

# **CITY OF SAINT PAUL LONG-RANGE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Monday June 23,2025 - 5:00-7:00 PM Rondo Community Library

- I. Call to order at 5:05 pm by Chair Dees Erickson  
Roll Call
  - a. Members in attendance: Carl Johnson, Demetrius Shaw, Jes Braun, Lauren Dees-Erickson, Makayla Cox, Pat McQuillan Pang Yang, Raymond Hess, Liam O'Brien
  - b. Members absent: April Eh, Darren Tobolt, Nardos Ashenafi, Tim Marino
  - c. City Staff in attendance: Nichelle Bottko Woods, Shannon Forney, Caroline Swinford – Office of Financial Services , Anne Weber –Public Works
  - d. Community Members in attendance: Bob Cattanaach
- II. Approval of 6/23 Meeting Agenda- O'Brien moved to approve the agenda, Braun seconded, motion passed.
- III. 2026-2027 CIB Budget Process – Bottko Woods confirmed the submission of additional written testimony, distributed in the 6/23 meeting packet from CDBG applicant group, Neighborhood Development Alliance. Some discussion followed regarding the low score for this group. Committee members noted that the request was equivalent to half of their funding for a year, which seemed large in scope.

Bottko Woods summarized the Community Poll results, confirming roughly the same amount of submissions as last year. Transforming Libraries – Riverview and Hayden Heights Library Renovations ranked as the top two projects, with Como Lakeside Pavillion upgrades and Sidewalk grinding as third and fourth ranked projects, respectively.

- IV. Capital Improvement Bonds Recommendation – Chair Dees Erickson led the discussion on tentative funding recommendations for 2026-2027 Capital Improvement Bonds.

Transforming Libraries – Hayden Heights Library renovation ranked number one for funding recommendation. Followed by Riverview Library renovation, and Randolph Avenue Bridge Reconstruction, respectively.

O' Brien noted that the Randolph Avenue Bridge rating was structurally deficit and that this project ranked high on the Community Poll as a needed investment. Johnson asked if there would be an alternative route to the Randolph Bridge business/industrial area during construction as there would be a significant impact to businesses and residents.

Weber confirmed there is not an alternative route, as there is singular point of access near this bridge point. Dees-Erickson offered that the project is even more important if it's a singular access point to an area. Johnson inquired if there had

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been community engagement activities around this project. Weber explained that the design is just starting, community engagement has not occurred but is a regular planned activity. Construction would begin in 2029. Dees Erickson asked if there was a motion to vote or change recommendation. McQuillan offered that a recommendation for funding should include clear communication to residents and businesses in advance of bridge reconstruction, and that robust community engagement occur for this project.

Yang stated a desire to see more investment in the community engagement for most projects. Example included: hiring consultants to work with District Councils, better dialogue with residents, patrons, the wider community, dog park users, visible use of QR codes for ease of information sharing.

O'Brien noted that the Community Poll itself is a starting point of Community Engagement for this project, and the project ranked high as a needed investment. Johnson countered that community engagement is lacking in effectiveness. Communication is spare and emailed - but what about phone calls, door-knocking, addressing language barriers?

Johnson referenced frustrations with the street reconstruction on Arcade Street. He stated that there is often a lack of sensitivity to public impact, by prioritizing "intent over impact" and causing distress to small businesses and major corridors. Dees-Erickson offered this language could be added to the final 2026-2027 funding recommendation letter to the Mayor. A motion to approve the 2026-2027 Capital Improvement Bond Recommendations was made by Shaw, seconded by O'Brien. Motion passes.

### **V. CDBG Funding Recommendation**

Chair Dees-Erickson presented tentative CDBG funding recommendations and opened the discussion on rankings. She reviewed the timeline the committee had in place, to hold a meeting the previous Monday, June 16th but had failed to meet quorum to discuss the rankings. Therefore, the June 23rd meeting must end in final decisions on CDBG funding recommendations to submit to the Mayor by the June 30th deadline. She reminded the committee of the need to submit scores in a timely manner and attend the subsequent meetings to discuss those scores, to maintain a strong process for all CIB deadlines.

Dees-Erickson requested comments on any proposals and desires to change scores or funding amounts. Yang offered that reconfiguring funding levels for projects would allow more projects to be funded. For example, the committee's recommendation to fully fund the Hmong Community Center project could be amended to partially fund this proposal. She noted that the project had other significant funding in their overall project plan, and that a reduction to the CDBG

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funding would still be helpful and supportive of their vision. She recommended that funding could be offered at \$100k rather than \$175k.

O'Brien requested an amendment to the CDBG funding recommendations, that the Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) proposal for Vacant and Hazardous Building Demolition be fully funded at \$175K each year, as this department has shown significant need and responsiveness to available CIB funding. The need to address vacant buildings also affects other aspects of life in the city including neighborhood vitality and crime rates, and therefore rises to a higher priority than new investments. He suggested that DSI's Vacant Building proposal is recommended, and that funding is reduced for other projects to allow for this change. Project funding levels that could be amended are NeighborWorks and Hmong Community Center, based on scores and committee discussion.

Dees-Erickson summarized the proposed changes to funding levels as:

- a. NeighborWorks funding recommendation would be reduced to \$85K in year 1 and \$185K in year 2
- b. Hmong Community Center funding recommendation would be reduced to \$100k
- c. Vacant & Hazardous Building Demolition funding recommendation would be changed to fully funded
- d. East Side NDC's Business Investment Fund would be fully funded both years

A motion to amend CDBG funding recommendations with these proposed changes was made by Braun, seconded by Cox. Motion passes.

- VI. 2028-2031 Capital Improvement Plans – a motion was made to move this item to the end of the agenda, as it does not require a decision-making vote. Motion to move the agenda item was made by Braun, seconded by O' Brien. Motion passes.
- VII. 2026-2027 CIB Budget Recommendations – Bottko Woods reviewed the 2026-2027 CIB Budget Recommendation project list. Dees-Erickson questioned whether all projects being recommended for funding had been fully reviewed by the full CIB Committee. Bottko-Woods clarified that CIB projects come before the committee for review, but the level of review is different for different funding sources. For example, City 1% sales tax funded projects appear in Public Work's 5-year plan that the committee reviews each year, but CDBG proposal review occurs by reviewing specific project proposals. The process is different for different Capital Improvement funding sources, but all projects are reviewed in some capacity by CIB committee members.

Braun offered that process improvement would include accountability measures for specific projects. Dees-Erickson reminded the committee that the Wilder Foundation Research group was coming to the July CIB meeting to present their findings on Community Proposal process improvements. Some of the learnings from that work could help clarify all CIB review processes. Johnson noted that for CIB to be more

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effective requires a greater amount of work and project review. Dees-Erickson mentioned that process improvement and clarification is one of the named themes in the committee's annual funding recommendation letter to the Mayor.

O'Brien offered that he was willing to approve the tentative funding recommendations as presented, but wanted to go on record naming the need for Summit-MRB to Fairview project to conduct environmental assessment. Weber confirmed that there was \$1.9M in the project plan for environmental design. O'Brien presented a motion to approve only \$1.9M specifically for environmental design of the Summit-MRB Fairview project. The motion is repeated and moved by Johnson, seconded by Braun. Vote does not pass. Discussion continues.

Yang motions to approve the presented 2026-2027 funding recommendations without further changes, O'Brien seconded the motion. McQuillan abstained from the vote due to a conflict of interest. Motion passes.

- VIII. CIB Chair Recommendation Letter – Dees-Erickson presented the CIB recommendation letter draft to the Mayor. She mentioned specific themes to include in the letter were about improving community engagement efforts and role clarification, and process improvement for all CIB processes. She reiterated that the Wilder Foundation Research group would attend the July CIB meeting to present their findings in auditing the Community Proposal process.
- IX. Announcements - Upcoming Meetings at Rondo Community Library
  - a. June 23: Tentative Additional Process Meeting
  - b. July 14: Regular CIB Meeting
  - c. Monday, August 11: Regular CIB Meeting
- X. Adjourned at 7:32 pm