City of Saint Paul
2018 Legislative Agenda

BONDING PRIORITIES

The City of Saint Paul has approved the following two projects as priorities for the 2018 state bonding bill:

$58 million for the reconstruction of the RiverCentre Parking Ramp

The RiverCentre Parking Ramp has been found to have numerous deficiencies related to structural stability and the infrastructure is at the end of its useful life. This project is critical to the vitality of the Xcel Centre, RiverCentre, Science Museum, Ordway Theatre and several employment hubs.

$46 million for the reconstruction of the 3rd Street Bridge

The 3rd Street Bridge has been deemed structurally deficient and functionally obsolete and returning this critical artery to full capacity and functionality will improve safety, enhance access to many state and local investments and jobs, continue revitalization of the East Side community, expand the regional transportation network including the Gateway BRT line and significantly benefit the entire East Metro area.

The City of Saint Paul Supports These Bonding Proposals

- Battle Creek Winter Recreation Construction, $2.126 million
- Bruce Vento Nature Center/Wakan Tipi Center, $3 million
- Completion of the Trout Brook/Gateway Trail, $600,000
- Conway Community Recreation Center, $4.5 million
- Eastside Freedom Library HVAC Modernization , $1.2 million
- Environmental Learning Center at Watergate Marina, $3 million
- Hmong American Partnership Workforce Development Center, $5 million
- Improvement of the Police Shooting Range In Maplewood, $3.8 million
- Ivy Street Humanities Center, $2.7 million
- Mental Health Community Service Centers, $50 million

- ❖ Parks and Trails Capital Improvement Projects, $15 million
- ❖ Riverview Corridor, $2 million
- ❖ Rush Line Corridor, $2 million Minnesota Museum of American Art, $2.5 million

FUNDING AND POLICY INITIATIVES

PUBLIC SAFETY

Community-First Police Reform for a Stronger, Safer Saint Paul

The City of Saint Paul has proposed a Community-First Police Reform initiative to improve public safety and trust between law enforcement and Saint Paul communities. This initiative values the six pillars of the 21st Century Policing Report and seeks additional strategies to better serve and protect our residents. This proposal would make essential reforms to current police practices to increase accountability and trust, implement innovative community policing strategies, and make the investments our community needs to prevent crime before it starts.

Reducing Gun Violence

Gun violence is not only an issue of crime but one of public health. Therefore, the City supports efforts to reduce gun violence including criminal background checks and the refinement of several statutes to close loopholes.

Other Public Safety Items

The City supports:

- Probation reform, such as the revocation prevention and alternative pilot program;
- Civil Asset Forfeiture reform;
- Bail reform;
- Reforms to fines and fees related to driver licenses and car insurance;
- Restoring voting rights to Minnesotans living in our community who are ineligible to vote due to a felony conviction;
- Supporting Driver Diversion Pilot Program;
- Funding the Minnesota Fire Safety Account with a standing appropriation to fund critical services and the Department of Labor and Industry efforts to transfer authority for adoption of the state fire code to the state Fire Marshal;
- Maintaining current state statutes related to fireworks sales and use;
- Adding concealing criminal proceeds § 609.496 and engaging in business of concealing criminal proceeds § 609.497 to the list of forfeitable offenses and monitoring other legislative changes to the state's forfeiture laws;
- Increasing the crash reporting threshold above the $1000.00 currently in statute;
- Legislation related to flame-retardant chemicals that reduces health risks to firefighters and other emergency responders;

- Expanding § 609.2231, sub. 6 to include code enforcement officials allowing for escalated charges for assaults perpetrated while performing official duties;
- Supporting Minnesota Commercial Railway's efforts to request loan forgiveness;
- Funding reimbursement for Bomb Squad Services;
- Support changing state law to give local governments the ability to reduce the default speed limit on residential streets from 30 mph to 25 mph in all cases; and
- Efforts to reduce sex trafficking and protect victims.

HOUSING, ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY STABILITY

Housing

Housing is a basic and fundamental human need. The City will advocate for state and local government tools to address housing of all types and will monitor foreclosure prevention and remediation activities and legislation related to legal warranty barriers to condo development and financing.

The City supports legislative efforts to:

- Finance rehabilitation of older housing stock in low and moderate income Census tracts;
- Prevent and decrease homelessness while implementing strategies to end long-term homelessness;
- Build more affordable housing units;
- Support additional state resources to help construct affordable senior housing;
- Expand programs to provide low cost financing to improve the accessibility, energy efficiency, and remediation of toxic substances in existing homes and buildings, particularly those in low and moderate income communities hit hard by the foreclosure/vacant housing crisis.

Working Families

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

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

Metropolitan Council

The City recognizes that the Metropolitan Council has an important role as a regional policy-making body, planning agency, and provider of essential services for the region. As such the City supports the continuation of the Metropolitan Council as a regional governmental agency and planning organization.

Mental Health Services

Mental health plays a role in everything from poverty to public safety from education to unemployment and homelessness. It can be difficult for people with mental health conditions to access the appropriate treatment at the right time and to receive appropriate legal services. The City supports funding for the continuation of treatment courts, such as Mental Health, DUI, and Veterans Courts to better serve the different needs of our residents. The City supports the efforts of the Mental Health Legislative Network and the nine recommendations of the Governor's Task Force on Mental Health.

Economic and Community Stability

The City supports:

- Attracting and retaining small businesses;
- Increasing job growth;
- Increasing funding for brownfield site remediation programs;
- Support for design and construction funding for a land bridge over I-94 in the Rondo Neighborhood;
- Dedicating State funding for programs at DEED focusing on women and minority-owned businesses, redevelopment areas and transit improvement areas;
- UFCW efforts to create a fund for construction of grocery stores in underserved neighborhoods in urban and rural areas;
- Legislation to streamline the zoning amendment process for cities of the first class;
- Preserving local municipality's ability to set the fees necessary to protect and promote public health within their communities;
- Statewide registration or licensure of massage therapists and opposes legislation that would restrict the ability of cities to regulate massage therapy establishments; and,
- Efforts to increase flexibility in the way that cities contract for large scale, complex infrastructure projects.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

High Quality Early Learning

The City supports legislative efforts that increase access to high quality early learning and education opportunities, particularly for families that are the most financially challenged, to ensure all children are prepared to succeed in school and in life.

High Quality Afterschool and Summer Learning

High-quality afterschool and summer learning programs have evidence-based benefits that will positively impact the persistent challenges facing Saint Paul's young people, families, businesses, educators, and communities. The City supports a new state public funding stream to fund competitive grants for afterschool and summer programs targeted to youth below 185% of poverty.

Youth Jobs

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

The City supports legislation that:

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

Workforce Training and Development

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

- A payroll tax credit for job training programs that invest in skilled employees;
- The Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Program;
- Tax incentives for companies that hire and retain disadvantaged workers; and,
- Support the MNWin for Jobs initiative to address racial disparities in employment and to prepare for future worker shortages.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, SUSTAINABILITY AND ENERGY INVESTMENT

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

- To incent the manufacture of green products to be used in construction and assist manufactures in incorporating green practices in their production of goods;
- To improve energy efficiency goals and activities by investor owned utilities;
- To prepare for the impacts of climate change on infrastructure, natural systems and human health;
- To increase distributed generation technologies, such as solar photovoltaic, solar thermal production, wind, combined heat and power for both public and private entities;
- To encourage laws and amendments to rules to expand source separated composting efforts; and,
- To increase state funding for the state solid waste block grant program referred to as SCORE to be used for recycling efforts and expansion of organics collection.

PARKS, TRAILS, AND FORESTRY

Legacy

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

The City supports the following positions regarding the Legacy Amendment:

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

Parks Funding

Local parks and trails also support the economic vitality needed to attract and retain a dedicated and qualified workforce. Investment in local parks is important to the future of economic growth, both to keep pace with the needs of those who live and work in Saint Paul and to attract future

development opportunities. The City supports the dedication of resources that can be invested in these local assets. Local parks and trails are not constitutionally eligible for Legacy funds therefore the City supports the dedication of other resources that can be invested in these local assets.

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

Urban Forestry Funding

City of Saint Paul will be removing close to 2300 declining or infested ash trees from city parks in 2018 due to emerald ash borer. This number includes 150 ash trees at Como Golf Course. With the emerald ash borer infestation now covering almost 100% of the Capital City, the cost for controlling the emerald ash borer and managing other shade tree similar forestry issues creates serious budget challenges to local government. The City supports dedicated funding to support local governments with building capacity for urban forest management and meeting the costs of preparing for and responding to urban forest problems. Specifically, direct grants to cities are desperately needed for the identification, removal, replacement, and treatment of trees related to emerald ash borer. The state should establish an ongoing grant program with annual funding that is available for those activities.

REVENUE, TAXES AND FINANCE

Local Government Aid (LGA)

The City of Saint Paul uses state-allocated Local Government Aid to fund critical city services and stabilize property taxes. While the total share of the city budget dependent on state payments has dropped significantly since 2003, the future of Local Government Aid (LGA) remains a key variable in the city's ability to provide basic services, accounting for 21% of the city's general fund.

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 supports full funding of LGA to at least the 2003 certified funding levels, as well as the addition of an annual adjustment growth factor to the formula. Should the state not 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.

Local Control

The increasingly complex and costly requirements necessary for cities to provide services to their residents require a strong partnership between federal, state and local governments. This partnership should be based upon a shared vision for Minnesota and should allow individual communities to tailor that vision to the unique needs of their communities. The state should not enact initiatives that erode the fundamental principle of local control in cities across Minnesota. The City also opposes using LGA as financial leverage to influence particular activities and policy decisions at the local level.

OTHER REVENUE, TAX AND FINANCE ITEMS

- The City supports the fiscal disparities program as it's an important tool in providing a common level of services among cities;
- 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;
- The City supports the Saint Paul Visitor and Convention Bureau's request to increase the lodging tax 1%;
- The City supports simplifying the process to receive the exemption for construction materials, as well as extending the exemption to materials purchased by third party officials on behalf of the City;
- The City opposes elimination of the Solid Waste Management Tax; and
- The City supports sensible efforts to protect the long term sustainability of pension plans for local government employees. Any changes to the public pension system should be reasonable for both employers and employees, help stabilize the financial condition of the pension funds, and be adopted with adequate notice to allow proper budget planning by local governments.

Infrastructure Financing

The availability of transportation funding resources continues to significantly lag behind need, especially for local municipalities. The City supports a new comprehensive transportation financing package that gives cities the new resources and funding tools needed to meet growing demand.

City Streets

Current funding to city streets is inadequate, leading to growing unmet need. The Transportation Finance Advisory Committee identified $400 million as the investment needed in local roads for the state to be economically competitive. Accordingly, new funding distributed outside of the constitutional formula is needed in order for cities to be able to perform the necessary treatment, maintenance and reconstruction to their systems. The City supports new dedicated revenue outside of the constitutional formula for city streets.

Current debt financing tools made available in state law to local governments are restrictive, sometimes contradictory, and pose affordability challenges for cities and their residents. The City supports changes to the street financing tools available to local governments to allow cities the flexibility they need to repair and reconstruct local roads.

The City supports funding for the statewide Complete Streets policy; ensuring streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. The City also supports 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.

Transit Investments

The City supports additional funding for transit projects across the region, including a sales tax increase for metro transit. 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. This includes projects like the Gateway Corridor, Riverview Corridor, Rush Line, Red Rock, and Robert Street.

The City also supports the implementation of streetcars, including recognition of streetcars as a potential transit way mode for metropolitan regional planning, and the identification of funding for planning, study and construction.

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

The City 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.

Railroads

Saint Paul has 84 active rail crossings and 5 quiet zones, yet has little authority to protect the human and environmental health of our community as it relates to railroads. The planning and coordination required for response operations is city and region wide and spans from initial response through recovery. The City recognizes the important role rail plays in our economy and as a transportation mode for goods, and will monitor all legislative activity related to railroads.

Safe Routes to School Funding

The Safe Routes to School grant funds are used for planning and infrastructure projects that encourage more students to walk and bicycle to school by increasing the walkability of the city and by assuring that curbs are compliant with ADA regulations. As part of the effort to more fully support the Safe Routes to School Program, the City supports funding for repairing, advancing and upgrading sidewalks.

Public Infrastructure Utilities

The City supports legislation authorizing cities to create, as a local option, additional utilities such as a transportation or sidewalk utility, that ensure funding for the maintenance of these public amenities. Cities should be able to impose service charges against property to ensure the maintenance and safety of the right of way for all Minnesotans without having to prove an increase in fair market value or having to determine whether those contributing to the utility fund are taxable or tax- exempt.

Lowertown Flood Damage Reduction Project

The City supports state funding to design and build a new permanent flood damage reduction system in the Lowertown area of Saint Paul. The area which includes a significant regional economic asset is heavily utilized and highly populated. Constructing a permanent system would be more cost effective and reliable than continuing to utilize the temporary emergency systems currently available.

McCarron's Water Treatment Process Improvements Project

The City supports the request for authorization to use the design-build procurement process for the McCarron's Water Treatment Process Improvements Project. The Saint Paul Regional Water Services seeks to replace century old technology with current treatment processes. While the process currently in place produces water of excellent quality, the City supports the Board of Water Commissioners capital investment plan to replace McCarron's Water Treatment Plant to ensure a sustainable treatment process for future generations.

Other Organizations

The City supports the platforms of the following organizations, with the exception of those policies that may be contrary to the interests of the City:

- Saint Paul Public Schools
- Ramsey County
- Saint Paul Port Authority
- League of Minnesota Cities
- Metro Cities
- The Homes for All Coalition
- Second Chance Coalition

For more information about the City of Saint Paul's 2018 Legislative Agenda, please contact:

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