

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

Monday, Nov. 10, 2025, 5:00 – 7:00 pm | Arlington Hills Community Center

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call Chair Dees-Erickson 2 min
- II. Approval of Meeting Agenda Chair Dees-Erickson 2 min
- III. Approval of [Meeting Minutes](#): October 13 Chair Dees-Erickson 2 min
- IV. Budget Amendments
  - a. **Treasury [RES PH 25-232](#)** Neal Younghans 5 min  
*Amending the City's Capital Improvement Budget and Operating Budget to correct a bond proceed transfer for Fire's cardiac monitors.*
  - b. **Parks [RES PH 25-250 Parks](#)** Alice Messer 5 min  
*Amending the financing and spending plan in the Department of Parks and Recreation in the amount of \$195,597.33 to utilize Parkland Dedication funds for the Taylor Park Improvements project.*
  - c. **Real Estate [RES PH 25-251](#)** Bruce Engelbrekt 5 min  
*Amending budgets for energy projects financed through the \$5 million Green Energy Program*
- V. New Business
  - a. **Community Proposal Sub Committee** Liam O'Brien 10 min
    - i. [Wilder Report to the City Council Audit Committee](#)
  - b. **CIB 2026 Proposed Budget & Project Recommendation** 45 min  
**Conversation with Saint Paul City Councilmembers:** *City Councilmembers Johnson, Coleman, Bowie, and Council President Noecker will be present to host a discussion with CIB Committee Members.*
  - c. **Capital Maintenance Recommendations** Tim Marino 35 min
    - i. [Scoresheet and Workgroup Recommendations](#)
  - d. **Community Proposal Sub Committee** Liam O'Brien 10 min
  - e. **[2026 Meeting Schedule and Locations](#)** Nichelle Bottko Woods 5 min
- VI. Announcements
  - a. **Upcoming Meetings:**
    - i. Monday, December 8 at North End Community Center
    - ii. Monday, January 12 at Arlington Hills Community Center
  - b. **[District Council Process Feedback](#)**
- VII. Adjournment

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

Monday, October 13, 2025, 5:00 – 7:00 pm | North End Community Center

- I. Call to order at 5:19 pm by Chair Dees-Erickson
- II. Roll Call
  - a. Members in attendance: Demetrius Shaw, Makayla Cox, Liam O'Brien, Carl Johnson, Raymond Hess, Tim Marino, Nardos Ashenafi, Lauren Dees-Erickson, Darren Tobolt
  - b. Members absent: April Eh, Jes Braun, Pang Yang
  - c. City Staff in attendance: Nichelle Bottko Woods, Shannon Forney -Office of Financial Services, Alice Messer-Parks and Rec, Dan Niziolek – Department of Safety and Inspection
  - d. Community Members in attendance: no community members in attendance
- III. Approval of 10/13 Meeting Agenda- Hess moved to approve the agenda, Tobolt seconded, motion passed.
- IV. Approval of 9/8 Meeting Minutes – O'Brien moved to approve the minutes, Marino seconded, motion passed.
- V. Budget Amendments
  - a) Office of Financial Services– RES PH 25-224: Budget amendment to reconcile current revenue, as presented by Nichelle Bottko-Woods. Amending the financing and spending plans in the 2022 Capital Maintenance Budget in the amount of \$300,000 to reflect a cancelled HRA Transfer.  
Bottko-Woods affirms this is accounting clean-up and reconciliation of funds that affects contingency funds available. Motion to approve the budget amendment is made by Hess, seconded by Cox. No further discussion. Motion passes.  
Contingency Update: - Bottko Woods provides a contingency status update, to demonstrate what funding is available. O'Brien mentioned that the market standard is to have a 20% contingency fund for a project.
  - b) Department of Safety and Inspection– RES PH 25-228: Budget amendment as presented by Dan Niziolek. Amending the Capital Improvement Budget to the 2025 DSI Animal Services Building Project for \$860,000.

Niziolek described that once the project was started, additional needs were discovered in the Animal Control Services Building renovation, including an uncapped manhole, additional asbestos and a load bearing wall that needed to be replaced. Kennels were not a part of the original budget. The building is slated for a March 2026 public opening.

Dees-Erickson noted that this project has already been the recipient of considerable contingency funding. She noted that wasn't a comment for or against the project, just reiterating that it spends down contingency funds to a remaining \$158,000 from \$1.3M.

Johnson noted that Dan gave a great presentation last fall on the needs for improvements to this same building, but expressed dismay at continuing to fund a building that has more and more needs without pre-design planning. There was further discussion on the practice of departments building funds in reserve before embarking on a project, but also the expense of the project going up over time. Bottko Woods noted that the reserve strategy is a good option for smaller departments, who may not have the capacity to launch a significant project without additional support.

Johnson noted his disapproval of awarding this project three quarters of remaining contingency, to an existing \$5.7M project.

O'Brien noted that it was critical for the project to reach completion, so there was no good alternative if the project wasn't funded through this budget amendment, using contingency. He reiterated the need for an all-project status report, all years, to avoid this type of project deferment and cost increase.

Tobolt noted that this building and its needed improvements have appeared before the CIB committee several times, and that the committee needed to support and trust the departments are making decisions in their best interest.

Johnson inquired if the commitment of these funds would truly finalize the project and bring it to completion. Niziolek affirmed that yes, the building was 95% completed.

Marino inquired what was the original contingency on this grant? Bottko Woods and Forney indicated they would get back to the committee with an answer.

Motion to approve the budget amendment is made by O'Brien, seconded by Tobolt. Votes not in favor of the motion: Johnson and Marino. No further discussion. Motion passes by majority.

- c) Parks and Rec- RES PH 25-226: Budget amendment as presented by Alice Messer. Authorizing the Department of Parks and Recreation to accept Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) Outdoor Recreation grant program funds and to amend the financing and spending plan in the amount of \$350,000 for a new city park at The Heights.

Motion to approve the budget amendment is made by Tobolt, seconded by Shaw. No further discussion. Motion passes.

- d) Parks and Rec- RES PH 25-225: Budget amendment as presented by Alice Messer. Authorizing the Department of Parks and Recreation to accept Parks and Trails

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

Legacy Funds, enter into grant agreements, which include an indemnification clause, and amend the financing and spending plan in the amount of \$2,596,039.

Messer described these Legacy Funds would support Crosby Farm Long Range Plan, Phalen Picnic Area Construction, Como Shuttle, etc. Marino asked what the timeline was for Long Range Plan for Imniizaska. Messer replied about 9 months to a year. Johnson asked if this was for an additional shuttle? Messer replied no, this is for the annual cost of the existing shuttle. She also confirmed that the Phalen Picnic Space was existing but would be remodeled.

Motion to approve the budget amendment is made by Ashenafi, seconded by Cox. No further discussion. Motion passes.

Johnson noted again his disapproval for the Department of Safety and Inspection project using so much of the contingency funding. He reiterated disbelief that the project didn't have adequate pre-design planning or better costs analysis without using contingency funds. Bottko Woods noted that CIB bond funded projects can't support pre-design activities or design as part of eligibility. Johnson also mentioned discomfort with the project using Capital Maintenance dollars for what is essentially new remodeling.

Dees-Erickson inquires if the committee can recommend that projects build in a 20% contingency fund. Bottko Woods mentions that the recently developed Capital Status Update document and process will help give greater context and dimension to projects in process, completed, and needing more funding.

Marino mentions wanting to know more about the history and context of each project before it arrives as a budget amendment to the CIB committee. O'Brien asks if the committee could request a one-pager on each project coming before the CIB, that would present all information and previous resolutions, budget amendment or contingency use per project.

Marino asks if we have data on current deferred maintenance by department, and if that could be a regular reporting. Bottko Woods answered that there are only 2 projects not started, one by Fire (Hillcrest) and one by Library (SunRay concrete main entrance). This is captured in the current project status report.

Committee members generally agreed that more funding was needed for CIB processes. Bottko Woods noted that the annual CIB bonding amount has been unchanged since 1995. O'Brien advocated again for a one-pager for all budget amendments before the CIB.

VI. New Business

- a) Capital Maintenance Process update as presented by Shannon Forney. Forney shared that the program had received 38 proposals requesting \$8.8M for \$2.7M available.
    - i. Nichelle Bottko Woods shared the Capital Maintenance Status Update Document with the committee. She demonstrated how the sheet shows project status for all projects since 2020. It shows projects completed, in scoping/design, in progress and not started.
  - b) Community Proposal Process Applications – Bottko Woods asked for feedback on the upcoming Community Proposal Process. The committee recommended that proposers be able to submit a pre-application via video. Marino said the application needs to be open for at least 6 weeks, and longer if possible. Bottko Woods asked about the tension of the committee wanting more information on each proposal vs. not burdening the applicant with too much detail in the application. All agreed there was a balance between the two. The committee agreed that generally, less detail could and should be accepted and considered as part of the process, in order to make the application easier to access.
  - c) Community Proposal Sub Committee - O'Brien announced that this group had met once and was organizing to give a more robust committee update at the November meeting.
  - d) Bottko Woods asked for recommendations for 2026 Meeting Locations. Committee generally supported Arlington Hills and North End Community Centers.
- VII. Announcements
- a. Upcoming Meetings:
    - i. Monday, November 10 at Arlington Hills Community Center
    - ii. Monday, December 8 at North End Community Center
  - b. October 22<sup>nd</sup> [City Council Budget Committee](#) presentation: Financial Services, Debt and CIB

Meeting adjourned at 7:21pm

# CITY OF SAINT PAUL LONG-RANGE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET COMMITTEE 2026 TENTATIVE MEETING SCHEDULE

CIB Meeting	CIB Meeting Type	Column2
January 12, 2026	Regular CIB Meeting	Arlington Hills Community Center
February 9, 2026	Regular CIB Meeting	Arlington Hills Community Center
March 9, 2026	Regular CIB Meeting	TBD
March 23, 2026	Additional Process Meeting Community Proposal Presentations	Arlington Hills Community Center
April 13, 2026	Regular CIB Meeting	Arlington Hills Community Center
April 20, 2026	Additional Process Meeting Community Proposal Presentations	TBD
April 27, 2026	Additional Process Meeting Community Proposal Process Meeting	Arlington Hills Community Center
May 11, 2026	Regular CIB Meeting	Arlington Hills Community Center
June 8, 2026	Public Hearing	Arlington Hills Community Center
June 15, 2026	Additional Process Meeting Committee Recommendation Discussion	TBD
June 22, 2026	Tentative Additional Process Meeting: Final Recommendation Decision	Arlington Hills Community Center
July 13, 2026	Regular CIB Meeting	Arlington Hills Community Center
August 10, 2026	Regular CIB Meeting	Arlington Hills Community Center
September 14, 2026	Regular CIB Meeting	Arlington Hills Community Center
October 12, 2026	Regular CIB Meeting	Arlington Hills Community Center
November 9, 2026	Regular CIB Meeting	Arlington Hills Community Center
December 14, 2026	Regular CIB Meeting	Arlington Hills Community Center
<b>Key</b>		
	<b>Public Hearing</b>	
	<b>Planned Additional Process Meeting:</b> <i>meetings outside of regular monthly schedule to complete steps of funding review processes</i>	
	<b>Tentative Additional Process Meeting:</b> <i>meeting held based on need, if decisions finalized in existing schedule, meeting will be cancelled.</i>	

## MEETING LOCATIONS

### **Arlington Hills Community Center**

1200 Payne Ave  
Saint Paul, MN 55145

**TBD:** Currently working to schedule in one of the following locations

### **El Rio Vista Recreation Center**

179 Robie St E,  
St Paul, MN 55107

### **Highland Park Community Center**

1974 Ford Parkway  
Saint Paul, MN 55116

### **North End Community Center**

145 Lawson Avenue West  
Saint Paul, MN 55117



# City of Saint Paul

City Hall and Court House  
15 West Kellogg Boulevard  
Phone: 651-266-8560

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** RES PH 25-232, **Version:** 1

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Amending the City's Capital Improvement Budget and Operating Budget to correct a bond proceed transfer for Fire's cardiac monitors.

WHEREAS, on January 15th, 2025, the City Council adopted RES 25-28 preliminarily approving the 2025 Bond Sale, and on June 4th, 2025, adopted RES 25-813 and RES 25-814 awarding the sale of the bonds for the series 2025A and 2025B bonds which closed on June 26, 2025; and

WHEREAS, on July 23, 2025, the City Council adopted RES PH 25-151 to update budgets to reflect for the post bond sale costs,

WHEREAS, the spending and financing budgets need to be adjusted in the bond proceeds accounts to reflect the transfer of bond proceeds from 2022 and to establish a spending budget for the repurposed proceeds; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor, pursuant to Section 10.07.1 of the Charter of the City of Saint Paul, certifies that there are unencumbered funds of \$31,665 in the City's capital and operating budget that may be appropriated; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the City of Saint Paul, upon recommendation of the Mayor that \$31,655 is available for appropriation in the City Capital and Operating Budget, that said budget, as heretofore adopted by Council, is hereby further amended by the particulars as specified in the attached financial analysis.

See attachment.

**City of Saint Paul Financial Analysis**

1	<u>File ID Number:</u>	RES PH 25-232
2		
3	<u>Budget Affected:</u>	Operating Budget Public Works Special Fund
4		
5	<u>Total Amount of Transaction:</u>	1,416,728.00
6		
7	<u>Funding Source:</u>	Transfer of Appropriations
8		
9		Appropriation already included in budget? Yes
10		
11	<u>Charter Citation:</u>	City Charter 10.07.4
12		
13		

**Fiscal Analysis**

16 Amendment corrects several errors. 1) Adjusting Fire's budget to correct a transfer bond proceeds from the 2022 Public Safety equipment  
 17 budget to a new cardiac monitor project. 2) Adds a use of interest earnings that was missed in the 2025 budget adoption. 3) Corrects errors in  
 18 rebates for Green Energy projects.

**Detail Accounting Codes:**

**GENERAL LEDGER (GL) - ANNUAL BUDGET**

**Spending Changes**

26 Reducing the spending budget for the cardiac monitors.

GL Annual Budget				CURRENT		AMENDED
Company	Fund-Dept-Cost Center	Account	Description	BUDGET	CHANGES	BUDGET
1	10022205	76805	Capital Outlay	636,144	(636,144)	-
1	10022205	79220	Transfer Capital Fund	604,479	31,665	636,144
				TOTAL:	1,240,623	(604,479) 636,144

**Financing Changes**

36 Removing the incorrect GF transfer.

GL Annual Budget				CURRENT		AMENDED
Company	Fund-Dept-Cost Center	Account	Description	BUDGET	CHANGES	BUDGET
1	10022205	56220	Transfer from GF	(604,479)	604,479	-
				TOTAL:	(604,479)	604,479 -

**PROJECT LEDGER (AC) - LIFE TO DATE ACTIVITY BUDGET**

46 Complete this section for Grants, Capital, Capital Bond Proceeds, STAR, TIF, and HRA amendments.

**Spending Changes**

Life to Date Project Budget				CURRENT		AMENDED
Project Group	Project	Account Category	Description	BUDGET	CHANGES	BUDGET
<b>Spending budget for Fire public safety vehicles</b>						
C-FMSCAP	C245T00500100	76505		1,300,000	-	1,300,000
<b>Adding spending to the new Cardiac Monitor project code</b>						
C-FMSCAP	C255T00500200	76805	Capital Outlay	-	636,144	636,144
<b>Adding spending in Transforming Libraries and drawing bond proceeds to correct for missed transfer</b>						
C-FMSCAP	C223K60531045	76210	Capital Outlay	8,169,000	500,000	8,669,000
C-FMSCAP	602023D	79115	Intrafund Out Bond Draw	140,000	336,294	476,294
C-FMSCAP	602024A	79115	Intrafund Out Bond Draw	0	163,706	163,706
<b>Correcting Green Energy Program Previous AO 21-17, 21-30, and 22-40</b>						
C-FMSCAP	C196T04901000	76805	Green Energy Program	(1,253,095)	385,063	(868,032)



65 TOTAL: 8,355,905 2,021,207 10,377,112

66

67 **Financing Changes**

68

Life to Date Project Budget				CURRENT		AMENDED	
Project Group	Project	Account Category	Description	BUDGET	CHANGES	BUDGET	
71	<i>Transferring unused bond proceeds from 2022 and reducing the amount of Bond Draw - Capital Notes to be drawn for public safety fleet vehicles.</i>						
72	C-FMSCAP	C245T00500100	56024	Bond Draw - Capital Note 2024	(695,251)	695,251	-
73	C-FMSCAP	C245T00500100	56025	Bond Draw - Capital Note 2025	-	(286,085)	(286,085)
74	C-FMSCAP	C245T00500100	56026	Bond Draw - Capital Note 2026	-	(409,166)	(409,166)
75	C-FMSCAP	C245T00500100	56220	Transfer of Proceeds	-	(604,749)	(604,749)
76							
77	<i>Correcting the source of financing for the Cardiac Monitors to a bond draw and removing the GF transfer.</i>						
78							
79	C-FMSCAP	C255T00500200	56026	Bond Draw - Capital Note 2026	-	(604,479)	(604,479)
80	C-FMSCAP	C255T00500200	56220	Transfer from GF	(604,749)	573,084	(31,665)



# City of Saint Paul

City Hall and Court House  
15 West Kellogg Boulevard  
Phone: 651-266-8560

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** RES PH 25-250, **Version:** 1

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Amending the financing and spending plan in the Department of Parks and Recreation in the amount of \$195,597.33 to utilize Parkland Dedication funds for the Taylor Park Improvements project.

WHEREAS, the Department of Parks and Recreation (“Department”) is making improvements to Taylor Park, including a new play area, trails, signage, and other site amenities; and

WHEREAS, the Department wishes to utilize Parkland Dedication funds in the amount of \$195,597.33 for the Taylor Park Improvements project; and

WHEREAS, the Department wishes to amend the existing financing and spending budget for the Taylor Park Improvements project to reflect said funds; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor, pursuant to Section 10.07.1 of the Charter of the City of Saint Paul, does certify that there are available for appropriation, funds of \$195,597.33 in excess of those estimated in the 2025 Capital Improvement Budget; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Saint Paul, upon recommendation of the Mayor and the advice of the Long Range Capital Improvement Budget Committee, that \$195,597.33 is available for appropriation in the 2025 Capital Improvement Budget, and said 2025 budget, as heretofore adopted by the Council, is hereby further amended.

See Attachment

[To be filled out by the CIB Executive Secretary.]

**City of Saint Paul Financial Analysis**

1	File ID Number:	RES PH 25-250
2		
3	Budget Affected:	CIB Budget      Parks and Recreation      Capital
4		
5	Total Amount of Transaction:	195,597.33
6		
7	Funding Source:	Transfer of Appropriations
8		
9		Appropriation already included in budget?      No
10		
11	Charter Citation:	10.7.1
12		

**Fiscal Analysis**

To amend the Parks and Recreation 2025 Capital Improvement Budget in the amount of \$195,597.33 for a transfer from Parkland Dedication Funds to be used for Tayler Park.

**Detail Accounting Codes:**

**GENERAL LEDGER (GL) - ANNUAL BUDGET**

**Spending Changes**

*(Action Accomplished)*

GL Annual Budget				CURRENT	CHANGES	AMENDED
Company	Fund-Dept-Cost Center	Account	Description	BUDGET		BUDGET
1	40041900	76805	Capital Expenditure	-	195,597.33	195,597.33
				TOTAL:	-	195,597.33

**Financing Changes**

*(Action Accomplished)*

GL Annual Budget				CURRENT	CHANGES	AMENDED
Company	Fund-Dept-Cost Center	Account	Description	BUDGET		BUDGET
1	40041900	56225	Transfer From Special Revenue Fund	-	195,597.33	195,597.33
				TOTAL:	-	195,597.33

**ACTIVITY LEDGER (AC) - LIFE TO DATE ACTIVITY BUDGET**

Complete this section for Grants, Capital, Capital Bond Proceeds, STAR, TIF, and HRA amendments.

**Spending Changes**

*(Action Accomplished)*

Life to Date Activity Budget				CURRENT	CHANGES	AMENDED
Activity Group	Activity	Account Category	Description	BUDGET		BUDGET
C-FMSCAP	C253A27401129	76010	Land Improvements	-	195,597.33	195,597.33
				TOTAL:	-	195,597.33

**Financing Changes**

*(Action Accomplished)*

Life to Date Activity Budget				CURRENT	CHANGES	AMENDED
Activity Group	Activity	Account Category	Description	BUDGET		BUDGET
C-FMSCAP	C253A27401129	56225	Transfer From Special Revenue Fund	-	195,597.33	195,597.33
				TOTAL:	-	195,597.33



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** RES PH 25-251, **Version:** 1

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Amending budgets for energy projects financed through the \$5 million Green Energy Program

WHEREAS, on February 13, 2019 the City Council approved an appropriation of \$5 million in the Capital Improvement Budget to establish the Green Energy Loan Program, now known as the Green Energy Program; and

WHEREAS, the Green Energy Program was established by the Mayor and City Council as a means of financing energy projects that support sustainable economic, social and environmental development through the implementation of energy efficient and renewable energy measures; and

WHEREAS, since the program's inception, the City has completed more than 40 energy improvement projects in fire stations, libraries, police facilities, recreation centers, public works operations buildings, and exterior lighting for trails and parking lots. Improvements have included new LED lighting, equipment and controls for heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, and other energy efficiency technology; and

WHEREAS, said project activity has noticeably reduced the City's carbon footprint and energy consumption over the past several years and enabled the City to take significant strides toward achieving its goal of carbon neutrality for city facilities by 2030; and

WHEREAS, in addition to receiving project funding from internal city loans and the issuance of bonds, the City has received more than \$400,000 in energy rebates from Xcel Energy; and

WHEREAS, the Green Energy Program is nearing completion, as most projects have been done and only six remain active, with one final project planned for HVAC improvements to the Police Headquarters and Central Station (Griffin Building); and

WHEREAS, the City now desires to reallocate funding between completed projects to close them out, to fully fund current projects in need of additional funding, and to allocate spending and financing budgets to establish said Police HVAC project; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor, pursuant to Section 10.07.1 of the Charter of the City of Saint Paul, does certify that there is available for appropriation and reallocation, funding within the current Green Energy Program in the 2019 Capital Improvement Budget for the aforementioned purposes; now,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the City of Saint Paul, upon recommendation of the Mayor and the advice of the Long Range Capital Improvement Budget Committee, that the 2019 Capital Improvement Budget, as heretofore adopted and amended by the Council, is hereby further amended in the particulars as indicated in the attached Financial Analysis.

See Attachment.

**City of Saint Paul Financial Analysis**

1	<b>File ID Number:</b>	<b>RES PH 25-251</b>		
2				
3	<b>Budget Affected:</b>	CIB Budget	Financial Services	Capital
4				
5	<b>Total Amount of Transaction:</b>	-		
6				
7	<b>Funding Source:</b>	Multiple		
8				
9		Appropriation already included in budget?		Yes
10				
11	<b>Charter Citation:</b>	10.09		
12				

14	<b>Fiscal Analysis</b>	New Line items	Changes
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15  
16 To move Green

17  
18  
19 **Detail Accounting Codes:**

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21 **ACTIVITY LEDGER (AC) - LIFE TO DATE ACTIVITY BUDGET**

22 *Moving budget authority in the Capital Projects Fund.*

23  
24  
25 **Spending Changes**

26  
27 **Life to Date Activity Budget**

28	Activity Group	Activity	Account Category	Description	CURRENT BUDGET	CHANGES	AMENDED BUDGET
29	<b>Capital Outlay Green Energy Contingency</b>						
30	C-FMSCAP	C196T04901000	76805	Capital Outlay	868,032.07	\$ (554,882.82)	313,149.25
31	<b>Updating Existing Projects</b>						
32	C-FMSCAP	C196T049110001	76805	Capital Outlay - OFS - (Municipal Garage LED Lighting Project)	99,459.89	\$ 7,981.06	107,440.95
33	C-FMSCAP	C196T049110002	76805	Capital Outlay - OFS - (Multiple HVAC Units Project)	140,812.00	\$ (21,769.00)	119,043.00
34	C-FMSCAP	C196T049210001	76805	Capital Outlay - Public Works - (Street Maint Office & Garages LED Lighting Project)	127,496.05	\$ (2,562.81)	124,933.24
35	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310001	76805	Capital Outlay - Parks & Rec - Lighting (Wilder Rec Center gym)	5,500.00	\$ (5,500.00)	-
36	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310002	76805	Capital Outlay - Parks & Rec - Lighting (North Dale Rec Center)	55,996.62	\$ (1,599.02)	54,397.60
37	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310003	76805	Capital Outlay - Parks & Rec - Lighting (MLK Community Center)	78,285.55	\$ 3,744.22	82,029.77
38	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310004	76805	Capital Outlay - Parks & Rec - HydroMX (Como Zoo Visitor Ctr & Polar Bear Exhbt)	31,085.00		31,085.00
39	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310005	76805	Capital Outlay - Parks & Rec - (Hillcrest Recreation Center)	42,589.33	\$ (2,129.47)	40,459.86
40	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310006	76805	Capital Outlay - Parks & Rec - (Como-Lakeside Pavilion, Passive Parks?)	154,470.72	\$ (24,846.92)	129,623.80
41	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310007	76805	Capital Outlay - Parks & Rec - (Passive Parks Lighting Project)	158,940.97	\$ (0.05)	158,940.92
42	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310008	76805	Capital Outlay - Parks & Rec - (Arlington Hills Community Center Energy Improvements	20,868.42	\$ (1,345.00)	19,523.42
43	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310009	76805	Capital Outlay - Parks & Rec - (Wellstone Center LED Lighting Project)	80,513.27	\$ 3,244.34	83,757.61
44	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310010	76805	Capital Outlay - Parks & Rec - (Battle Creek Rec Ctr. LED Lighting Project)	30,735.85	\$ 7.21	30,743.06
45	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310011	76805	Capital Outlay - Parks & Rec - (Oxford Community Center)	76,057.66	\$ (854.32)	75,203.34
46	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310012	76805	Capital Outlay - Parks & Rec - (Merriam Park Community Center)	10,499.51	\$ (642.42)	9,857.09
47	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310013	76805	Capital Outlay - Parks & Rec - (Battle Creek Community Center Exterior Lighting	27,613.46	\$ 1,225.13	28,838.59
48	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310014	76805	Capital Outlay - Parks & Rec - (Daytons Bluff Community Center Interior & Exterior LED	43,456.38	\$ (4,231.91)	39,224.47
49	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310015	76805	Capital Outlay - Parks & Rec - (Highland (hillcrest) Community Center Exterior LED Ligt	3,709.38		3,709.38
50	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310016	76805	Capital Outlay - Parks & Rec - (W Minnehaha Rec. Center Exterior LED Lighting)	26,955.62	\$ (1,613.12)	25,342.50
51	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310017	76805	Capital Outlay - Parks & Rec - (Wilder Community Center Interior & Exterior LED Lightir	3,572.53	\$ (621.31)	2,951.22
52	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310018	76805	Capital Outlay - Parks & Rec - (Phalen Recreation Center Interior & Exterior LED Lightir	41,490.79	\$ (336.03)	41,154.76
53	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310019	76805	Capital Outlay - Parks & Rec - (Sacket (Boys and Girls Club) Rec. Center Int. & Ext. LEI	55,513.25	\$ (55,513.25)	-
54	C-FMSCAP	C196T049410001	76805	Capital Outlay - Police - (Griffin Building Energy Improvements)	28,575.00		28,575.00
55	C-FMSCAP	C196T049410002	76805	Capital Outlay - Police - (Lighting: Griffin HQ, Central, Eastern, Western Dists)	763,842.00	\$ (107,841.99)	656,000.01
56	C-FMSCAP	C196T049510001	76805	Capital Outlay - Fire Station Lighting (Group 1 - EPD - PSG, Training, Storage)	35,467.92		35,467.92
57	C-FMSCAP	C196T049510002	76805	Capital Outlay - Fire Station Lighting (Group 2 - FS 7, 9, 17, 24)	82,053.96		82,053.96
58	C-FMSCAP	C196T049510003	76805	Capital Outlay - Fire Station Lighting (Group 3 - FS 6, 8, 18, 22, 51)	117,602.11		117,602.11
59	C-FMSCAP	C196T049510004	76805	Capital Outlay - Fire Station Lighting (Group 4 - FS 5, 14, 20, 23)	82,673.35		82,673.35
60	C-FMSCAP	C196T049700000	63160	General Professional Service - (Energy Consultants/Xcel Energy Audits/Fleet Grant Mat	75,000.00	\$ 30,175.25	105,175.25
61	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810001	76805	Capital Outlay - Rondo Library Lighting	76,918.05		76,918.05
62	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810002	76805	Capital Outlay - Hamline Midway Library Lighting	8,544.13		8,544.13
63	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810003	76805	Capital Outlay - Hayden Heights Library Lighting	37,298.05		37,298.05
64	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810004	76805	Capital Outlay - Highland Park Library Lighting	34,700.70	\$ (821.82)	33,878.88
65	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810005	76805	Capital Outlay - St. Anthony Park Library Lighting	14,940.78		14,940.78
66	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810006	76805	Capital Outlay - Rice Street Library Lighting	33,094.75		33,094.75
67	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810007	76805	Capital Outlay - Sun Ray Library Lighting	18,975.01		18,975.01
68	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810008	76805	Capital Outlay - Merriam Park Library Lighting	47,899.73		47,899.73
69	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810009	76805	Capital Outlay - Riverview Library Lighting	15,746.97		15,746.97
70	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810010	76805	Capital Outlay - Central Library Energy Improvements	757,950.00	\$ 190,734.05	948,684.05
71	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810010	64505	Capital Outlay - Central Library Energy Improvements	150,000.00	\$ (150,000.00)	-
72	C-FMSCAP	C258J00093009	76805	2025 ANIMAL SERVICES BUILDING- Green Energy Funding	400,000.00	\$ -	400,000.00
73	C-FMSCAP	C196T049510005	76805	Fire Station 3 Remodeling Project- Green Energy Funding	800,000.00		800,000.00
74	<b>CREATE NEW PROJECT- Griffin Building HVAC</b>						
75	C-FMSCAP	C196T049410003	76805	Capital Outlay - Police - (Griffin HQ HVAC Improvements)	-	\$ 700,000.00	700,000.00
76							
77	<b>TOTAL:</b>				<b>5,764,936.83</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>5,764,936.83</b>

78

79 **Financing Changes**

80

81 **Life to Date Activity Budget**

82	Activity Group	Activity	Account Category	Description	CURRENT BUDGET	CHANGES	AMENDED BUDGET
83							
84	<b>Capital Outlay Green Energy Contingency</b>						
85	C-FMSCAP	C196T04901000	57610	Advance from Other Funds	-	\$ (76,203.90)	(76,203.90)
86	C-FMSCAP	C196T04901000	55526	Rebates	(126,569.23)	\$ 6,208.00	(120,361.23)
87	C-FMSCAP	C196T04901000	56023	Intra-fund Bond Draw (2023)	0.16	\$ (0.16)	-
88	C-FMSCAP	C196T04901000	56024	Intra-fund Bond Draw (2024)	-		-
89	C-FMSCAP	C196T04901000	56025	Intra-fund Bond Draw (2025)	(741,463.00)	\$ 612,892.22	(128,570.78)
90							-
91	<b>Updating Existing Projects</b>						
92	C-FMSCAP	C196T049110001	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(71,906.81)	\$ (7,981.06)	(79,887.87)
93	C-FMSCAP	C196T049110001	55526	Rebates	(27,553.08)		(27,553.08)
94	C-FMSCAP	C196T049110002	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(109,492.00)	\$ 21,769.00	(87,723.00)
95	C-FMSCAP	C196T049110002	55526	Rebates	(31,320.00)		(31,320.00)
96	C-FMSCAP	C196T049210001	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(113,831.23)	\$ 2,562.81	(111,268.42)
97	C-FMSCAP	C196T049210001	55526	Rebates	(13,664.82)		(13,664.82)
98	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310001	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(5,500.00)	\$ 5,500.00	-
99	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310002	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(46,501.62)	\$ 13,585.68	(32,915.94)
100	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310002	55526	Rebates (N Dale Rec. Ctr.)	(9,495.00)		(9,495.00)
101	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310003	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(55,793.78)	\$ (3,744.22)	(59,538.00)
102	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310003	55526	Rebates	(22,491.77)		(22,491.77)
103	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310004	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(31,085.00)		(31,085.00)
104	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310005	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(31,104.65)	\$ 2,129.47	(28,975.18)
105	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310005	55526	Rebates	(11,484.68)		(11,484.68)
106	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310006	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(126,303.72)	\$ 24,846.92	(101,456.80)
107	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310006	55526	Rebates (Como Lakeside Pav)	(28,167.00)		(28,167.00)
108	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310007	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(145,199.36)	\$ 0.05	(145,199.31)
109	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310007	55526	Rebates (Passive Parks)	(13,741.61)		(13,741.61)
110	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310008	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(13,291.42)	\$ 1,345.00	(11,946.42)
111	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310008	55526	Rebates (Arlington Hills Com. Ctr)	(7,577.00)		(7,577.00)
112	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310009	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(62,734.08)	\$ (3,244.34)	(65,978.42)
113	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310009	55526	Rebates	(17,779.19)		(17,779.19)
114	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310010	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(20,699.91)	\$ (7.21)	(20,707.12)
115	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310010	55526	Rebates	(10,035.94)		(10,035.94)
116	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310011	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(62,236.58)	\$ 854.32	(61,382.26)
117	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310011	55526	Rebates (Oxford - Pending Rebates)	(13,821.08)		(13,821.08)
118	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310012	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(9,423.49)	\$ 642.42	(8,781.07)
119	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310012	55526	Rebates	(1,076.02)		(1,076.02)
120	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310013	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(26,793.79)	\$ (1,225.13)	(28,018.92)
121	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310013	55526	Rebates	(819.67)		(819.67)
122	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310014	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(35,539.79)	\$ 4,231.91	(31,307.88)
123	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310014	55526	Rebates	(7,916.59)		(7,916.59)
124	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310015	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(2,924.92)		(2,924.92)
125	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310015	55526	Rebates	(784.46)		(784.46)
126	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310016	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(24,817.21)	\$ 1,613.12	(23,204.09)
127	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310016	55526	Rebates	(2,138.41)		(2,138.41)
128	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310017	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(3,201.53)	\$ 621.31	(2,580.22)
129	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310017	55526	Rebates	(371.00)		(371.00)
130	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310018	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(36,658.79)	\$ 336.03	(36,322.76)
131	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310018	55526	Rebates	(4,832.00)		(4,832.00)
132	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310019	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(41,721.25)	\$ 41,721.25	-
133	C-FMSCAP	C196T049310019	55526	Rebates	(13,792.00)	\$ 13,792.00	-
134	C-FMSCAP	C196T049410001	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(28,575.00)		(28,575.00)
135	C-FMSCAP	C196T049410001	55526	Rebates	-		-
136	C-FMSCAP	C196T049410002	56023	Intra-fund Bond Draw (2023)	(680,537.57)	\$ 107,841.99	(572,695.58)
137	C-FMSCAP	C196T049410002	55526	Rebates	(83,304.43)		(83,304.43)
138	C-FMSCAP	C196T049510001	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(30,988.83)		(30,988.83)
139	C-FMSCAP	C196T049510001	55526	Rebates	(4,479.09)		(4,479.09)
140	C-FMSCAP	C196T049510002	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(66,558.27)		(66,558.27)
141	C-FMSCAP	C196T049510002	55526	Rebates	(15,495.69)		(15,495.69)
142	C-FMSCAP	C196T049510003	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(81,093.49)		(81,093.49)
143	C-FMSCAP	C196T049510003	55526	Rebates	(36,508.62)		(36,508.62)
144	C-FMSCAP	C196T049510004	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(52,410.31)		(52,410.31)
145	C-FMSCAP	C196T049510004	55526	Rebates	(30,263.04)		(30,263.04)
146	C-FMSCAP	C196T049700000	57610	General Professional Service - (Energy Consultants/Xcel Energy Audits)	(75,000.00)	\$ (30,175.25)	(105,175.25)
147	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810001	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(66,512.41)		(66,512.41)
148	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810001	55526	Rebates	(10,405.64)		(10,405.64)
149	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810002	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(7,280.27)		(7,280.27)
150	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810002	55526	Rebates	(1,263.86)		(1,263.86)
151	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810003	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(30,253.24)		(30,253.24)
152	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810003	55526	Rebates	(7,044.81)		(7,044.81)
153	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810004	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(23,983.41)	\$ 821.82	(23,161.59)
154	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810004	55526	Rebates	(10,717.29)		(10,717.29)

155	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810005	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(11,377.23)		(11,377.23)
156	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810005	55526	Rebates	(3,563.55)		(3,563.55)
157	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810006	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(26,405.61)		(26,405.61)
158	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810006	55526	Rebates	(6,689.14)		(6,689.14)
159	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810007	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(10,722.59)		(10,722.59)
160	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810007	55526	Rebates	(8,252.42)		(8,252.42)
161	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810008	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(38,856.62)		(38,856.62)
162	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810008	55526	Rebates	(9,043.11)		(9,043.11)
163	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810009	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(13,271.38)		(13,271.38)
164	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810009	55526	Rebates	(2,475.59)		(2,475.59)
165	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810010	57610	Advance from Other Funds	(207,950.00)		(207,950.00)
166	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810010	56021	Intra-fund Bond Draw (2021)	(150,000.00)		(150,000.00)
167	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810010	56023	Intra-fund Bond Draw (2023)	(530,000.00)		(530,000.00)
168	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810010	56025	Intra-fund Bond Draw (2025)	-	\$ (40,734.05)	(40,734.05)
169	C-FMSCAP	C196T049810010	55526	Rebates	(20,000.00)	\$ -	(20,000.00)
170	C-FMSCAP	C229T05293005	56024	22 CAPITAL MAINTENANCE - FIRE - Green Energy Program Funding	(463,570.00)		(463,570.00)
171	C-FMSCAP	C229T05293005	56025	22 CAPITAL MAINTENANCE - FIRE - Green Energy Program Funding	(336,430.00)		(336,430.00)
172	C-FMSCAP	C258J00093009	56025	Animal Services Building - Green Energy Program Funding	(400,000.00)		(400,000.00)
173	<b>CREATE NEW PROJECT- Griffin Building HVAC</b>						-
174	C-FMSCAP	C196T049410003	56025	Intra-fund Bond Draw (2025)	-	\$ (680,000.00)	(680,000.00)
175	C-FMSCAP	C196T049410003	55526	Rebates	-	\$ (20,000.00)	(20,000.00)
176							
177							
<b>TOTAL:</b>					<b>(5,764,936.83)</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>	<b>(5,614,936.83)</b>

# Community-Project Capital Improvement Budget Process

*Final Report to the Saint Paul City Council Audit Committee*

Authors: Audrey Mutanhaurwa, Heather Britt

**M A Y 2 0 2 5**

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# Background

As part of the City of St. Paul's Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) process, community projects are developed, selected, and funded through a community-project specific approach that happens every other year. The process offers approximately \$1,000,000 each time the process is deployed to fund a variety of community-identified initiatives aimed at meeting specific needs.

While the selection of community-identified projects was previously a longstanding, labor-intensive process where a small number of community members were deeply involved in selecting projects for funding, starting in 2020, the City of St. Paul and its Office of Financial Services implemented changes in the community-project CIB process. These changes were implemented as a response to community feedback that competing with City Departments was inequitable. These changes were also put into place to enable broader participation of St. Paul residents in the process.

The City of Saint Paul's City Council Audit Committee partnered with Wilder Research to conduct an evaluation of the new process. **The study goals** were to understand whether the process is effective and what improvements in the process might be considered.

## Research questions

In partnership with the Audit Committee, as well as the staff from the City of Saint Paul's Office of Financial Services, Wilder developed guiding questions for the project including:

- Is the current community-project CIB process working as intended with the changes in place?
- Is the current community-project CIB process effective?

More specifically, questions centered on three areas, the CIB process itself, the community engagement aspect of the process, and questions around equity in the process and in funding. These focus areas for questions were drawn from an initially brainstormed list of questions from the Audit Committee and from Office of Financial Services staff. Explicit questions guiding the approach are included in Appendix B.

# Methods

To conduct this assessment, Wilder used three information gathering activities:

## *Document review*

Wilder collected and reviewed documents provided by the Office of Financial Services (OFS) and the Saint Paul City Council Audit Committee pertaining to the CIB community-project process. These documents included CIB meeting summaries, committee guidelines, public-facing materials, and historical data on project applications and awards. The review helped identify structural elements of the current process, shifts from previous iterations, and areas where clarification or redesign may be needed. A summary of the document review can be found in Appendix A.

## *Key informant interviews*

Wilder conducted key informant interviews with eight community applicants, three CIB committee members, one City council member, one former member of the Mayor's office staff, and four staff from the City of Saint Paul's Office of Financial Services (OFS), identified in collaboration with the Saint Paul City Council Audit Committee and OFS leadership. Interviewees were selected for their firsthand experience with the community-project component of the CIB process.

The key informants brought a different perspective on the process. Together, these interviews helped Wilder better understand how the CIB community process is functioning in practice, including strengths, pain points, and areas for improvement. One interview protocol was used for applicants, committee members, and OFS staff. All interviews were conducted between December 2024 and March 2025. The interview protocol used can be found in Appendix B.

## *Story map*

In addition to interviews and document review, Wilder created an interactive Story Map to visualize the geographic distribution of community-created CIB proposals and awards across Saint Paul. The analysis used data from the 2020–2021, 2022–2023, and 2024–2025 CIB cycles to examine how project applications and funding align with neighborhood demographics, Areas of Concentrated Poverty, and district councils and wards. The Story Map highlights patterns in where proposals originate, where investments are directed, and what disparities may exist across communities. These spatial insights provided important context for understanding engagement

levels, resource allocation, and implications for equity in the CIB process. A link to the Story Map is included in Appendix C.

## Key findings

Based on the results of the three activities listed above, Wilder Research identified the following overarching opportunities and challenges, and key observations, for the CIB process. We explore these opportunities in depth in the analysis section and offer recommendations at the end of this report.

Difficult to disentangle as part of this work was the impact of the adjustment made to the 2024 process. At the urging of a Council member and the Deputy Mayor, the application process was reopened to allow for more time from Wards that had not yet submitted proposals. While this reopening aimed to support greater equity, it also created confusion and frustration for participants who had already planned around the initial timeline.

### *Opportunities*

- There is widespread interest across stakeholders in making the CIB process more equitable, accessible, and transparent.
- Committee members are willing to serve as community ambassadors but need better direction and support to do so.
- OFS staff recognize the need to simplify the process and improve alignment between funding cycles, implementation, and communications.
- Many applicants are eager to reapply or support others if better tools, timelines, and outreach are provided.

### *Challenges*

- The process is overly complex and confusing, even for experienced participants and city staff. [Of note, the community process is only one part of the broader CIB process for the city. There are 5 funding deadlines with proposal reviews within each 2-year CIB cycle, a significant impact on the portfolio of already busy city staff.]
- There is no clear owner for public outreach, which has led to inconsistent engagement and missed opportunities.
- The application favors individuals with grant-writing skills and insider knowledge, limiting who participates.

- Equity goals are not clearly defined, and there is no shared understanding of how to prioritize funding for underserved communities.

### *CIB Process*

- The shift to separate community and department proposals was meant to increase fairness but has added complexity.
- Applicants experience the process as opaque; they often don't know who to contact or what happens after submitting. [See above note about context for the 2024 process which may be shaping perspectives of recent applicants.]
- Staff cited the need for better alignment between internal funding timelines and public-facing communication.

### *Community Engagement*

- Most participants, including staff, could not identify who is accountable for engagement.
- CIB committee members and district councils are underused and lack clear guidance.
- Outreach typically starts too late, and communication materials are hard to navigate.

### *Equity*

- There is a shared desire to fund projects in underrepresented areas, but the process still favors repeat applicants from more resourced neighborhoods.
- Equity is interpreted in different ways some view it as equal ward representation, others as need-based investment.
- Data is expected in proposals, but not made accessible or understandable for most applicants.

## In-depth analysis

The following section provides a detailed analysis of the Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) community-project process, based on the key informant interviews. While perspectives varied by role and experience, consistent patterns emerged across stakeholder groups. This section outlines findings across these three core areas: CIB Process Design and Implementation, Community Engagement, and Equity.

## Key informant perspectives: CIB Process

Seventeen key informants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview protocol. This section focuses on the Capital Improvement Budget process. Participants reflected on how the process is currently experienced, how it compares to earlier versions, and where they believe changes are most needed.

Participants described the CIB process as difficult to navigate due to a lack of structure, unclear timelines, and inconsistent communication. Many noted that they were unsure where to begin or what was expected of them throughout the application cycle. There was no central point of contact, no clear guidance on deadlines or decision-making criteria, and no consistent process for confirming or following up on submissions. Some participants described relying on outdated or secondhand information just to figure out where to start.

While many participants found the process complex, some staff noted that the redesigned process may actually be more accessible than the previous structure, which included lengthy instructions and favored individuals familiar with internal city procedures.

*“I sit on the board of a district council in the city, and even I find this extremely opaque... I felt like I was flying blind.” – Key informant*

*“There were a lot of shifting deadlines that were difficult to keep track of and communicate... I think they even had to reopen the proposal period after it had already closed.” – Key informant*

The tight timeline imposed by the city's budget cycle was seen as a significant barrier to success. Several participants emphasized that the entire process from outreach to application review, feels rushed, leaving little time to build relationships, provide technical assistance, or support thoughtful proposals. Participants noted that while the city has a long planning window, applicants are often given only a few weeks to prepare and submit a detailed application, many for the first time. Others involved in reviewing proposals described receiving submissions with limited context or background and feeling underprepared to assess them fairly.

*“I didn't see any of this information until pretty late in the process... I threw mine together rather quickly.” – Key informant*

*“A month is not long enough. I don't really believe that a month is long enough to open a process and have a deadline and to think that all of the marketing and questions can appropriately happen in that time frame.” – Key Informant*

Communication was another persistent challenge. Participants shared that they often submitted applications without receiving confirmation, updates, or final decisions. Some said they only learned about the outcomes through council meeting notes or informal channels. Those managing aspects of the process noted that communication responsibilities appear to be spread across various offices and groups, but no one is tasked with coordinating or leading those efforts. As a result, the communication infrastructure feels fragmented and reactive.

*“You don’t hear what happens. Nobody loops back to tell you what the CIB committee recommended... Trying to weed through a budget and figure out if your project is included or not is difficult.” – Key informant*

*“There’s a gap in communication... Just because I’m on the committee doesn’t mean I have ownership to communicate with the mayor’s office.” – Key Informant*

*“There wasn’t a consistent point of contact, and that created gaps.” – Key Informant*

### **Key informant perspectives: Community Engagement**

Seventeen key informants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview protocol. This section focuses on community engagement

#### *Key findings*

Participants consistently expressed a desire for the process to reflect more genuine, community-centered engagement. However, in practice, engagement efforts were described as inconsistent, under-resourced, and lacking a clear strategy. Many felt that the opportunity to apply was not widely known or broadly accessible, especially among those with limited prior involvement in city processes. Some learned about the process too late to participate, while others were unsure how their voices would be heard once they did.

*“You didn’t always know about the committee hearings right away... sometimes it was like, ‘Oh, there’s a meeting tonight—can someone go?’” – Key informant*

*“There are a lot of community groups that just don’t know this process exists... It can’t always be on the committee to get the word out.” – Key informant*

*“You have to be part of a district council or have inside knowledge. It’s hard for someone new to know how to even begin.” – Key Informant*

There was widespread uncertainty around who is ultimately responsible for engagement. Participants described a process in which responsibilities are

distributed across departments, offices, and volunteers but without clear ownership or accountability. This has led to an engagement structure that is uneven across neighborhoods and dependent on individual initiative rather than a coordinated citywide strategy. For some, the absence of clarity resulted in missed opportunities to connect with interested community members.

*“Who is accountable for engagement? Of all the questions in the section, that’s the one I struggle with the most.” – Key informant*

*“There’s been confusion about who owns what piece of communication... We imagined Finance would lead, but the Mayor’s Office became more involved.” - Key Informant*

Several participants reflected on the potential role of community partners and committee members in improving outreach, but noted that these individuals are not given sufficient support, training, or tools to fulfill that function. While some community-based groups were active and visible in their districts, others were not involved at all. Participants agreed that more consistency, direction, and investment in these partners would help extend the reach and credibility of the process.

*“We should be clearer about committee members’ roles... They’re supposed to represent their communities and share information back, but many don’t know that or have the support to do so..” – Key informant*

*“We do ask committee members to talk with neighbors, community groups, and district councils. Some of that definitely happens. But these are volunteers—many with full-time jobs and families—and they only receive a \$25 meeting stipend” – Key Informant*

### ***Key informant perspectives: Equity and Inclusion***

Seventeen key informants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview protocol. This section focuses on equity.

#### ***Key findings***

Although equity was frequently named as a goal of the CIB process, participants shared that it is not yet consistently reflected in how the process functions. Many expressed that the structure still favors those who have existing relationships with the city or prior experience navigating similar systems. First-time applicants or those with less familiarity were often unsure whether their ideas qualified, how to meet application expectations, or where to turn for help. Some participants reported abandoning the process altogether due to lack of clarity or support.



*“It was hard to know where to start or whether I was even allowed to apply. It feels like it’s not really meant for us unless you already know the system.” – Key informant*

*“People who know how to navigate City Hall—those are the ones who get through. It shouldn’t be that way.” – Key informant*

Concerns were also raised about whether funding decisions are aligned with community need. Participants questioned whether projects from high-need neighborhoods are being prioritized, or whether decisions are overly influenced by political balance or application polish. Some voiced frustration that communities with fewer resources or less institutional support are at a disadvantage, despite being the intended beneficiaries of the community track.

*“It feels like the projects that get picked are from places where people already know how to talk to the city. What about neighborhoods that don’t have that kind of access?” – Key informant*

*“I don’t know if the decisions are based on who needs it most. I’ve seen great ideas from smaller organizations that don’t go anywhere, and I don’t know why.” – Key informant*

*“There’s always a tension between wanting geographic diversity and wanting to fund the highest-quality proposals. But those don’t always come from high-need neighborhoods—and we don’t have a system in place to bridge that gap.” – Key informant*

Finally, participants highlighted a gap between the equity values articulated by the city and the tools available to achieve them. While there was support for using data to guide investments, several participants noted that most community members do not have access to the kinds of information needed to create "data-driven" proposals. Others emphasized that lived experience should carry equal weight in decision-making, and that the process needs to be designed in a way that actively includes and supports underrepresented communities not just invites them.

*“The data piece is really missing from the current community proposal process... They are encouraged to bring in data, but we don’t give them any signposts or help finding it.” – Key informant*

*“I think we should be careful not to dismiss a project just because it doesn’t come with crash statistics or citations. A lot of what people are responding to is what they see every day in their neighborhoods.” – Key informant*

*“We say we want equity-driven proposals, but we haven’t created a user-friendly way for community members to plug in. The platform still favors people who’ve done this before.” – Key informant*

# Recommendations

Based on participant interviews, document review, and spatial analysis, Wilder Research, in partnership with the Saint Paul City Council Audit Committee, has identified a set of actionable recommendations to improve the CIB community-project process. These recommendations aim to address the core issues raised around process clarity, engagement, and equitable access, and are categorized by priority level to support implementation planning.

The prioritization of recommendations is based on the following criteria:

- **Urgency** – Does the issue require immediate attention?
- **Impact** – Will addressing it improve outcomes for applicants, staff, and the broader public?
- **Feasibility** – Can the recommendation be implemented with available resources?
- **Stakeholder Support** – Is there broad agreement on the need for change?
- **Alignment with Goals** – Does the recommendation reflect the City’s vision for a more transparent, equitable, and community-centered process?

## High priority recommendations

While all recommendations aim to improve the process, it is important to note that implementing these changes would require more resources to be dedicated to the CIB program. This includes increased staff time and capacity across OFS and other departments, where existing responsibilities already stretch available resources. Without this added support, meaningful implementation of these recommendations may be limited. The high priority recommendations represent more immediate action items with broad support and high potential impact.

### *Clarify roles and responsibilities across the process. (Resource Dependent)*

Participants emphasized the need for clarity about who is responsible for outreach, engagement, communications, technical assistance, and decision-making. Currently, responsibility is spread across multiple departments and offices without formal structure. Creating a clearly documented process defining timelines, handoffs, and responsibilities would reduce confusion and improve coordination.

*Document the current process and its components for regular future updates.  
(Feasible within Existing Resources)*

Spending time now to capture the specific steps and procedures used in the current CIB process would allow for documentation that could be revisited with future improvements and enhancements. Ensuring documentation is available to OFS staff, as well as other City staff needing to better understand the process, would help create consistency in understanding across individuals touching the process.

*Launch a pre-application phase to screen for feasibility and increase accessibility.  
(Resource Dependent)*

Introducing a simplified pre-application step would help applicants understand if their proposals meet eligibility and feasibility thresholds before investing significant time. This could include a brief form or checklist reviewed by City staff to flag common issues, confirm alignment with City priorities, and identify potential barriers (e.g., ownership issues, zoning concerns, budget feasibility). This could also allow staff to provide early-stage technical assistance and connect applicants with appropriate departments.

*Note that a pre-application phase was previously implemented and produced a wide range of submissions, including ideas outside the scope of CIB funding. To be effective, a future pre-application phase would need to clearly communicate what constitutes a CIB-eligible project and what the submission process entails.*

*Assign a lead for outreach and communication. (Resource Dependent)*

There is a strong need for a designated office or individual to coordinate citywide communications about the process. This would ensure consistent messaging, timely updates, and better alignment with application timelines. Outreach materials should be multilingual, user-friendly, and distributed through trusted community networks. This lead would be able to leverage the variety of existing engagement avenues already present across the City of St. Paul (e.g., district councils, ward organizations, City department engagement activities).

*Reinforce and enhance the availability of direct technical support to applicants. (Need for Resources Mixed: some support exists, expansion may require more resources)*

Participants frequently requested hands-on support, especially for applicants without grant-writing experience. From the perspective of applicants, this could include application workshops, office hours, translated materials, examples of past applications, and access to data (e.g., crash stats, project maps). A centralized FAQ hub and guidance library could serve as an ongoing resource. Because many of these resources already exist, including the FAQ hub and guidance library, grading rubric and process explanation, public-facing project tracker, examples of past successful

projects, and application workshops (see <https://engagestpaul.org/cib2024> for examples), continuing to reinforce the availability of these resources through outreach mechanisms will be critical. Enhancing this support via the additional suggested mechanisms is worthy of consideration.

*Improve the structure and support for CIB committee members. (Resource Dependent)*

Committee members are interested in serving as community ambassadors but are not currently set up to succeed in this role. The City should offer training, clear expectations, outreach materials, and potentially increased compensation or stipends. Members should be equipped with clear communication tools, contact lists, and talking points, and granted the authority and encouragement to engage directly with district councils, local organizations and underrepresented neighborhoods.

*Make the application process more transparent and predictable. (Feasible within Existing Resources)*

The process should include clearer guidance on how proposals are evaluated, including how cost estimates are determined and how equity is considered. Applicants should be informed when proposals are received, where they are in the process, and why they were or weren't selected. A public-facing project tracker could support transparency. Typically applicants are informed about when proposals are received, where they are in the process, and why there are or are not eligible, but the adjustments in the 2024 process presented complications in this process. Further, refreshing awareness about the public-facing project tracker is clearly critical.

*Simplify and standardize the application. (Feasible with Moderate Effort)*

The current application was widely described as overly complex and inaccessible to those unfamiliar with city processes. Recommendations include simplifying language, offering tiered application options (e.g., small, medium, large projects), and reducing repetition. Making the application available in multiple languages would further reduce barriers.

*Recommendations marked as resource-dependent may require additional funding, staffing, or technology to implement. Without this support, departments may struggle to take action. We encourage the City to identify which departments will be responsible for leading each recommendation and to define a time frame (e.g., short-term within 6 months, medium-term within a year, long-term over 1 year) for implementation.*

## Secondary priority recommendations

### **Strengthen engagement infrastructure beyond district councils.**

- Partner with schools, faith-based institutions, cultural organizations, and community groups to reach a broader audience.
- Provide these partners with resources to support outreach and engagement.

### **Align funding and implementation timelines.**

- Improve coordination between funding cycles and departmental capacity to ensure timely project delivery.
- Consider whether projects are realistically implementable within current city staffing and infrastructure timelines.

### **Use objective data to prioritize funding equitably.**

- Focus funding in neighborhoods with higher need based on public safety data, infrastructure gaps, or past underinvestment.
- Balance data-informed decision-making with geographic and political considerations.

### **Improve internal coordination and long-term planning.**

- Facilitate more cross-department collaboration in reviewing and implementing projects.
- Establish a long-term planning cycle (e.g., every five years) to reassess goals and community needs with broad input.

### **Reframe the CIB process for accessibility and inclusion.**

- Consider renaming the program to make it more intuitive and approachable for community members.
- Replace technical jargon with clear, everyday language in all materials.

The secondary priority recommendations focus on strengthening infrastructure, coordination, and accessibility within the existing system. They emphasize

expanding outreach beyond district councils, better aligning timelines with departmental capacity, incorporating accessible data to guide equitable funding, enhancing cross department planning, and making the process easier to navigate through clearer language and materials.

## Future consideration recommendations

In addition to the high- and secondary-priority recommendations outlined above, participants shared several forward-looking ideas that could strengthen CIB process over time. These suggestions focus on building long-term capacity, improving alignment with broader city planning efforts, and embedding continuous learning into the process. Implementing these forward-looking strategies will require additional staffing, time, and resource investments. These recommendations reflect a shared interest in continuing to evolve the CIB process toward a more sustainable, inclusive, and community-centered system.

- Develop a five-year strategic planning cycle that engages residents in long-term capital investment priorities.
- Separate large-scale infrastructure proposals including those submitted by community members from smaller-scale, community-driven projects to reduce competition and clarify expectations. .
- Consider restriction of community projects to certain types of activities such as improvements to public gathering spaces, pedestrian infrastructure, or safety enhancements in order to focus funding, manage breadth of implementation, and navigate overall budget constraints.
- Continue to build internal staffing capacity dedicated to managing community engagement, technical assistance, and CIB coordination.
- Explore reducing the number of CIB program types in operation. The current structure includes various parallel processes such as the Department Process, Annual Programs, Capital Maintenance, and CDBG each with distinct timelines, eligibility criteria, and applications. Streamlining the portfolio of CIB processes may reduce burden on city staff and improve clarity for applicants.
- Create a public-facing project dashboard to visualize all submitted and funded proposals over time, supporting transparency and equity analysis.

# Appendix

## A. Document review

To inform the assessment, Wilder Research conducted a review of key documents related to the City of Saint Paul’s Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) community proposal process. These materials provided important background on how the current process is structured, how projects are evaluated and funded, and what guidance is provided to applicants.

The following documents were reviewed:

- **2024–2025 Community Proposals Applications and Committee Recommendations**  
This document includes detailed information about all submitted proposals, CIB Committee scoring, and final recommendations to the Mayor. It outlines the timeline, eligibility review, cost estimates, and reprogramming of prior funds. It also highlights projects selected for funding and those not recommended.
- **2024 CIB Community Proposal Scoring Guide**  
This guide describes the scoring rubric used by the CIB Committee to evaluate community proposals. Projects are rated across five categories: Condition, Usage, Equity and Inclusion, Strategic Investment, and CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design). Each category includes qualitative descriptions aligned to numeric scores ranging from “Very Poor” to “Very Good.”
- **City of Saint Paul Capital Improvement Budget Community Proposal Application Questions**  
The application form outlines the information required from community members submitting a proposal. It emphasizes public safety, equity, and community impact. It also asks applicants to describe their project’s relationship to CPTED principles, data-supported need, and community use.
- **Community Proposal Committee Recommendation (Council Update)**  
This spreadsheet summarizes recommendations from the CIB Committee, including funding allocations, department involvement, and proposal status. It also includes Ward and district-level data for each project.

- **Project Locations History**

This dataset tracks the locations of funded projects from prior CIB cycles, which helped the team identify historical funding patterns across wards and neighborhoods.

## B. Interview protocol

The Saint Paul City Audit Committee is working with Wilder Research to understand how the community-project CIB process is working, whether the process is effective, and what improvements in the process might be considered. Wilder will assess the process from the lens of various stakeholders and make recommendations around continued improvement.

To inform the work, we are interviewing key individuals from the City of St. Paul and across the community. You were identified as one of these individuals to interview.

We will combine your feedback with that of others, to look for themes, as well as gather information about any questions that emerge. The results will be combined with others' perspectives from the interviews and shared in a report to the Audit Committee.

We know we have 1 hour so we may need to move to the next question to be sure we get through the main questions.

Before we start, do you have any questions?

In addition, would you be OK with us recording this so we can reference it when taking notes?

*Participation in this survey will not impact your relationship with The City of St Paul.*

*Individual quotes will be de-identified and results from the survey will be reported in aggregate. Please indicate the level of confidentiality you would like us to maintain for your own responses in our report:*

- Do not share any of my open-ended responses. Only combine my feedback with others.*
- Share my de-identified open-ended responses: You can share key quotes, but any other information that will identify me will be removed.*

### **Process Questions**

- How did the CIB process shift from its previous delivery?
  - What does success look like now? What did it look like then?



- What are the characteristics of the current process (including participants, investments, committee members, applications, distribution of spend)?
- What process steps could be improved for the next CIB round?
- What communications support for the variety of partners/owners is needed in the future?

### **Community Engagement Questions**

- What are the overarching goals for the CIB process related to engagement?
- Who is ultimately accountable for the CIB community engagement approach? What changes might need to be pursued in the future?
  - How is ownership currently shared and how should it be shared between the Departments (including Public Works and Parks & Recreation), Mayor’s Office, OFS, and the community?
- How are CIB committee members acting as community ambassadors? How might the City better support their work?
- How are district councils and other organizations in the City involved in the community engagement work?
- What additional tools would help with CIB community engagement?
- How can the application process continue to be adapted to meet City and community needs?
- How can the City balance a data-driven approach and ongoing needs around community engagement?

### **Equity Questions**

- In what ways could the CIB process be adapted to focus funding more equitably?
  - What does it mean for the community process funding to be equitable?
- How might the CIB process be evolved to move from a complaint-based or a process-knowledge-based orientation?
- How can everyone assembling the CIB process work toward centering community more in the process so that it does not feel as much like an ‘insider’ process?
  - Where are there opportunities for departments to work together to support the community process?

## **C. Story Map**

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/831f440a52894a3c8ea78e513285c36d>

## Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the Saint Paul City Council Audit Committee for supporting this research and staff from the Office of Financial Services for ongoing participation in guiding the research and in participating in interviews.

In addition, we would like to thank the following Wilder Research Staff who contributed to this report:

Heather Britt  
Audrey Mutanhaurwa  
Justin Hollis

Wilder Research, a division of Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, is a nationally respected nonprofit research and evaluation group. For more than 100 years, Wilder Research has gathered and interpreted facts and trends to help families and communities thrive, get at the core of community concerns, and uncover issues that are overlooked or poorly understood.

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**SAINT PAUL**  
**MINNESOTA**

**2025 Capital Maintenance Recommended Funding**

Available Program Funding	3,000,000
10% contingency funding	300,000
Public Art .5 %	15,000
Available Funding Total	2,685,000

Project Title	Department	Project Address	TOTAL Calculated Score	Ameresco Number	2026 Request	2027 Request	Total	Recommended for Funding
George Latimer Central Library HVAC Repair	Library	90 W. 4th St., St. Paul, MN 55102	14.17	53.75	90,000	-	90,000	90,000
Asphalt Plant Tank Maintenance	Public Works	456 Burgess Street	14.00	na	300,000	250,000	550,000	550,000
889 Dale St Roof Replacement	OFS-Fleet	889 Dale St N Saint Paul, MN 55103	13.83		200,000	-	200,000	200,000
Rice Street Library Boiler	Library	1011 Rice Street, St. Paul, MN 55117	13.50	57.5	259,500	-	259,500	259,500
Hallie Q. Brown/MLK Center-Roof	Parks and Recreation	270 Kent	13.50	68.5/68.5	500,000	-	500,000	500,000
Fire Station 5 Apron	Fire	860 Ashland Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55104	11.67		43,706	-	43,706	43,706
Highland Park Library Boiler Replacement	Library	1974 Ford Parkway, St. Paul, MN 55116	13.00	50	9,500	375,000	384,500	384,500
Harriet Island Wigington Pavilion	Parks and Recreation	200 Dr Justus Ohage Blvd, St Paul, MN 55107	12.83	44.5	275,000	-	275,000	275,000
Fire Station 8 Kitchen	Fire	65 East 10th Street	12.17	11.25	40,111	-	40,111	40,111
Highland Aquatics Pool Finish	Parks and Recreation	1840 Edgecombe Rd.	12.17	44.5/42.5	500,000	-	500,000	342,183
								<b>2,685,000</b>
Battle Creek Rec Center Roof	Parks and Recreation	75 Winthrop St. S.	12.17	51	-	500,000	500,000	
Fire Station 23 Roof	Fire	1926 Como Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55108	12.00		275,000	-	275,000	
Fire Station 6 Roof	Fire	33 Cesar Chavez Street, Saint Paul, MN 55107	11.83		362,500	-	362,500	
Traffic Operations Roof Repairs	Public Works	899 Dale St.	11.67	59	1,045,000	-	1,045,000	
Replace (4) Garage Doors	OFS-Fleet	891 Dale St N Saint Paul, MN 55103	11.50		75,000	-	75,000	
North Dale Recreation Center Roof	Parks and Recreation	1414 St. Albans St.	11.33	79	-	331,761	331,761	
Bathroom Mold Remediation and Repair	Public Works	889 Dale St	11.33	74.25	40,000	-	40,000	
Replace (6) Fuel Dispensers	OFS-Fleet	891 Dale St N Saint Paul, MN 55103	11.17		75,000	-	75,000	
6 - Como Zoo Main Zoo Building Bathrooms	Parks and Recreation	1250 Kaufman Drive	10.83	na	200,000	-	200,000	
Fleet Services - Fuel Tank Refurbishment	OFS-Fleet	891and 889 Dale St N Saint Paul, MN 55103	10.67		17,000	-	17,000	
Como and Western Building Repair	Public Works	388 Como Ave	10.67	41.5	790,000	-	790,000	
George Latimer Central Library Rain Leader Repair	Library	90 W. 4th St., St. Paul, MN 55102	10.50	48.25	250,000	-	250,000	
Fleet Services - Vehicle and Equipment Column Hoists	OFS-Fleet	891and 889 Dale St N Saint Paul, MN 55103	10.50		60,000	-	60,000	
George Latimer Central Library Balustrade Tuckpointing	Library	90 W. 4th St., St. Paul, MN 55102	10.33	13.5	-	350,000	350,000	
Merriam Park Library Roof Replacement	Library	1831 Marshall Ave., St. Paul, MN 55104	10.00	59	132,000	-	132,000	
8 - Como Park Midway Picnic Pavilion	Parks and Recreation	1199 Midway Pkwy, St Paul, MN 55103	10.00	63	-	150,000	150,000	
Como Park Conservatory	Parks and Recreation	1225 Estabrook Dr.	9.67	na	150,000	-	150,000	
Fire Station 20 Parking Lot	Fire	2179 University Avenue W, Saint Paul, MN 551	9.50		-	34,720	34,720	
Fire Station 14 Door Replacement	Fire	111 Snelling Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55104	9.17		-	40,178	40,178	
Fire Headquarters and Fire Station 1LED Lighting Upgrade	Fire	645 Randolph Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55102	9.00		-	57,376	57,376	
Library Materials Management Center Roof Replacement	Library	2109 Wilson Ave., Saint Paul, MN 55119	8.50	51	-	93,000	93,000	
Como Regional Pool Complex	Parks and Recreation	1151 Wayne Ave.	8.50	50	-	500,000	500,000	
Fire Station 18 Workout Room HVAC	Fire	681 University Avenue W, Saint Paul, MN 5510	8.33		-	20,086	20,086	
Sun Ray Library Carpet Replacement	Library	2105 Wilson Ave., St. Paul, MN 55119	8.33	39.5	146,000	-	146,000	
Arlington Hills Carpet Replacement	Library	1200 Payne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55130	7.50	39.5	-	57,500	57,500	
W. 7th Area Multi-Service Center (St. Clair)-Building	Parks and Recreation	265 Oneida St.	7.50	51	175,000	-	175,000	
<b>Total</b>							<b>\$ 8,769,938</b>	



**West 7th/Fort Road Federation**

395 Superior Street

Saint Paul, MN 55102

651.298.5599

[www.FortRoadFederation.org](http://www.FortRoadFederation.org)

Sent via email  
October 14, 2025

Mayor Melvin Carter  
and Members of the Saint Paul City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Boulevard  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

**Re: Capital Improvement Budget Process Recommendations**

Dear Mayor Carter and Councilmembers,

On behalf of the West 7th/Fort Road Federation Board of Directors and the residents we represent, we are writing to share our concerns and experiences with the current capital improvement budget (CIB) process, particularly as it relates to maintaining and caring for our city's parks.

Over the years, our organization has advocated for capital investment to address significant maintenance needs at Dousman Park, located at 284 West Goodhue Street. While we understand that funding decisions are competitive and resources are limited, the park's ongoing disrepair, despite its identified need, has prompted our community to seek greater clarity about how priorities are set and how maintenance decisions are made within the CIB process.

From our perspective, several issues with the current process have become apparent:

- The criteria used by the CIB committee and how they are applied are not clear to the public.
- Maintenance for existing parks appears to receive less emphasis than funding for new facilities, even as deferred maintenance needs exceed \$235 million.
- Communities are not provided with comparative data to understand how projects like Dousmann rank against others citywide. Because not all projects funded by the 1% sales tax are reviewed together, it's difficult to know whether limited dollars are directed to the facilities in greatest need.
- Opportunities for meaningful input from district councils and residents remain limited.

*The Fort Road Federation coordinates participation in advocacy and planning and builds community connections for the residents, businesses, and nonprofit organizations of the West 7th neighborhood so that it is a place where people want to live, work, and play.*

*Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity Employer*

[Return to Agenda](#)

We deeply value the City's investment in parks and the important role they play in the health, safety, and vibrancy of our neighborhoods. To strengthen this process and build greater public trust, we respectfully offer the following recommendations for your consideration:

- Ensure that the CIB budget includes a detailed, publicly accessible list of park facilities, along with their current conditions and maintenance needs.
- Ask the Department of Parks and Recreation to provide a five-year maintenance priority plan based on professional assessments of each facility that is available to the public.
- Prioritize funding for maintenance projects, beginning with the parks and amenities in the most deteriorated condition.
- Consider slowing or pausing investments in new facilities until significant progress is made on the maintenance backlog.
- Require city departments to submit the semi-annual capital project status reports called for in the City Charter (Sec. 57.12).
- Expand the CIB committee to include representation from each district council to ensure diverse community perspectives and local expertise are part of the review process.

We share these recommendations in the spirit of collaboration and partnership. Our goal is to ensure that Saint Paul's beloved parks, especially those in greatest need, remain welcoming, safe, and well-maintained for generations to come. We welcome the opportunity to discuss these ideas further and to work together toward a more transparent and equitable budget process.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to our city's parks and public spaces.

Sincerely,



Julia McColley  
Executive Director  
West 7th/Fort Road Federation