combined heat and power for both public and private entities.

- Support expansion of 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.
- Support programs to fund loans and grants to businesses along Central Corridor during construction of Light Rail Transit.
- Oppose all constitutional amendments as a way to circumvent the legislative process.
- Monitor activities regarding governance of the Metropolitan Council.
- Monitor efforts to change current practices with regional watershed districts.
- Support legislation that allows a city to assess the costs of installing new sewer and water pipes at a demolished building.

For more information about the City of Saint Paul's 2014 Legislative Agenda, please contact:

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