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## Community groups seek a piece of St. Paul's CIB pie

By Jane McClure  
Mar 24, 2026



### Fifteen capital projects vie for share in \$1 million fund.

A permanent toboggan chute, West End parks improvements, Union Park pedestrian and bicycle safety upgrades, and a Selby Avenue pedestrian safety project are among the requests for funding through the city of Saint Paul's Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) for 2027-2028.

The city's CIB Committee got its first look at 15 eligible projects on March 9. Applications for 39 projects were submitted by the deadline, but 24 of them were ruled ineligible for CIB funds. The committee and city staff plan to review the ineligible submissions at a later time.

A total of \$1 million is available this year from the Long-Range CIB.

Last year, an odd-numbered year, city departments submitted project applications, but 2026 is a community projects year with applications submitted by individuals, district councils, clubs, business associations and neighborhood groups.

Project presentation will get underway later this spring. Grant recipients will be chosen by the mayor and City Council following recommendations by the CIB Committee.

At least one eligible proposal was received from each of the city's seven wards, according to Nichelle Bottko Woods, senior city budget analyst.

What was surprising was the high number of ineligible requests. To be eligible for CIB, projects must be located on city-owned property, have a public purpose, have a useful life of at least 10 years and be capital in nature. The money may not be used for program or operating expenses.

Fifteen projects are moving forward. One is from the Saint Paul Toboggan Club, which wants a permanent toboggan chute installed in a city park. The preferred site is Highland Park Community Center, but other potential sites include McMurray Field, Cherokee Park, Crosby or Hidden Falls parks — places that allow for a structure but do not impede on summer activities.

Highland Park resident Patrick Thuente is president of the Saint Paul Toboggan Club. Growing up, his family would take their antique toboggan to the Town and Country Club golf course for winter fun. The toboggan club formed a few years ago and became incorporated as a nonprofit last year.

The toboggan chute would become the official home of the Midwest Toboggan Racing Championship during the Saint Paul Winter Carnival. The tie to the Winter Carnival is important, Thuente said, since toboggan chutes were once a part of the carnival.

“Tobogganing is a lot of fun, and it’s something that can be shared with the community,” he said.

Other MyVillager area projects include:

- New playground equipment and landscaping improvements at Bay Triangle Park, Bay Street and Tuscarora Avenue. The project was submitted by neighbors of the park, which they said has become overgrown with trees and bushes.
- New trees, lighting, sidewalks and a replacement of the 33-year-old playground at Dousman Park, Goodhue and Dousman streets, a project submitted by the West Seventh/Fort Road Federation.
- Replacing the vandalism-prone bollard lighting along Exchange Street between Cedar Street and Dorothy Day Place with standard globe-style lighting to provide consistent, reliable illumination for pedestrian safety, a project submitted by a local resident.
- Safe pedestrian and bicyclist connections near Hamline and Ashland avenues. Submitted by neighbors, the project would involve an accessible curb cut and paved trail connecting the existing Hamline Avenue underpass to the Eleanor Graham Community Garden path as well as

the Ayd Mill Trail.

- Pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements on Hamline and Portland avenues near Ayd Mill Road. The project was submitted by neighbors. It would reallocate excess roadway space on Hamline south of Ashland Avenue to provide a safer pedestrian crossing and bicycle trail. Improvements could include painted lanes, median refuges and lighting to improve visibility and reduce traffic speeds.
- Pedestrian safety improvements on Selby Avenue near Boyd Park at Farrington and Nina streets, a repeat request submitted by the Summit-University Planning Council and Safer Selby neighborhood group. The project would include two raised pedestrian medians, a curb bumpout and a painted center stripe barrier.