



IN\$IGHT

SAINT PAUL

www.insightstpaul.org

Transparency - Fiscal Responsibility - Accountability

About In\$ight St. Paul

In\$ight St. Paul is a nonpartisan fiscal watchdog group dedicated to promoting the long-term financial health and stability of Minnesota's capital city. A coalition of community members, business leaders and former public officials, the organization serves as an independent voice for transparency, fiscal responsibility, and government accountability.

St. Paul faces serious financial challenges, including a shifting tax base, mounting debt, and rising spending. In\$ight St. Paul was formed to unpack and explain these complex fiscal issues, providing the community and policymakers with the objective analysis needed to develop sound, sustainable solutions. We believe that an informed public and an accountable government are the cornerstones of a thriving city.

Independent Oversight Matters

The City's finances are intricately linked with regional, state, and federal funding—systems that are currently under significant pressure. As a capital city, St. Paul's success is vital to the entire state of Minnesota. To remain competitive and vibrant, the City must maintain robust infrastructure and high-quality services at a reasonable cost to taxpayers.

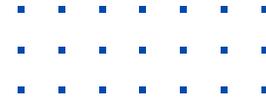
In\$ight St. Paul fills a critical gap by providing independent research and monitoring of the City's fiscal affairs. We advocate for a fiscally responsible approach that prioritizes essential maintenance and sustainable growth instead of speculative projects that lack adequate long-term funding.

Our leadership team brings together decades of experience in public service, community development, and private sector management. Guided by a steering committee of veteran civic leaders, In\$ight St. Paul operates through dedicated working groups focused on key areas of concern.

We love St. Paul and are committed to protecting its future. Whether you are a property owner concerned about the property tax levy, a local business owner or a resident who values transparent governance, your voice is essential. Together, we can ensure that St. Paul remains a place where people and businesses can afford to grow and thrive.



Focus Areas



Parks

Smart Park Growth



While Saint Paul's park system remains nationally top-ranked, In\$ight St. Paul warns that a \$230 million deferred maintenance backlog threatens the long-term viability of these community assets. To ensure fiscal responsibility, we urge city officials to pause all spending on new major projects—such as the River Balcony and Regional Athletic Complex—until existing facilities are restored and the maintenance backlog is reduced by 90%. We advocate for the 1% sales tax revenue to be used exclusively for these critical repairs under the transparent oversight of the Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) Committee. Furthermore, we call on the city to demand that the State of Minnesota fulfill its statutory obligation to fund regional park operations, ensuring that local taxpayers are not unfairly burdened by the costs of non-resident visitation.

CIB

Capital Improvement Budget Modernization



The City of St. Paul must restructure its Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) committee to ensure equitable growth and rigorous fiscal oversight. The current committee lacks both the capacity for granular project review and the structural breadth required for meaningful public engagement. To resolve this, we propose expanding the CIB committee to include a dedicated representative from every neighborhood planning district, ensuring a voice for all residents. This expanded body will operate through three specialized review teams—Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and City Facilities—allowing for technical expertise and focused deliberation. Furthermore, to eliminate budgetary drift, we must strictly enforce the City Charter's mandate: any department receiving capital dollars must provide transparent, standardized progress reports. By decentralizing project review and centralizing accountability, St. Paul can transform its capital spending from a closed-door process into a model of transparent, community-driven investment.

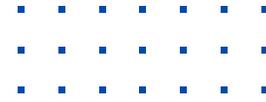
TIF

Tax Increment Financing Reform



While the City of St. Paul faces an urgent need to expand its property tax base, the reflexive use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) requires a rigorous course correction. Our research concludes that the over-reliance on TIF by developers and city officials often fails to meet stated goals while shifting an inequitable financial burden onto taxpayers. To safeguard the public interest, we propose a strategic framework for "Responsible TIF" that prioritizes transparency and fiscal accountability. This includes a temporary freeze on new proposals to allow for a full audit of existing districts, the implementation of a more rigorous "But-For" economic test, and requirements for developers to offset the increased demand on public services like fire and police. By decertifying successful districts early and accounting for the tax-base erosion caused by commercial-to-residential conversions, St. Paul can achieve its development objectives without compromising its long-term financial stability.

Focus Areas



PILOT

Payment In Lieu Of Taxes



St. Paul's fiscal stability is fundamentally threatened by a shrinking tax base and escalating debt, making a Payment-In-Lieu-Of-Taxes (PILOT) program a critical necessity for property tax relief. Currently, a disproportionate volume of tax-exempt property forces a dwindling number of residential and commercial taxpayers to unfairly shoulder the rising costs of public safety, infrastructure, and municipal services. It is no longer sustainable for the city to provide high-quality essential services to large institutions without a corresponding contribution toward the infrastructure that supports them. By entering into a formal PILOT agreement with the city, our institutional, nonprofit partners can help Saint Paul broaden and diversify its revenue streams and ensure a more equitable and mutually beneficial financial future that prioritizes proper maintenance of existing assets over the accumulation of further debt.

Learn More:

[Your Voice. Your City. Your Tax Dollars](#)

We formed **In\$ight** to advocate for the residents and business owners who drive our city forward. And we depend on your input.

Visit www.insightstpaul.org to find out how you can join the conversation, either online or at one of our monthly meetings. There you can also explore our latest fiscal reports and see what we are doing to create a more vibrant City of St. Paul.

And don't forget to find and follow **In\$ight** on your favorite social media channels.