

From: [Dillon Donnelly](#)
To: [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#); [*CI-StPaul Contact-Council](#)
Subject: Public Comment: RES PH 26-110 — Parks Budget and Tree Grant
Date: Thursday, May 7, 2026 3:02:07 PM

To the Saint Paul City Council,

Written public comment on agenda item RES PH 26-110 for the May 13, 2026 meeting.

It takes at least five (5) years to replace a dead tree in Saint Paul.

Despite:

- Parks and Recreation annual budget: \$87.3 million — up 44% since 2018
- General Fund support: \$52.7 million — up 51% since 2018
- Staff added since 2018: 81 positions
- Common Cent sales tax funding: \$246 million over 20 years

Now the city is requesting an additional \$43,745 in state funding to plant trees.

This is not "free money." It is taxpayer money from another bucket being used to cover basic services despite massive growth in budgets, staffing, and dedicated funding.

At some point, the conversation has to shift from "how do we get more money?" to "where is the money already going?"

Saint Paul residents are already paying enough. The city should demonstrate it can manage existing resources before asking Saint Paul taxpayers for more.

Dillon Donnelly