



## **COUNTY GENERAL TRANSPORTATION AIDS (GTA)/ LOCAL ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM-DISCRETIONARY SUPPLEMENTAL (LRIP-S)**

**BACKGROUND GTA:** General Transportation Aids (GTA) are distributed to all counties and municipalities to assist in the maintenance, improvement, and construction of the county trunk highway system. Payments are divided among all local governments based on either a percentage of eligible highway-related expenditures or a per-mile payment, whichever is greater. GTA is often used to offset the cost of constructing roads, filling potholes, plowing snow, grading shoulders, marking pavement, and repairing curbs and other transportation services.

County GTA is critical to maintaining the 19,000-mile county trunk highway system. Faced with limits on local property tax collections and rising costs in the delivery of state-mandated services, many counties have been forced to delay important maintenance activities. According to a survey of county highway commissioners, the average replacement schedule for a county road is now over 75 years—far longer than the lifespan of a county highway.

While the Governor and Legislature have recently devoted additional funding to county GTA, counties receive a lower percentage of our “share of costs” than ten years ago.

**BACKGROUND LRIP-S:** In the 2019-21 biennial budget, the Joint Committee on Finance (JCF) established the Local Supplemental Transportation Program with a surplus in dollars available to the committee in the state budget. The initial idea behind this concept was for this program to be a one-time infusion of state surplus revenue dollars to be used to support local “shovel ready projects” as requested by counties, municipalities, and towns. After some bartering back and forth between the governor, legislature and a Wisconsin Supreme Court case, the amount allocated for this new one-time program was \$90 million to be spent in the 2019-21 biennium.

Following the establishment of the Local Supplemental Transportation Program, the popularity of this program exploded, and Governor Tony Evers appropriated \$100 million for this program in his 2021-23 biennial budget proposal. The legislature concurred with this amount and established a programmatic change that placed the dollars for the program in the Local Road Improvement Program. The new title for this program was established as the Local Road Improvement Program Discretionary Supplemental (LRIP-S).

After two successful budget cycles, LRIP-S continues to be very popular. The program has supported local projects all around the state and can be seen as a prime example of the positive relationship that still exists between the state and local governments. As it is projected by the Legislative Fiscal Bureau the State of

Wisconsin will begin the 2023-25 biennial budget process with a \$7 billion budget surplus. An opportunity exists for more investment in this highly successful and popular program.

**CURRENT STATUS GTA:** Counties received an increase in annual GTA payments statewide from \$122.2 million in 2019-21 biennial budget to \$127.1 in the 2021-23 biennial budget. Counties will receive the full \$127.1 million in annual GTA distribution payments in 2023.

**CURRENT STATUS LRIP-S:** The 2021-21 biennial budget included \$100 million in LRIP-S.

**REQUESTED ACTION GTA:** WCA and the Wisconsin County Highway Association request additional funding be allocated to the county GTA appropriation for the backlog of maintenance on the county trunk highway system.

**REQUESTED ACTION LRIP-S:** With a \$7 billion surplus, the WCA requests \$200 million be appropriated for LRIP-S.

**TALKING POINTS GTA:**

- GTA is critical towards maintaining the 19,000-mile county trunk highway system.
- The “share of costs” counties receive in GTA from the state is the local portion of the gas tax and vehicle registration fees collected from users.
- Counties currently receive less in state GTA “share of costs” than they received ten years ago. Counties have traditionally received around 30% “share of costs” for local transportation needs.
- Recent inflation increases have made county transportation costs astronomical. Even with recent increases and investment from the state, costs for local transportation have far exceeded local revenue and state support.

**TALKING POINTS LRIP-S:**

- The LRIP-S program has assisted local governments with over 100 shovel ready projects around Wisconsin.
- The LRIP-S program has assisted local governments in upgrading their transportation systems and has demonstrated the state’s commitment to support for local roads.
- The LRIP-S program is a testament of the strength that exists in the relationship between state and local government.
- Due to the success and popularity of the LRIP-S program, leaders from around Wisconsin are advocating for additional investment in LRIP-S.

**Contact:**

Patrick B. Vander Sanden, WCHA Executive Director

Dan Bahr, WCA Government Affairs Associate: 608-663-7188