



July 18, 2025

To: Angie Wiese, Director, Department of Safety and Inspections
Nicolle Newton, Director, Department of Planning and Economic Development

CC: Mayor Melvin Carter
Deputy Mayor Jamie Tincher
Laura Logsdon, Director, Office of Financial Services
PED Deputy Director Green

Subject: Request for Information: DSI Permitting Positions in Budget Contingency

On behalf of the Saint Paul Housing & Redevelopment Authority (“HRA”), this correspondence serves as a formal request for a report from the Department of Safety and Inspections on certain specified positions held in budget contingency. Upon receipt of the requested information and HRA acceptance of the responses submitted, the intent is to clear the existing budget allocation from contingency restrictions so that it is available for use towards established objectives. The request for information as specified below is respectfully requested to be presented to the HRA no later than Wednesday, August 6, 2025.

Introduction

In the 2024/2025 budget process, City Council and the Housing & Redevelopment Authority approved a budget allocation of \$440,000 through the Housing Trust Fund for the Department of Safety and Inspections to hire 3 full-time permitting positions to expedite the permitting process for construction. This line item is currently managed through an HRA special fund – Housing Trust Fund and exists as part of the budget of the Planning and Economic Development Department. These positions were determined to be held in contingency until further information was provided regarding the progress of the downtown office to housing conversion initiative and other city-wide permitting needs. Additionally, \$1,000,000 was allocated in the 2024/2025 budget year to waive permitting fees for the City’s downtown Office-to-Housing Conversion program. The purpose of the allocation was to increase the cost-efficiency of conversion efforts, revitalize underutilized downtown properties, and offer property tax revenue opportunities.

Request for Information

The report shall include, but not be limited to:

- Information on the Department of Safety and Inspections and Human Resources’ progress in establishing additional permitting positions, including:
 - The anticipated timeline and plan for creating, posting, and filling new positions to fulfill this priority and, if applicable, information on current positions that were reclassified in order to fulfill the permitting needs (i.e. Planning Examiner I to Planning Examiner II).

- The anticipated programming, training, certification, and education requirements for reclassified positions.
- Previous instances, if applicable, of the Department of Safety and Inspections using reclassified positions or adding permitting responsibilities to existing roles to expedite permitting process.
- Information on instances, if any, in prior years where the Department of Safety and Inspections received an allocation from the Housing Trust Fund for staff expenditures, expenditures intended to expedite permitting processes, or other expenditures not tied to the Housing & Redevelopment Authority's housing, business, or commercial development activities.
- Budget to Actual projections for FY2025 and estimated total expense for this specific line-item within the DSI's budget. Include a breakdown of the total estimated costs per position related to this line item, indicating whether each role is currently filled or vacant.
- Information on the Office-to-Housing Conversion program, including but not limited to an update on the current status of the allocated permitting fee waivers, the identified projects selected for conversion and waiver of fees, and the anticipated challenges to conversion for additional properties in downtown Saint Paul.

The information requested from the Department of Safety and Inspections is essential to assist the Saint Paul Housing & Redevelopment Authority in its authority to assess, review, and ultimately release the funds held in contingency for the 2024-2025 budget. If the funding is no longer needed, or the HRA and Council do not receive a response by Monday August 4th, 2025, the Housing & Redevelopment Authority will presume funding is no longer needed and the funds will be returned for reallocation, by way of resolution, to the Housing Trust Fund at the Saint Paul Housing & Redevelopment Authority's Board Meeting on Wednesday, August 13, 2025.

Please send your presentation, an attached detailed budget memo, and any other materials by **Monday, August 4, 2025**.

Thank you for your partnership and please let us know if you'd like to discuss this request, have any questions, or require further clarification.

Sincerely,
 Councilmember/HRA Chair Cheniqua Johnson
 Council President Rebecca Noecker
 Vice Chair Saura Jost