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# 2024 Saint Paul Legislative Agenda

*Building a Saint Paul that works for all of us.*





## City of Saint Paul

### Bonding Priorities

The City of Saint Paul supports a robust bonding bill that addresses the backlog of the state and city's growing public infrastructure needs and invests in important regional projects.

**The City of Saint Paul is seeking General Obligation Bond dollars to support the following publicly owned infrastructure projects:**

1. **Mississippi River Learning Center** – \$22.638 million
2. **Como Park Zoo & Conservatory (Big Cat Exhibit)** – \$25.659 million
3. **River Balcony** – \$24.902 million
4. **Urban Tennis (Cemstone Site)** – \$5.876 million
5. **Eastbound Kellogg Bridge** – \$9 million
6. **Randolph Avenue Bridge** – \$11.6 million
7. **Regional Athletic Facility** – \$35.637 million
8. **Phalen Lakeside Center** – \$11.189 million
9. **Battle Creek Park** – \$2.894 million
10. **Hayden Heights Library** – \$4 million
11. **Riverview Library** – \$5.7 million

### Other Projects

#### Saint Paul Supports

*in alphabetical order:*

- **JK Movement (Jimmy Lee Recreation Center)** – \$5.7 million
- **Latino Museum** – \$10 million
- **Saint Paul Urban Tennis (Housing & Tennis Facility)** – \$7 million
- **Sanneh Foundation (Innovation Center)** – \$4.2 million

**The City of Saint Paul also supports the following Ramsey County bonding projects located in the City of Saint Paul:**

- **The Park at RiversEdge** – \$20 million

The City of Saint Paul also supports capital investments in: Housing Infrastructure Bonds, General Obligation Bonds for public housing authorities, building out the region's Bus Rapid Transit system, active transportation, and direct state investments for non-profit capital investment projects.





# XCEL ENERGY Arena Complex

The Xcel Energy Center is a city-owned arena complex that opened in 2000. Throughout the year, it hosts the Minnesota Wild professional hockey team, the Minnesota Professional Women's Hockey team, concerts, cultural events, rodeos, conventions and conferences, State High School League athletic tournaments, and many other events. As a concert venue, it has been nominated nine times for the title "Arena of the Year" by leading concert-industry publication Pollstar magazine.

For over two decades, the Xcel Energy Center arena complex, which includes the Xcel Energy Center arena, RiverCentre, and Roy Wilkins Auditorium, has been the engine driving Saint Paul's economy. No other single entity attracts more visitors to downtown Saint Paul. The one-of-a-kind, multi-purpose arena complex hosts over 332 events a year and welcomes approximately 1.83 million visitors annually.

To remain competitive and cater to an ever-growing entertainment and athletic needs, the arena complex requires upgrades. The City of Saint Paul is seeking \$2 million for planning activities necessary for the predesign and design of updates and improvements to the Xcel Energy Center and the Roy Wilkins Auditorium.





# REVENUE, Taxes & Finances

## Local Government Aid

The City of Saint Paul supports the city Local Government Aid (LGA) program as a means of ensuring the city remains an affordable place to live and work while meeting the public service needs of residents and businesses.

The City of Saint Paul supported the appropriation increase and updates to the LGA program formula passed by the 2023 Legislature. The City of Saint Paul supports future reviews of the LGA program that should be conducted every five years or earlier and should consider the needs and capacities of cities.

The City of Saint Paul supports updates to the LGA formula factors and an increase in the program appropriation consistent with recommendations by a work group of city associations. Recommended updates will ensure the LGA program adequately addresses the needs of the city.

**Recommended updates will ensure the LGA program adequately addresses the needs of the city.**

The City of Saint Paul supports increasing the LGA appropriation to address cities' unmet needs as defined by the LGA formula, as well as increases in the LGA appropriation to account for inflation. The City of Saint Paul also supports adjusting LGA each year to account for inflation.

In 2002, the City of Saint Paul received \$73.5 million in LGA. In 2023, the city received \$72.8 million in LGA, approximately \$736K less than what was received 20 years ago. In 2024, Saint Paul's LGA allocation will finally be above what it received in 2002 at \$81.6 million.

If LGA had kept pace with inflation, the city should be receiving \$151.1 million in 2024, which is \$69.4 million more than what the city will actually get. The City of Saint Paul has the largest unmet need in the state at \$143.8 million. The City of Saint Paul has the largest gap in the state between its unmet need and what it receives in LGA at \$62.2 million.

The City of Saint Paul uses state-allocated LGA to fund critical city services and to stabilize property taxes. LGA remains a key variable in the city's ability to provide basic services, accounting for 19.5% of city general fund revenues. The City of Saint Paul strongly opposes freezes to the LGA appropriation or reductions of LGA for balancing state budget deficits.

The City of Saint Paul also opposes targeted reductions to specific cities as well as reductions or offsets for local policy or expenditure decisions.

## 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. There are 855 cities in Minnesota, each with its own challenges, and legislators at the State Capitol generally tend to agree that local elected officials are in the best position to decide how the needs of their communities should be addressed.

The City of Saint Paul supports the preservation of local control to ensure city officials can exercise their own decision-making authority.



The City of Saint Paul opposes the imposition of legislative mandates that increase local costs without a corresponding state appropriation or funding mechanism. Unfunded mandates potentially increase property taxes and impede cities' ability to fund traditional service needs.

### **Sales Tax on Local Government Purchases**

The City of Saint Paul supported the 2013 reinstatement of the sales tax exemption for purchases of goods and services made by cities. This reinstatement does not apply to all local government purchases.

The City of Saint Paul supports simplifying the exemption process for construction materials. The city also supports extending the exemption to materials purchased by third party officials on behalf of the city that are complex and cost ineffective or converting the process to a refund program. The City of Saint Paul supported the law enacted in 2021 that exempts construction materials purchased to construct public safety facilities from state sales tax.

### **Metropolitan Area Fiscal Disparities Program**

The City of Saint Paul supports the Fiscal Disparities Program as it is an important tool in providing a common level of services among cities.

The City of Saint Paul opposes any diversion from the fiscal disparities pool to fund specific state, regional, or local programs, goals, or projects, as such diversions contradict the purposes of the program.

### **State Property Tax Relief Programs**

The City of Saint Paul supports state-funded property tax relief programs paid directly to homestead property taxpayers such as the "circuit breaker" program and enhanced targeting for special circumstances.

The City of Saint Paul also supports the renter's credit program. The City of Saint Paul supports an analysis of property tax relief programs to determine their effectiveness and equity in providing property tax relief to individuals and families across the state and city.

The City of Saint Paul supports efforts by the Minnesota Department of Revenue to expand outreach and notification efforts about state property tax relief programs to homeowners and notifications to local units of government to support such efforts. The City of Saint Paul also supports legislative modifications to make tax relief payments to taxpayers automatic.

The City of Saint Paul supports the use of the Department of Revenue's Voss database to link income and property values, as well as the consideration of income relative to property taxes paid in determining eligibility for state property tax relief programs. Updates to the database should occur in a timely manner with data reviewed periodically to ensure the database's accuracy and usefulness.

### **Property Valuation Limits/Limited Market Value**

The City of Saint Paul opposes the use of artificial limits in valuing property at market for taxation purposes as such limitations shift tax burdens to other classes of property and create disparities between properties of equal value.

### **Payments for Services to Tax Exempt Property**

The City of Saint Paul supports city authority to collect payments from tax-exempt property owners to cover costs of services to those entities, similar to statutory authority for special assessments. The City of Saint Paul opposes legislation that would exempt nonprofit entities from paying user fees and service charges.

### Franchise Fee Limits

The City of Saint Paul supports changes to current state statute to remove all restrictions that are unique to the City of Saint Paul regarding the months and seasons during which the city's residential gas and electric utility fees can be imposed through its franchise agreements with Xcel Energy.

### 4(d) Affordable Housing Incentive Program

The city has established a 4(d) Affordable Housing Incentive Program which provides owners of unsubsidized rental housing 4(d) status in exchange for 10-year affordability restrictions to serve households at or below 60% AMI.

The City of Saint Paul does not support additional changes to the 4(d) property tax classification without a comprehensive study to examine the property tax implications for cities and their residents. Any program expansion proposals for state mandated class-rate reductions should include a full analysis of the impacts to local property tax bases before their enactment.

The City of Saint Paul opposes any changes to the 4(d) program that substantially increases the tax responsibility for residents and businesses or increases the tax benefit for landlords without including increased benefits for renters of 4d units. The City of Saint Paul also supports ongoing 4(d) aid.

The City of Saint Paul supports a property owner being required to receive city approval where the property is located for all 4(d) property that has not in whole or in part been classified as 4(d) property.

The City of Saint Paul supports the continuation of a reporting process for landlords benefitting from the 4(d)-class rate reduction to ensure deeper affordability or property reinvestment and a sunset period for any changes made to the program to evaluate the range of impacts that expanding the program may have.







# HOUSING

## Strategies in Saint Paul

Housing is a basic and fundamental human right. The city is focused on three people-focused strategies to meet housing needs:

- **Production:** Creating new affordable housing
- **Preservation:** Maintaining existing affordable housing
- **Protection:** Ensuring all residents can have safe affordable homes

### State Role in Housing

The state must be an active participant in providing funding for housing, including direct funding, financial incentives, and initiatives to assist local governments and developers to support affordable housing and housing appropriate for people at all stages of life. State funding is a major and necessary component for the provision of housing. Current resource levels are insufficient to meet the spectrum of needs in the metropolitan region and across the state.

### The City of Saint Paul supports:

- Increased, sustainable, and adequate state funding for new and existing programs that support life cycle, workforce, and affordable housing, address homeownership disparities, address foreclosure mitigation, address housing for families with children, and support senior, transitional, and emergency housing
- An ongoing state match for local and regional housing trust fund investments and local policies in support of affordable housing. State funds should be issued on a timeline that works with a city's budget process
- Private sector funding for workforce housing
- Housing programs that assist housing development, preservation, and maintenance of existing housing stock, including unsubsidized, naturally occurring affordable housing that is affordable to residents throughout the low-to-moderate income range
- State-funded housing assistance programs to help with affordability
- Housing programs designed to develop market-rate housing in census blocks with emerging or high concentrations of poverty, where the private market might not otherwise invest, as a means of creating mixed-income communities and reconciling affordable housing with community development goals
- Continuing the policy of using the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency's investment earnings for housing programs
- City input into state legislation and administrative policies regarding distribution of tax credits and tax-exempt bonding
- Exemptions from or reductions to sales, use, and transaction taxes applied to the development and production of affordable housing
- Consideration of the use of state bond proceeds and other appropriations for land banking, land trusts, and rehabilitation and construction of affordable housing

- Programs that help avoid foreclosures, improve homeownership rates and reduce racial disparities through homeownership assistance programs and counseling services, including down payment assistance and pre-purchasing counseling to improve financial wellness and inform homeowner and potential homeowners of their rights, options, and costs associated with owning a home
- State tenant protection policies as well as a city's ability to enact tenant protections to support access to affordable housing and housing stability for tenants
- Prohibiting landlords from denying housing opportunities to residents based on their source of income
- Housing stability for renters through policies that mitigate the impact of or reduces the number of evictions filed
- Policies that encourage public housing authorities and owners of federally-assisted housing to consider a holistic approach to selecting tenants during the application and screening process, as well as avoid excluding tenants solely based on criminal records
- Exploring best practices toward increased housing affordability for residents, housing maintenance standards, and providing quality housing for residents. Cities should work with rental housing owners and operators when establishing best practices
- The state housing tax credit to support local governments and the private sector to help spur construction and secure additional private investment

### Unsheltered Homelessness

Since 2018, the City of Saint Paul has been actively responding to encampments through coordination and outreach in collaboration with Ramsey County Continuum of Care (COC), co-chaired by Ramsey County Commissioner Trista Martinson and Saint Paul Deputy Mayor Jaime Tincher alongside nonprofit partners.

Protocols are in place to monitor the safety and health of encampment residents and ensure access to services.

The City of Saint Paul supports the request by Ramsey County to pursue funding and policy legislation in partnership with the Heading Home Ramsey Continuum of Care to fund homelessness work until the affordable housing investments come online. This funding will support operations and shelter capacity for single adults, couples, families with children, day services and critical supportive services for individuals and families seeking shelter.

The City of Saint Paul acts to restrict, limit, or close encampments only when necessary to protect the health, safety, and security of encampment residents. Before any action is taken, the City of Saint Paul works with Ramsey County and nonprofit partners to find safe, stable housing for encampment residents. In partnership, the city supports legislative efforts for more supportive services, shelter options, permanent housing for unsheltered individuals, and direct state aid appropriations to local units of government to help address these issues.

### Renter Community and Eliminating Income Discrimination

As a renter-majority community, the City of Saint Paul supports state and local government tools that increase the supply of housing units for the city's most vulnerable residents and expands access through tenant protections.

Housing assistance is a valuable tool for helping families remain stably housed and find secure, affordable housing. Source of income (SOI) protection will help individuals and families with rental assistance have access to housing on the same basis as those without public housing assistance.



SOI discrimination occurs when a landlord refuses to rent to a housing applicant because of that person's form of income, in this case, housing assistance. Laws prohibiting source of income discrimination seek to end this practice. Housing assistance can include a variety of program types, including Bridges, emergency rental assistance, and Section 8/Housing Choice Vouchers.

The City of Saint Paul also supports reversing racial disparities in homeownership through increasing in homeownership opportunities and increasing resiliency of existing homeowners.

### The Heights Development

The City of Saint Paul supports Sherman Associates and other private developers seeking allocations from Housing Infrastructure Bonds that were previously allocated in the 2023 Housing Bill and from future legislation in 2024 to secure new housing infrastructure bonds specifically for The Heights development project.

The City of Saint Paul supports the development of a district geothermal system at The Heights, and encourages the State Energy Office in the Department of Commerce to assist in the development of this first district geothermal system in Minnesota.



### Housing Infrastructure (HIB) Bonds and General Obligation (GO) Bonds

The City of Saint Paul supports funding of HIB and GO bonds that advance housing goals. HIB provide much needed multifamily housing development purposes tied to supportive and senior housing. GO Bonds support the city's Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) for capital rehabilitation of their public housing units, providing vital housing for the most impoverished Minnesotans. The development and preservation of affordable housing is critical to creating jobs, economic development, and stability for the most vulnerable populations.

### Tenants' Rights and Remedies

The City of Saint Paul supports tenant protection policies geared at ensuring stable, accessible, fair, and equitable housing opportunities for all. The City of Saint Paul supports policies around tenant rights and responsibilities, just cause notices, advance-notice of sale, security deposit limitations, and tenant screening guidelines.

The City of Saint Paul also supports Tenant Remedies Act (TRA) that allows tenants to petition the court to require landlords to provide necessary repairs and improvements in the case of the loss of essential services and amenities. The proposed amendment to TRA combines the existing court order with a priority lien on the property.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, Redevelopment, & Workforce Readiness

The economic viability of the City of Saint Paul is enhanced by an array of economic development tools that create infrastructure, revitalize previously developed property, provide incentives for business development, support technological advances, support a trained workforce, and address disparities in economic development and workforce development. It should be the goal of the state to champion development and redevelopment by providing adequate and sustainable funding to assure competitiveness in a global marketplace.

The state should recognize the relationship between housing and economic development. Access to affordable child care supports working families and allows parents to enter or remain in the workforce. Economic development and redevelopment are not mutually exclusive – some projects require a boost on both counts. The State of Minnesota should recognize cities as the primary unit of government responsible for the implementation of economic development, redevelopment policies, and land use controls.

## **Economic Development**

The City of Saint Paul supports state-funded programs that support new and expanding businesses, infrastructure development, and public-private partnerships. This includes the Minnesota Investment Fund, Job Creation Fund, and Angel Tax Credit. Programs using statewide funding should strive to award funds balanced between the metro region and greater Minnesota.

The City of Saint Paul supports economic tools that facilitate job growth without relying solely on the property tax base.

## **Redevelopment: Historic Tax Credit**

Redeveloping properties supports community vibrancy and revitalization. Redevelopment increases the city's local property tax base, increases land values, provides more efficient use of new or existing public infrastructure (including public transit), reduces urban sprawl, and enhances the livability of neighborhoods.

Jobs are created three times – at demolition and cleanup, during construction, and ongoing jobs tied to the new use.

The City of Saint Paul has the highest number of historic structures in Minnesota and chooses to revitalize historic structures rather than construct new buildings. The City of Saint Paul supported the extension of the sunset of the state income tax credit and maintaining the federal tax credit for preservation of historic properties.

## **Redevelopment: Minnesota Conversion Tax Credit**

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way Americans work. As more employees are working from home on a full-time or hybrid basis, more employers are downsizing their office spaces. As a result of this national trend, the City of Saint Paul is experiencing significant commercial vacancy issues, especially downtown. At the same time, the city is facing a shortage of housing and a severe shortage of affordable housing. This is a national issue.

According to the New York Times, there is about 998 million square feet of vacant office space in cities across the U.S. This presents an opportunity to convert vacant, functionally obsolete, and/or underutilized commercial space to housing units, and many U.S. cities and states are responding to this opportunity by creating incentives for these conversions.

The City of Saint Paul supports state funding, tax credits, and other policy tools that will assist with the conversion of vacant commercial space to residential or new types of uses that support economic growth in the city.



### Workforce Readiness

A trained workforce is important to a strong local, regional, and state economy. As part of its economic development efforts, the City of Saint Paul has an interest in the availability of qualified workers and building a future workforce based on current and future demographics.

The City of Saint Paul can work with the public and private sectors to address workforce readiness to include removing barriers to education access, addressing racial disparities in achievement and employment gaps, addressing the occupational gender gap, and supporting training and jobs for people with disabilities.

The state has a role to prepare and train a qualified workforce through the secondary, vocational, and higher education systems and job training and retraining programs in the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), including youth employment programs.

The competitive DEED grant programs provide key funding for Right Track, the city's youth employment and training program. Funds from the state support internships and employment training for nearly 1,000 young people each year. Right Track brings together over 100 partners across sectors to support young people starting their career journeys.

#### The City of Saint Paul supports:

- Increased funding for the Job Skills Partnership, youth employment programs, and other workforce training programs administered by the state that lead to jobs that provide a living wage and benefits innovative workforce programs and partnerships that foster workforce readiness for a full range of jobs and careers, including skilled municipal jobs and current high-opportunity areas such as manufacturing and construction
- Investments in programs that address the gender wage gap, including training for women to enter nontraditional careers
- A payroll tax credit for job training programs that invest in employees

### Minnesota Sports and Events – World Junior Hockey Tournament

The City of Saint Paul is excited to host the 2026 IHF World Junior Hockey Championship in Saint Paul. The City of Saint Paul supports the \$7 million request by Minnesota Sports and Events for security and programming funding for the 10-day, multi-game tournament featuring the best young hockey players under 20.





# COMMUNITY Public Safety

Crime in Saint Paul continued its downward trend in 2023, however it has not deviated from national trends and remains consistent with what is happening in other cities nationwide. The record levels of gun violence in communities are the primary barrier to sustainably addressing Saint Paul's most pressing inequities – joblessness, homelessness, access to quality education, and health disparities – as we build broad systems to address all public safety needs for residents. Saint Paul continues to experience gun violence in 2024.

The 2024 Community-First Public Safety Plan continues to prioritize new investments in the Office of Neighborhood Safety (ONS) that are data-driven and SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound). These approaches are documented to make the most vulnerable children and families more secure in their homes and neighborhoods and center around three focus areas:

- Improving community connectivity and supports further data-driven strategic planning and implementation
- Addressing key locations using place-based interventions, investment, and improvement of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)
- Enhancing capacity of public safety systems in alignment of state and federal actions with the city's Community-First Public Safety priorities

## **2024 Office of Neighborhood Safety Investments:**

- Project PEACE (Prevention/Intervention, Environmental Design Accountability, Community Action, Enforcement)
- Operation ASPIRE (A Saint Paul Intervention and Recovery Effort) the city's Community Violence Intervention (CVI) and Gun/Group Violence Intervention (GVI) focused-deterrence programming
- Connect Saint Paul-Technological investments in place-based interventions
- Right Track targeted youth employment program
- Saint Paul Fire Department Community Alternative Response Emergency Services (CARES) team
- Department of Safety and Inspections Homeless Assistance Response Team (HART)
- Ujamaa Place
- Returning Home Saint Paul
- ETHOS initiative of the City Attorney's Office
- Neighborhood Safety Community Council grant-funded partners
- Awakenings intervention program in the city's Parks and Recreation Department



In December 2020, Mayor Carter announced his Community-First Public Safety Commission. The 48 members included a broad array of voices from public and private sectors, nonprofits, community and neighborhood organizations, educational institutions, peace officer associations, city commissions, labor and advocacy organizations, health care systems, philanthropy, and residents.

The commission has evolved into a permanent, 15-member Neighborhood Safety Community Council (NSCC), which continues the work of the commission and administers grants to community-based organizations. The grants focus on the recommendations of the NSCC to fund organizations addressing youth, gun, and group violence. The NSCC convenes monthly to hear concerns, address public safety needs, and provide recommendations to the director of ONS.

### **Community Violence Prevention and Intervention**

#### **The City of Saint Paul and ONS supports legislative efforts to:**

- Direct funding to Hospital-Based Violence Interventions programs (HVIP) by leveraging credible violence intervention and prevention specialists to provide intensive counseling, peer support, case management, mediation, and social services to patients recovering from gunshot wounds and other violent injuries
- Fund safe and effective community-led initiatives to policing and research surrounding fire safety and gun violence prevention
- Fund programs supporting victims of violence through non-traditional programming to generate community stabilization and individualized wraparound services. Opportunities include, but are not limited to, housing support, financial assistance, reentry services, legal assistance, therapeutic services, grief counseling or targeted victim services, and skill building based on the needs of survivors
- Appropriately fund the Crime Victims Fund to support community-based violence intervention initiatives that provide services for direct and secondary victims of community violence at high risk for reinjury, retaliatory violence, and involvement in community violence
- Fund youth and young adult initiatives that support and address workforce development and community stabilization
- Fund and support mental health initiatives and substance use treatment facilities for youth and young adults
- Fund and support community-based and mental health domestic violence strategies to reduce sex trafficking while protecting victims and supporting survivors
- Create and fund ongoing mental health alternatives to incarceration for low-level offenses
- Add certified Violence Prevention Professionals to the list of recognized health care providers that are eligible for reimbursement under the Minnesota's Medical Assistance Program

### **Gun Violence Prevention**

Gun violence across the nation and in Saint Paul presents a significant threat to the wellbeing of residents and visitors. It disproportionately impacts communities of color, and the rise in violent crime is being felt throughout the city. The recent surge in gun-related incidents and their devastating consequences have left an indelible mark on the lives of every one of the residents of the Saint Paul community. To address the rising prevalence of gun-related violence and the impact it has on the city, it is crucial to prioritize appropriate resources and funding for comprehensive initiatives to address gun related violence within the city.

The commitment of these resources will further capitalize on the Saint Paul Police Department's (SPPD) abilities to reduce violent gun-related incidents, both proactively and reactively, through greater and focused response, technology, and strategic intelligence. In 2023, the SPPD clearance rate for homicides was 93%, well above the national average of 54%. This is a testament to the professionalism, skill, and policies in place to commit the needed resources to solve these major crimes for the residents and visitors of Saint Paul. This funding will provide the targeted training, devoted personnel, and state-of-the-art technology to allow the SPPD to approach any gun-related crime with a similar tenacity.

For the City of Saint Paul to be successful in addressing gun-related violence, it must take a profound and coordinated approach for long-term changes with immediate implementation. Even small and easy acts by many people aid in this ground-up, community-based approach to public safety.

Small things like committing to never leaving a personal gun unaccompanied in a residence with children, committing to always securing weapons and ammunition in an appropriate gun safe, committing to never leaving a gun locked in a vehicle, committing to registering home or business surveillance camera systems with the city, and committing to working and building relationships with community outreach workers and public safety personnel. Commitments paired with actions made from every corner of the city, from every employee to every resident, visitor, and business owner, will help the efforts of addressing and reducing gun-related violence within the community.

The City of Saint Paul is committed to supporting efforts to reduce gun violence, including gun violence protective orders and safe storage on all gun sales and purchases.

The City of Saint Paul supports local authority to prohibit handguns and other weapons in city-owned/leased and county-owned/leased buildings, facilities, parks, libraries, liquor stores, and at city-sponsored youth activities. It is not the City of Saint Paul's intention for the city to have the authority to prohibit legal weapons in parking lots, on city streets or sidewalks, or on locally-approved land or properties.

### **The City of Saint Paul additionally supports legislative efforts to:**

- Pass laws to prohibit the sale of ghost guns and the critical parts to manufacture them, and mandate the serialization of firearms that are manufactured at home and require the licensure of individuals who want to manufacture firearms
- Require firearms to be stored unloaded and in a secure manner, and require the Minnesota Department of Health to develop relevant public education materials
- Regulate non-serialized firearms and certain unfinished frames and receivers
- Elevate crime penalties for those knowingly participating in a straw purchase of a firearm

### **Public Safety Training and Resources**

The City of Saint Paul acknowledges that the tasks public safety responders have been asked to address are increasingly the result of inadequate social services and programs. The City of Saint Paul recognizes the need for adequate social services and mental health resources and redesigning systems to ensure that residents who are in crisis receive the necessary and appropriate response from the city.

The City of Saint Paul supports ongoing state funding for public safety responders training, including training in crisis management, cultural awareness and implicit bias, and mental health and de-escalation. The city also supports ongoing funding for equipment such as body cameras.



The City of Saint Paul supports ongoing state funding for public safety innovation at the local level. This could include funding for imbedded social workers or mental health crisis response.

### **Fencing**

The City of Saint Paul supports resources for the Minnesota Department of Public Safety to acquire and store with a third-party vendor anti-scale fencing, pedestrian doors, and vehicle gates for local government facilities, so as to improve equitable access to these de-escalation and safety tools.

### **Carjacking**

The crime of carjacking has increased significantly in the metropolitan region, with serious consequences for individual and community public safety.

The City of Saint Paul supports the consideration by the Legislature of statutory changes to address the severity of this crime, as well as state funding to help state and local law enforcement agencies prevent and respond to carjacking. Funding could be used for State Patrol air supports and for costs, including overtime, associated with targeted law enforcement saturations. The City of Saint Paul also supports state resources to increase the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension's intelligence gathering capabilities and enhance existing coordination efforts among law enforcement agencies.

The City of Saint Paul further recognizes the importance and value of diversion programs that emphasize behavior modifications, which can help curb illegal activity and minimize recidivism.

The City of Saint Paul supports consumer protection efforts that require motor vehicle manufacturers to offer antitheft protection devices on certain vehicles that have been shown to be especially susceptible to theft.

### **Cannabis**

The City of Saint Paul supported the legalization of recreational cannabis in 2023. The city supported reducing and expunging non-violent marijuana-related drug offenses from an individual's records and provide dedicated new tax revenues toward education and community wealth building programs.

The City of Saint Paul supports policy changes and technical tweaks to the cannabis law that are responsive to local government concerns and improve access to the new market by members of communities most negatively impacted by cannabis prohibition. The City of Saint Paul supports granting authority to cities to impose local taxes on cannabis.

The City of Saint Paul supports the distribution of tax revenue from adult-use cannabis sales to cities based on the number of products sold and not the number of stores located in each municipality so that the costs of compliance and enforcement to local governments are paid for by cannabis revenue.

The City of Saint Paul supports encouraging the Office of Cannabis Management to work collaboratively with cities when creating or modifying cannabis rules.

### **Copper Wire Theft**

The high cost of copper has led to an exponential increase in copper wire theft from private property, as well as streetlights, traffic signal lights, and other public infrastructure. Stolen copper wire is sold to businesses that profit from selling recycled metal. Copper wire theft compromise public safety by disabling streetlights and traffic signals. The cost to repair and replace infrastructure damaged by copper wire theft is borne by residents. The City of Saint Paul supports efforts to curtail the theft of copper wire from public infrastructure by using similar strategies that combat catalytic converter theft and limit the ability of businesses to purchase copper wire without proof of origin.

Wire theft from streetlights and other public infrastructure negatively impacts the community by reducing public safety for all modes of transportation and mobility, and it costs the City of Saint Paul hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to replace and repair damaged streetlights.

### Fines and Fees

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

### Emergency Responders

As part of the Community-First Public Safety strategy, the city's budget invests in emergency responders to ensure they have the resources to respond to the wide variety of health and safety needs across the city.

#### The City of Saint Paul supports legislative efforts to:

- Provide state funding to help cover costs associated with filling temporary personnel gaps created by firefighters, police officers, and emergency responders who are called to military duty for training or combat
- Adjust state statute regarding the federal fee for service Medicaid match allowing for more thorough reimbursement rates for EMS services
- Fund 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
- Maintain current state statutes related to fireworks sales and use
- Add 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
- Increase the crash reporting threshold above the \$1,000 currently in statute
- Amend § 152.021-152.025 to assign weights to marijuana derivatives
- Reduce health risks to firefighters and emergency responders through legislation related to flame-retardant chemicals.
- Expand § 609.2231, sub. 6 to include code enforcement officials allowing for escalated charges for assaults perpetrated while performing official duties







# SUPPORTING New Americans

The United States has a proud tradition of welcoming immigrants and refugees into communities, and Saint Paul is no exception. Minnesota's first large group of immigrants came from European countries of Norway, Sweden, Ireland, and Germany. Today, Minnesota's immigrant and refugee populations are from across the globe, including Central and South America, Southeast Asia, East Africa, and South Asia. Nearly 20% of Saint Paul residents are foreign-born. Nearly 30% of Saint Paul residents speak more than one language. In all, over 100 languages are spoken in Saint Paul.

Protecting the human rights of residents of the United States, including the City of Saint Paul, is not just a moral imperative rooted in the founding principles of the nation, but it is also essential to ensuring future economic opportunity and prosperity for all who live, work, and conduct commerce within Minnesota and the City of Saint Paul.

**Regardless of immigration status, an individual is endowed with the same universal and inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.**

The City of Saint Paul supports legislation that welcomes and supports new American communities, advances community cohesion and family unity, and prevents the unfair and unjust removal of residents.

The City of Saint Paul supports state-funded resettlement assistance for refugees coming to the United States and City of Saint Paul.

## **Banning Private Detention Centers**

The aggressive and expanding presence of Immigration and Customs Enforcement in communities across Minnesota has caused and will continue to cause trauma for many families. The City of Saint Paul supports banning private prisons from operating in Minnesota to incarcerate inmates detained by state and local jurisdictions.

## **Reduce Gross Misdemeanor Sentencing**

A difference between the state and federal definitions creates an inconsistency in Minnesota. Two people can be convicted of the same gross misdemeanor, with one sentenced to 364 days and the other to 365 days. Federal law dictates that these two people will face very different immigration consequences.

The City of Saint Paul supports efforts to align sentencing guidelines.

## **Timely U-Visa Certification Processing**

The City of Saint Paul supports efforts that expedite law enforcement agencies processing of immigration-related requests from victims of crimes who are foreign nationals in the United States under a U-Visa. These victims receive a certificate from law enforcement that identifies them as crime victims and presents it to federal immigration authorities to support their request to remain in the United States under a U-Visa.

## **Racial Equity**

As racial and ethnic diversity increases in the city, people of color continue to experience significant barriers in housing, employment, criminal justice, public infrastructure, health care, and education, and disparities are becoming more apparent.

The City of Saint Paul is working to examine local policies and systems to revise the delivery of public services and allocate resources to help advance race equity.

All levels of government, as well as the nonprofit and business sectors, have a role to play in addressing race inequities and must work collaboratively to ensure that services and resources are considered, designed, and implemented in a comprehensive, purposeful, informed, and inclusive way to achieve race equity.

### **The City of Saint Paul supports:**

- An examination and revision of existing regional, state, county, and city laws, ordinances, and policies to address racial disparities
- Regional, state, county, and city resources to assist with comprehensive data collection, disaggregation, and sharing to ensure informed policy and funding decisions at all levels of government
- Funding to assist in the development of tools and resources that advance racially equitable outcomes
- Activating partnerships among regional, state, and local governmental institutions and other entities to advance race equity







# LIFELONG Learning

In the City of Saint Paul, everyone deserves the opportunity to learn and grow over the course of their entire life, from infants and toddlers to aging adults.

## Early Childhood Learning and Caring

The aggressive and expanding presence of Immigration and Customs Enforcement in communities across Minnesota has caused and will continue to cause trauma for many families. The City of Saint Paul supports banning private prisons from operating in Minnesota to incarcerate inmates detained by state and local jurisdictions.

The City of Saint Paul understands how critical it is for the youngest learners to have access to quality education and child care. Research has proven that investing in early childhood has as much as an 18% return on investment and can help mitigate many negative outcomes. The City of Saint Paul supports investments in early childhood education, including Early Learning Scholarships, voluntary prekindergarten, and the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), as well as increasing CCAP rates and removing the cap for early learning scholarships while fully funding public schools to appropriate levels.

The City of Saint Paul also supports opportunities for cities to meet the needs of their own community in early learning by expanding funding opportunities for early childhood learning and care. The City of Saint Paul has been and continues to be an active and engaged partner on key local, regional, and national initiatives to ensure every child has an opportunity to learn and grow. The City of Saint Paul supports a collaborative effort to ensure that all families in Saint Paul have access to affordable, high-quality early learning and child care.

## High-Quality After-School and Summer Learning

High-quality after-school 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 of Saint Paul supports new state public funding for competitive grants for after-school and summer programs targeted to low-income youth.





# ECONOMIC JUSTICE & Inclusion

To fulfill Mayor Melvin Carter’s mission of “building a city that works for all of us,” the City of Saint Paul is committed to ensuring that everyone has safe, healthy neighborhoods to live and raise a family in, receives access to high-quality education, and has the opportunity to obtain good-paying jobs. The City of Saint Paul established the Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE) in 2019 to connect families with financial education and wealth-building resources available from the government, nonprofits, and private sectors. The City of Saint Paul supports legislation that will expand economic opportunity for families and workers.

The City of Saint Paul supports five key legislative efforts:

- Statewide guaranteed income
- Statewide \$15 minimum wage
- Elimination of sub-minimum wages for people with disabilities
- Rent-a-bank reform
- Military leave subsidy for police officers and firefighters

## Statewide Guaranteed Income

The City of Saint Paul supports the passage of legislation establishing a Minnesota basic income grant program. This legislation establishes a competitive grant program for local government entities, Minnesota's Tribal Nations, or nonprofit organizations to provide regular cash payments to eligible recipients in order to disrupt poverty, build wealth, advance equity, and support a recipient's basic needs.

This legislation builds on the success and lessons learned from guaranteed basic income programs implemented in the City of Saint Paul and nationwide. This legislation provides grants to communities to implement basic income programs and fund the administration, evaluation, and implementation of the basic income programs while also providing needed technical assistance.





### **Statewide \$15 Minimum Wage**

The City of Saint Paul supports a statewide \$15 minimum wage. With the recent passage of a \$15 minimum wage ordinance in the city, we have seen more wages get in the hands of the working poor. The city is committed to working families and supports legislation that will ensure all workers are paid a fair wage.

### **Eliminate Sub-Minimum Wages for People with Disabilities**

The City of Saint Paul supports changes by the Legislature ensuring that all workers with disabilities are paid at least the minimum wage by 2028 by phasing out 14(c) certification.

### **Rent-A-Bank Reform**

In 2023, Minnesotans for Fair Lending, with the valuable support from OFE, led the campaign to cap interest rates on small-dollar consumer loans at 36% APR, effectively ending predatory payday lending in Minnesota, with many storefronts ceasing these practices even ahead of the January 2024 policy change.

However, online, out-of-state lenders are evading Minnesota law. The ability to do so stems from a provision in the federal Depository Institutions Deregulation and Monetary Control Act (DIDMCA).

DIDMCA, passed in 1980, allows any state-chartered, federally-insured bank to charge out-of-state customers the same APR that is allowed in the bank's home state. For example, an online lender can partner with a bank chartered in Utah to issue a loan to a Minnesota resident that is subject to Utah's lending laws, rather than Minnesota's.

These arrangements, commonly known as "rent-a-bank," are of growing relevance as the internet has made out-of-state lending easier.

More than a quarter of the loans Exodus Lending, a nonprofit that refinances predatory loans for Minnesotans, refinanced for Minnesotans in 2022 originated from lenders who are exploiting this rent-a-bank loophole. These loans carried interest rates consistently above 100% APR, with some as high as 700%.

States can choose to opt out of the DIDMCA provision and require that all out-of-state lenders comply with in-state lending laws.

The City of Saint Paul supports Minnesotans for Fair Lending, their growing partners, and endorsing organizations that Minnesota should join Iowa and Colorado by exercising its right to opt-out, ensuring that all those who lend to Minnesotans play by the same rules and comply with Minnesota's strong consumer protection laws – some of the strongest in the nation.

### **Military Leave Subsidy for Police Officers and Firefighters**

State law requires political subdivisions of the state to award preference points to veterans for most open, competitive positions and establishes the requirements persons must meet in order to qualify for Veterans Preference. The City of Saint Paul supports filling vacancies created by police officers and firefighters who are called to military duty for training or combat.



## Open Meeting Law

Public meetings in the State of Minnesota, including city council meetings and local boards and commissions, must be conducted in accordance with the Open Meeting Law under Minnesota Statute 13D. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, cities successfully pivoted to working remotely while maintaining and even increasing transparency and accessibility.

The City of Saint Paul supports amending the Open Meeting Law to allow city board and/or commission members the ability to participate remotely in up to 50% of scheduled meetings each year without making their location open and accessible to the public as otherwise required under Minn. Stat. § 13D.02, subd. 1. The City of Saint Paul also supports amending the Open Meeting Law to remove the three-times-per-year cap for medical and military exceptions.

## Broadband Access and Digital Equity and Inclusion

The City of Saint Paul supports investments in broadband and digital equity inclusion to ensure affordable, high-capacity internet access, and digital literacy training and support is available to all Saint Paul residents. Clarifying the broadband spending guidelines in ways that are inclusive of metro digital equity needs are vital to addressing the significant disparity gaps in digital access and literacy.

The City of Saint Paul supports clarifying language around the federal Digital Equity Act funds received by DEED to support community-based organizations whose digital skills-training and navigation are specific to certain languages and communities and for residents who live in Saint Paul – specifically residents living in apartments.

The City of Saint Paul supports a review of the BEAD infrastructure program so that most, if not all, of the state is served by the federal allocation. For example, adopt more cost-effective fixed wireless technologies that have been developed since the beginning of the Border-to-Border grant program.





# HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUAL ECONOMIC Opportunity (HREEO), Procurement, & Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)

## Labor Standards Data Practices

Currently, the City of Saint Paul cannot protect labor standards complainants and witnesses upon closure of a case like we can with discrimination cases under §§ 363A. This could potentially make complainants and witnesses vulnerable to retaliation in the workplace. (See below) The City of Saint Paul supports having §§ 363A afford to human rights case data.

The City of Saint Paul supports revising Minn. Stat. § 13.79 by adding: §§ 181.9445 - .9448 and 177.24 to subd. 1; subd. 2 extending the data classification to data collected by municipalities acting under a locally enacted ESST or Minimum Wage Ordinance or local labor standards ordinance.

## Subpoena Power

Currently in law, Chapter 183 gives HREEO subpoena power, but the State Legislature also needs to confer in order for the city to be able to use it. This is an essential tool that both the State Department of Human Rights and Minneapolis Office of Civil Rights have that compels full participation with investigations.

The City of Saint Paul supports extending authority to the City of Saint Paul that was granted under 1975 Special Law to the City of Minneapolis and clarifying that the Saint Paul City Council may delegate this power to HREEO for both human rights and labor standards investigations.

## Procurement

The City of Saint Paul supports a change to the Minnesota Municipal Contracting Statute that is codified at § 471.345 to allow cities to make a contract by two quotes for contracts estimated not to exceed \$250,000, but only if the business being directly solicited was either:

- Certified as a small business enterprise by a county-designated small business certification program; or
- Certified by the commissioner of administration as a small business that is majority owned and operated by a veteran or service-disabled veteran. This authority currently applies only to county boards and the cities requests the same authority.

## Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)

No one should be discriminated against based on their sex and must affirm and protect women's full equality. The City of Saint Paul supports the ratification of the ERA to bolster pay equity for all.







The City of Saint Paul supports legislation that will ensure that the Saint Paul Public Library has the resources necessary to provide high-quality educational tools and programming.

The city supports increased funding for Regional Library Basic System Support (RLBSS) and Regional Library Telecommunication Aid (RLTA), and continuing access to Legacy/Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund for public library programs.

The City of Saint Paul supports increased funding and a corresponding formula change for Minnesota's regional public library systems to provide the essential support needed by citizens, students, and lifelong learners to reach their educational, personal, and professional goals.

The City of Saint Paul additionally supports legislative efforts to:

- Support investments and initiatives that position public libraries as resources for digital navigation and connectivity in communities
- Support for partnerships with federal, state, and local organizations and government units to secure funding for public libraries to support positive public health and well-being outcomes for community members, including telehealth needs
- Fund safe and equitable resources that make menstrual products and opioid antagonists available to the public
- Support infrastructure funding for public libraries in recognition of the essential role they play in supporting community needs for digital equity, education and learning, workforce support, access to government resources, and social connection

## Capital Investment Funding

The City of Saint Paul supports state funding for the following library capital investment projects in Saint Paul:

- Renovations of the Hayden Heights and Riverview libraries to enhance their ability to meet community learning, work, and wellbeing needs
- Additional funding for library construction and remodeling grants to fund safety and renovations at libraries





# TRANSPORTATION,

## Roads, Streets, Sidewalks, Bikeways, & Transit

### Road and Bridge Funding

Under current financing structures that rely primarily on local property taxes and fees, as well as cities' share of the Highway User Tax Distribution (HUTD) Fund, road and bridge needs in the metropolitan region continue to be underfunded. The City of Saint Paul strongly supports stable, sufficient, and sustainable statewide transportation funding and expanded local tools to meet the transportation system needs of the region and local municipal systems. Consideration should be given to using new, expanded, and existing resources to meet these infrastructure needs. The City of Saint Paul supports the use of dedicated taxes and fees to fund transportation infrastructure.

The City of Saint Paul supports Municipal State Aid Street (MSAS) funding. MSAS provides an important but limited revenue source that assists eligible cities with street infrastructure needs and is limited to 20% of a city's street system.

The City of Saint Paul supports state funding for state highway projects, including congestion, bottleneck, and safety improvements. The City of Saint Paul also supports state financial assistance, as well as innovations in design and construction, to offset the impacts of regional transportation construction projects on businesses.

The City of Saint Paul supports further research into the policy implications for electric and automated vehicles on roadways, transit, and other components of transportation systems. The City of Saint Paul encourages the state to study the impact of electric and automated vehicles on transportation – related funding and policies.

### Regional Transit System

The Twin Cities metropolitan area needs a multi-modal regional transit system as part of a comprehensive transportation strategy that serves all users, including commuters and the transit dependent. The system should be regularly monitored and adjusted to ensure that routes of service correspond to current and forecasted changes in the region's transit service needs and priorities.

The City of Saint Paul recognizes that transit service connects residents to jobs, schools, health care, libraries, and recreation centers. Transit access and service frequency levels should recognize the role of public transit in addressing equity, including but not limited to racial and economic disparities, people with disabilities, and the elderly.

Current congestion levels and forecasted population growth require a stable, reliable, and growing source of revenue for transit construction and operations so that the metropolitan region can meet its transportation needs and remain economically competitive.

The City of Saint Paul supports an effective, efficient, and comprehensive regional transit system as an invaluable component in meeting the multimodal transportation needs of the metropolitan region and expand the region's economic vibrancy and quality of life.

The City of Saint Paul supports additional funding for transit projects across the region. The City of Saint Paul supports strategic expansion of the regional transit system. Some of these projects include: the Gateway Corridor, Riverview Corridor, Rush Line, Red Rock, and Robert Street. The City of Saint Paul also supports efforts to develop and incorporate bus rapid transit into the Highway 252/I-94 project.

### Transit and Infrastructure Financing

In 2023, a 0.75% regional sales and use tax in the seven-county metropolitan region was established to provide funding for transit operations, maintenance, capital projects.

In 2023, a 0.75% regional sales and use tax in the seven-county metropolitan region was established to provide funding for transit operations, maintenance, capital projects. To promote stable and predictable distribution of Regional Transportation Sales and Use Tax receipts, the City of Saint Paul supports a collaborative process by which the Metropolitan Council includes stakeholders in the creation of policy guiding the distribution of funds.

The City of Saint Paul supports the creation of a city allocation from the Regional Transportation Sales and Use Tax to aid cities with local transportation infrastructure needs.

### **Street Improvement Districts**

Funding sources for local transportation projects are limited to the use of MSAS, property taxes, and special assessments. With increasing pressures on city budgets and limited tools and resources, cities are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain aging streets.

Street improvement districts allow cities in developed and developing areas to fund new construction as well as reconstruction and maintenance efforts. The street improvement district is designed to allow cities, through a fair and objective fee structure, to create a district or districts within the city in which fees are raised on properties in the district and spent within the boundaries of the district.

The City of Saint Paul supports the authority of local units of government to establish street improvement districts. The City of Saint Paul also supports changes to special assessment laws to make assessing state-owned property a more predictable process with uniformity in the payment of assessments across the state.

### **Funding for Non-MSAS City Streets**

Cities under 5,000 in population are not eligible for MSAS funding. Cities over 5,000 residents have limited eligibility for dedicated Highway User Tax Distribution Fund dollars, which are capped by the state constitution as being available for up to 20% of streets. Current County State Aid Highway (CSAH) distributions to metropolitan counties are inadequate for the needs of smaller cities in the metropolitan area.

Cities need long-term, stable funding for street improvements and maintenance. In 2023, the Legislature established the Transportation Advancement Account, which distributes revenue from the retail delivery fee and the auto parts sales tax to counties, cities, townships, and a food delivery support account. Specifically, this account will distribute 27% of the revenue collected to cities under 5,000 in population and 15% to cities over 5,000 in population.

The City of Saint Paul supports additional resources and flexible policies to meet local infrastructure needs and increased demands on city streets.

### **CSAH Distribution Formula**

Significant resource needs remain in the metropolitan area CSAH system. Revenues provided by the Legislature for the CSAH system have resulted in a higher number of projects being completed. However, greater pressure is being placed on municipalities to participate in cost sharing activities, encumbering an already overburdened local funding system. When the alternative is not building or maintaining roads, cities bear not only the costs of their local systems but also as much as 50% of county road projects.

Although only 5% of CSAH roads are in the metropolitan area, they account for nearly 37% of the vehicle miles traveled. The City of Saint Paul supports special or additional funding for cities that have burdens of additional cost participation in projects involving county roads. The CSAH formula passed by the Legislature in 2008 helped to better account for needs in the metropolitan region, but additional resources for the region are needed. The City of Saint Paul supports a new CSAH formula more equitably designed to fund the needs of the city and metropolitan region.



### Complete Streets

A complete street may include sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, and more. A complete street in a rural area will differ from a complete street in a highly urban area, but both are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road.

**The City of Saint Paul supports options in state design guidelines for complete streets that would give cities greater flexibility to:**

- Safely accommodate all modes of travel
- Lower traveling speeds on local streets
- Address city infrastructure needs
- Ensure livability in the appropriate context for each city

### Railroads

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

### 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 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 of Saint Paul supports funding for repairing, advancing, and upgrading sidewalks.

### Capital Investment Funding

**The City of Saint Paul supports state funding for the following Public Works capital investment projects in Saint Paul:**

- Eastbound Kellogg Boulevard RiverCentre Bridge: Requested appropriation of \$9 million for the removal and replacement of the existing Eastbound Kellogg Boulevard RiverCentre Bridge
- Randolph Avenue Bridge: Requested appropriation of \$11.6 million for removal and replacement of the Randolph Avenue Bridge, including retaining walls, approach roadways, traffic signals, and lighting





# PARKS & Recreation Centers

The City of Saint Paul is committed to providing a parks and recreation system that provides opportunities for health, safety, and lifelong learning.

## Wakan Tipi Center Clarification Language

The City of Saint Paul supports clarifying language to the \$2.5 million Wakan Tipi Center appropriation from the 2023 Capital Investment bill, which would amend the title and appropriation of the project from Lower Phalen Creek Project to Wakan Tipi Center and appropriation to the City of Saint Paul.

## Parks Funding

Local parks and trails 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 of Saint Paul 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 and investment of other resources in these local assets.

The Saint Paul Parks Department is one of 10 implementing agencies in the Metropolitan Council's Metro Regional Parks System. The City of Saint Paul works closely with the nine other implementing agencies to ensure an equitable funding formula for the Parks and Trails Fund and increase the operations and maintenance funding, which is required by state statute to be 40% and is currently funded at 14%. The City of Saint Paul supports ongoing, sustainable funding the Metro Regional Parks biennial budget and allowing the Metropolitan Council to maximize investments in capital assets. The city opposes any cuts.

The City of Saint Paul supports inclusion of \$50 million in state bonding for capital projects for Metropolitan Regional Parks and Trails, which leverages Metropolitan Council dollars and benefits projects in the City of Saint Paul.

## Capital Investment Funding

The City of Saint Paul supports state funding for the following parks and recreations capital investment projects in Saint Paul:

- Mississippi River Learning Center: requested appropriation of \$22.638 million for construction of a year-round environmental, cultural, and historical learning recreation center
- Como Zoo Big Cat Exhibit: requested appropriation of \$25.659 million for design, construction, and redevelopment of the cat animal habitats, operating systems, and expanded visitor accessibility
- River Balcony: requested appropriation of \$24.902 million for construction of a 1.5-mile promenade along downtown Saint Paul's river bluff, connecting public spaces, civic landmarks, and development sites, providing new connections to the river and sparking economic development along the riverfront
- Cemstone Site (Urban Tennis): requested appropriation of \$5.896 million to convert a former demolition and concrete landfill into a new city park
- Regional Sports Facility: requested appropriation of \$35.637 million for a versatile, dedicated multi-sport, multi-use regional athletic complex that would serve Saint Paul residents and visitors from surrounding suburban cities

- Phalen Lakeside Center: requested appropriation of \$11.189 million for renovation and expansion of Phalen Lakeside Center, to provide the boat house access to Phalen Lake for non-motorized paddle sports, and fund improvements for storage, more suitable classroom/work/shop spaces, and a concession space
- Battle Creek Park Field improvements: requested appropriation of \$2.896 million for redesign and construction improvements to the existing sports fields that are in poor condition and to provide quality recreational opportunities in this well-used public park that is uniquely connected to a regional park operated by Ramsey County and a school in the Saint Paul Public Schools district

### Legacy Funding

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

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

- Overall Fund – Supports the equitable distribution of all funds
- Parks and Trails Fund – Supports projects with clear regional or statewide significance that will ensure equitable funding across metro, outstate, and DNR programs
- Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund – Supports 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 – Supports distribution of the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund in a fair and equitable way, which includes support for the Minnesota regional library systems and Como Park Zoo and Conservator

### Urban Forest Invasive Species Mitigation

The City of Saint Paul supports funding to assist the city with urban forest management and meeting the needs of preparing for and responding to catastrophic urban forest issues, such as Emerald Ash Borer and climate change.

To combat present and future pests and diseases, and address the impacts of climate change, cities need additional funding for planning, tree inventory, maintenance, treatment, removal, and planting. The state should provide ongoing funding for those activities.







# LEAD PIPE Replacement & Water

## Lead Pipe Replacements

The City of Saint Paul is appreciative of the Legislature's \$240 million statewide appropriation from the 2023 legislative session which will begin the process of making sure Minnesota is free of lead lines. Saint Paul Regional Water Services (SPRWS) has been replacing utility-owned (publicly-owned) portions of lead service lines for over 20 years and launched Lead Free SPRWS in 2022 to remove all public and privately owned service lines that contain lead. The City of Saint Paul estimates that there are 26,000 lead service lines left to be removed in the service area and we have a work plan to accomplish this over the next 10 years, predicated on continued state and federal funding.

The coalition working on replacing lead lines statewide includes labor unions, the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities, League of Minnesota Cities, and Conservation Minnesota.

The City of Saint Paul supports partners in asking for \$180 million in additional funds to help all cities continue to remove lead pipes.

## Waive Tax Liability for Grant Funding for Lead Pipe Removal

The Biden Administration signed into law the IIJA in November 2021, which appropriated \$11 billion over five years funded through the Drinking Water Revolving Fund for lead-related projects. The State of Minnesota passed a bill in 2023 providing \$240 million in grant spending for lead projects through the Public Facilities Authority (PFA). SPRWS was approved by the PFA and Minnesota Department of Health to receive up to \$15 million in grant funding.

There are over 25,000 lead service lines in the SPRWS service area. The total cost to replace these services is estimated to be over \$500 million. Lead service lines in Saint Paul are located predominantly in older parts of the city with a high proportion being considered low income or disadvantaged areas. SPRWS is implementing an ambitious plan to remove all lead service lines in the next 10 years.

In 2023, SPRWS completed over 600 lead service line replacements with funding through American Rescue Plan Act. Homeowner participation was over 95%. The IRS waived tax liability associated the funding source, ensuring the replacement was at completely no cost the homeowners.

In 2024, SPRWS is planning to replace over 1,200 lead service lines with the help of dedicated full-time staff and construction contracts.

This plan is viable using Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding disbursed through the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority. Construction contracts have been let and are currently awaiting award with construction slated to begin in April 2024.

The funding allocated by the federal government through the IIJA for lead service line replacements does not waive tax liability for property owners who receive a lead service line replacement from their water provider. Each homeowner who participates could owe thousands of dollars in taxes. Homeowners will likely decline participation in the program, especially in low-income areas. The tax exemption waiver is a critical component for water utilities to receive the necessary buy-in and permission from private property owners to rid Saint Paul communities of lead services.

The City of Saint Paul supports petitioning the IRS and Department of Revenue to waive the tax liability for property owners who permit water utilities to replace their lead service lines in their homes using IIJA funding.

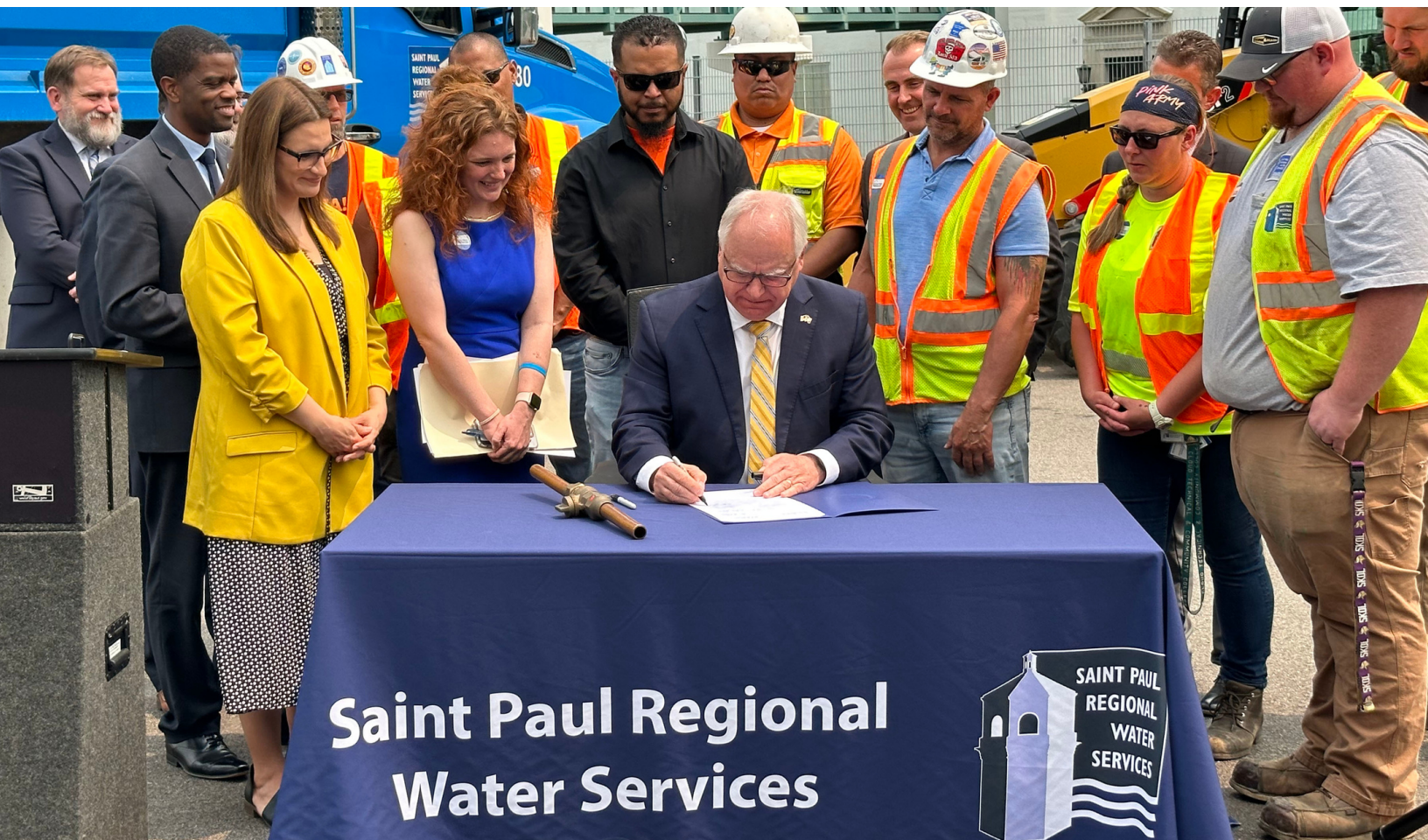
### Water Supply

Municipal water suppliers are charged with meeting the water supply needs of their communities and work to do so with safe, reliable, and cost-effective systems that are sustainable both for established cities and for all future growth.

The aquifers in the metropolitan area cross municipal boundaries and therefore require a coordinated regional approach to planning for their future availability. Currently, approximately 75% of municipal water supply in the metropolitan area comes from groundwater. With proper management of the resource, the current water supply in the region is adequate; however, Metropolitan Council projections predict localized declines in aquifer availability due to population growth estimates if current usage levels are maintained.

The metropolitan region must consider the effects of groundwater use beyond the borders of the metropolitan area on the region's groundwater availability and the cost of treating contaminants in surface water that comes into the metropolitan area for use.

The City of Saint Paul supports state funding for costs associated with converting water supply from groundwater to surface water and funds to encourage and promote water conservation as a strategy to improve water sustainability and to improve and protect water quality.





# RESILIENCE & Climate

Cities must respond and adapt to the harmful effects of climate change and other long-term challenges. The City of Saint Paul is committed to becoming a carbon-neutral community by 2050 and being a leader on clean and efficient energy, sustainable transportation systems, land use, and solid waste systems.

## **Groundwater Thermal Exchange Device (GTED)/Aquifer Thermal Energy Storage (ATES) Systems**

The City of Saint Paul supports modifications to existing state statute to permit the use of Groundwater Thermal Exchange Devices for heating and cooling buildings, consistent with the goals of the city's Climate Action and Resilience Plan.

## **Advanced Energy Standard I Stretch Code**

The City of Saint Paul supports legislation that enables Minnesota cities to require commercial and multifamily buildings to be designed and constructed to an energy performance standard sometimes referred to as an advanced energy standard or stretch code. The legislation would also permit cities to apply the advanced energy standard to commercial and multifamily buildings undergoing major renovation.

## **Energy Conservation and Optimization ("ECO") Act**

The City of Saint Paul supports building on the highly successful Minnesota Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) by expanding customer choices to include load management (modifying timing of energy use) and limited efficient fuel switching (switching to the use of another fuel when more efficient, cost-effective, and lower carbon).

## **Capital Investment Funding**

The City of Saint Paul supports state funding for the MPCA capital investment project at the Saint Paul Levee Superfund Site. The City of Saint Paul supports the MPCA's \$8.2 million request to address legacy contamination at the Saint Paul Levee Superfund Site.

This is funding is for the cleanup of contaminated soils at the levee site. Contaminated soils within the levee pose a continued environmental threat to the nearby Mississippi River. There is not a viable responsible party to complete the cleanup and the MPCA is therefore authorized to conduct the cleanup.

The city also supports legislative efforts to:

- Advance the work of the Pig's Eye Landfill Task Force and fund the cleanup and restoration of the Minnesota Superfund sites at Pig's Eye Lake
- Clarify in statute local government taxing authority to establish a municipal streetlight utility
- Increase state funding for energy efficient building upgrades to outdated libraries and rec centers
- Advocate for including more renewable, equitable, and locally-produced energy so the city can meet the bold commitments for reducing emissions and energy burdens as expressed in the Climate Inheritance Resolution and Climate Action and Resilience Plan
- Incentivize manufacturers of green products to be used in construction and assist in incorporating green practices in their production of goods



- Improve energy efficiency goals and activities by investor-owned utilities
- Prepare for the impacts of climate change on infrastructure, natural systems, and human health
- Increase distributed generation technologies, such as solar photovoltaic, solar thermal production, wind, combined heat and power for both public and private entities
- Encourage legislation and amendments to rules to expand source separated composting efforts
- 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
- Exempt nonprofit car sharing from the current car rental tax in order to increase affordability of services for residents of racially diverse and low-income communities
- Repurpose revenues from car rental fees to support growth of car sharing in disadvantaged communities







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**For more information on City of Saint Paul's  
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