



City of Slayton

"A Community of Ambitions in Action"

March 20, 2023

Chair Frank Hornstein
House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee
563 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Hornstein and Committee Members,

The City of Slayton submits these comments to urge you to pass significant, ongoing, and dedicated funding for the Small Cities Assistance Program this session. As you know, cities with populations less than 5,000 are the only unit of local government that receives no dedicated road funding support from the State, and Small Cities Assistance has only been funded sporadically by one-time injections of state general fund dollars.

The City of Slayton (population 2100) is planning a full reconstruction of 34th street in town. We are looking to do this project late summer/early fall of 2023. The scope of the project is 2600 feet (1/2 mile). Currently the road is (2) 12' driving lanes with no shoulder, it is a "rural" design section with no curb/gutter/storm drains, just ditches. Currently the road is built to a 5 ton spec and being that this road is a main thoroughfare for agriculture and freight traffic going between US Highway 59 and State Highway 267 we are looking at reconstructing the road at a 9 or 10 ton spec of road so it does not degrade as quickly. The cost of a 10 ton road and adding (1) 4' shoulder is estimated at **\$1.9 million dollars**. Per our assessment policy on this classification of road we are supposed to assess property owners 50% of the project. This would create a \$188.20 per linear foot assessment rate.

This puts our community in an incredibly difficult situation, in which we cannot fund an essential project without massively burdening our property taxpayers. As an example, this would mean that a bare lot with no buildings on it with 210 feet of frontage would be assessed \$39,522.24 when the estimated market value of the lot is only \$25,400 for 2022 (payable 2023). As you can only assess the amount that you are raising the value on the lot the current 50/50 split is not tenable, thusly putting more of the financial burden on all of the taxpayers in Slayton, not just those that mostly benefit from the new road.

Slayton has submitted a bonding request (SF2952/HF2898) for this road as the financial burden is so large and small cities have no financial assistance other than extremely competitive grants. Cities over 5,000 in population receive dedicated street funding in the form of municipal state aid, it is ridiculous that small cities that arguably have a more difficult time in paying for these large projects, don't have a source of dedicated funding. With the incredible resources available to the state at this time, we urge you to make this the year that funding for small cities finally reaches the top of the priority list. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Josh Malchow
Clerk/Administrator
City of Slayton, MN

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