

Transportation Funding

BACKGROUND:

- Townships maintain approximately 39% of Minnesota's roads (over 55,000 miles) as well as about 6,000 bridges, of which over 400 are on the deficiency list.
- Road and bridge expenditures are the largest expense for townships, at a cost of over \$229 million per year.
- Current spending is insufficient to meet the increasing demand placed on township infrastructure.
- MAT is advocating for a \$20 million increase.

REQUEST:

SUPPORT THESE TRANSPORTATION BILLS

- HF1620 (Lippert) / SF 1991(Howe) – Car rental sales/excise tax
- HF 758 (Petersburg) /SF 625 (Howe) – Auto repair/parts sales tax dedication (3% to townships)
- HF 3546 (Swedzinski) /SF 3086 (Howe) - Auto repair/parts sale tax dedication (12% to townships)
- SF 436 (Jasinski) – Town Road Improvement Program via bonding and \$10 million in bonding funds for Small Cities
- Alternative General Road Funding
 - HF 1148 (Olson) /SF 1604 (Dornink) - \$6.2 million in one-time road funding and \$2.8 million in one-time bridge funding
- Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP)
 - HF 3216 (Frederick, Torkelson) / SF 2647 (Coleman) - adds two representatives (a township official and township engineer) to the LRIP advisory (selection) committee. There are currently no township officials on the LRIP committee.
 - Support township road funding increase to LRIP

Annexation Equality

BACKGROUND:

- Current annexation law is unfair to townships and their residents as it allows a city to annex existing township land without agreement by the township.

- Townships should be on equal ground with a city when faced with a proposed annexation.

REQUEST:

- SUPPORT annexation by contract (also known as “orderly annexation”), which is the preferred method because it requires agreement of BOTH parties. This method is undermined when a city not party to the contract can take property that is already subject to a contract.
- Townships should also be able to detach property when the property has not been developed or received additional services under a city's annexation and move a city parcel back to a township. Current law allows only the city or landowner to detach property.
- SUPPORT Senate File 1969 (Kiffmeyer)/ House File 2282 (Mekeland, Urdahl) Orderly annexation should consider landowners' wishes and allow residents a vote on whether they will be annexed.
- SUPPORT Senate File 1949 (Kiffmeyer)/ House File 2387 (Quam): Town approval required before a county road is reverted to the town.
- SUPPORT Senate File 1927 (Anderson)/ House File 3383 (Mekeland, Huot, Quam) Specifies annexation by contract (“orderly annexation”) with an agreement by both parties and a city not part of the agreement cannot take property that is already subject to the agreement.

Broadband Funding

BACKGROUND:

- Robust broadband is essential to the vitality of rural communities and many townships are currently being left behind in broadband development.
- Wireless is only part of the solution. Our members report wireless solutions continue to lack the reliability, speed, and affordability of access available to population centers.

REQUEST:

- Fund the Border-to-Border Grant Program in the amount of \$70 million per biennium.
- Maintain focus on unserved areas as the top priority.

Additional Priorities

Efficient. Effective. Accountable. Accessible.



Transportation Issues

- Provide funding to replace culverts when replacement is ordered by water authority for environmental reasons, not road purposes.
- Require a written agreement with the township before a county can revert jurisdiction of a road to a township, which increase the township's responsibilities, liabilities, and costs.
- Restore 30 MPH speed limit option for Rural Residential Districts.
- Allow townships to place "Now Entering" signs on all state, county, and federal highways.
- Remove cost-barriers from volunteers providing senior transportation services.
- Hold utilities responsible for damages they cause in or to road rights-of-way and related infrastructure including culverts and hold road authorities immune for damage to utilities whose infrastructure is improperly placed or marked.

Truck Weights

- Require funding adequate to build roads to a minimum 10-ton standard before approving any increase in truck weight limits or sizes.

Taxes & State Aid

- Increase funding for Town Aid program to ensure full funding of the Town Aid formula.
- Hold townships harmless, dollar-for-dollar, from lost tax revenues by seeking increased, sustainable, and dedicated funding for the Payment-in-lieu-of-Taxes (PILT) program.

Environment

- Noxious weeds are a threat to the environment, destroying natural habitat. Allow townships to hold State and Counties responsible for weeds in their rights-of-way.

Government Operations/Elections

- Townships serve as local election officials and protect the integrity of elections. Allow townships to determine which four hours they will have an authorized person available to accept filings on the last day to file for office.
- Restore local government authority to receive infrastructure development fees to fund improvements required by private development.
- Eliminate requirement that towns re-designate their polling place each year, when the polling place has not changed.
- Restore Township's powers to administer Local Board of Appeal and Equalization that was lost in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Improve wildlife management practices to reduce bear, turkey, and other nuisance animal populations that are harming agricultural production.

Mandate Relief & Cost Reductions

- Reduce costs of townships obtaining easements across state land, especially for roads sited on school trust land.
- Implement 90-day notice periods for state agency hearings, actions, or comment periods.