

# 2004 CLIC GENERAL COMMENTS

## **CLIC (All) All Projects**

Although CLIC is considering over 120 projects this session, as few as three or four of them, if funded at the requested amounts, would account for over 50% of the property tax supported funding available for the Minneapolis' 5-year capital program. These projects include Heritage Park Redevelopment, Police Forensic Laboratory, Police Evidence Unit and Business Information Systems Capital Program. Tragically it is not possible to fund these at their requested and needed levels. **CLIC points out the obvious:** Minneapolis' expectations and/or revenues will need to change in order to accommodate these high-cost projects.

## **BIK (All) Bicycle-Related Projects**

The opportunity to leverage capital funding for alternative transportation strategies, including bicycling, is unequalled in almost any other area of public improvements in Minneapolis. Unfortunately these largely- federal funding sources do not include ongoing operating costs. **CLIC both recognizes and commends** the City's bicycle program staff for its aggressive pursuit of alternative funding strategies to maintain the public bicycle infrastructure, including licenses, usage fees, and trail sponsorships. The Committee appreciated the staff's discussion of anticipated operating costs for this year's bicycle-related proposals.

## **PRK (All) Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Projects**

**CLIC commends** the Park Board for promoting projects that actually show a reduction in operating costs following completion of the proposed capital improvements. These savings are due to a variety of strategies to decrease energy, maintenance and supply costs. (The introduction of artificial turf at the Parade Grounds site is one example.) **CLIC suggests** that some of these saved dollars be applied to the maintenance of both the City's deteriorating tennis courts and the proposed skate parks. These facilities should be maintained up to at least minimum levels for full usage throughout Minneapolis. In regards to the Park Board's creation of a separate project proposal to cover all other projects' contingencies such as inflation, **CLIC declines** to rate and support such a general "slush fund" for all projects. The appropriate place for these considerations is within each individual project's proposal. Finally, **CLIC asks** the Park Board to ensure that park signage reflect the language(s) spoken within neighborhoods having a significant number of non-English-speaking residents. All park-users should be made to feel welcome and informed.

## **Public Works Proposals**

**CLIC is unhappy** with the quality of some of Public Works' written proposals. Some were incomplete, some contained apparently inaccurate or irrelevant material and some were poorly edited with misspellings and sections of text perhaps lifted from previous proposals or other materials. For example, a project's start and end dates might not reflect the current 5-year budget under consideration. For example, a program might be represented as increasing or decreasing future operating costs without any specific dollar amounts being indicated. CLIC hopes that this shows only lapses in attention to details which the addition of an overall quality control process for Public Works capital improvement proposals could protect against.

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## **Sewer Condition Rating Reports**

**CLIC thanks** the Minneapolis Sewer Department for undertaking condition rating and priority action reports for the SW001 Storm and Sanitary Tunnel & Sewer Rehabilitation Project (now one of the Committee's highest-rated projects) and the SW007 Park Board Capital Storm Drain Project (currently one of the Committee's lowest-rated projects). Perhaps the Park Board has historical records and related incident reports which will assist in the latter effort.

## **SW010-027 All Flood Mitigation Projects**

As a package, Minneapolis' flood mitigation projects represent a very large capital expenditure for perhaps a relatively small number of homes. In many cases, CLIC wonders if the involved home sites should have been developed in the first place, considering the original lowland and/or swampland character of the neighborhoods. Perhaps some were among the last house lots offered for home construction in the city. Perhaps others became at risk as the result of other nearby reclamation, construction, and mitigation efforts. **CLIC recommends** that the City take a "big picture" look at gradually returning many of these home sites to their earlier nature, as wetlands, natural holding ponds and parklands. Perhaps it is time to stop investing great sums against the hundred-year storm, maybe even the ten-year storm.