



April 30, 2020

Representative Hornstein, Chair
House Transportation Finance and Policy Division

Chair Hornstein and Members of the House Transportation Finance and Policy Division:

House File 926 A20-0752 DE Amendment, Sec. 24, Transportation Project Selection Process proposes to make changes to project evaluation, selection, and notification for programs that are administered by the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT).

On behalf of the 87 counties in the Minnesota County Engineers Association (MCEA) and the 148 cities in the City Engineers Association of Minnesota (CEAM), we would like to express our support for the existing processes that are in place for project evaluation and selection for the Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP), Local Bridge Replacement Program (LBRP), and Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program that are administered through the Office of State Aid (State Aid) at the Minnesota Department of Transportation. State Aid is a trusted partner for the counties and cities. We work very closely with them on these programs to help us meet the needs of our local transportation systems.

Local agencies have been directly involved in these local programs since their inception. The existing processes developed for project selection have allowed for expedient delivery of funds and construction of important infrastructure projects by local agencies throughout the state. Here are some statistics about these programs to give some context on the duration and importance of them:

Local Bridge Replacement Program (LBRP)

- Created in 1976
- From 2008-2018, 768 bridges have been replaced utilizing \$285M in state general obligation bond funds from the legislature
- There are 107 bridges with approved plans or currently in design that are waiting for funding, requesting \$47 million; there are an additional 701 bridges identified by counties and cities as a priority through a county board/city council resolution if funding was available
- Eligibility for funding from this program is based on national and state bridge evaluation standards

Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP)

- Created in 2002
- From 2014-2018, 156 roads have been improved utilizing \$258M in state general obligation bond funds from the legislature

- In 2018, the legislature allocated \$43.6 million of the available \$78.6 million to 4 projects. The remaining \$35 million funded 56 local projects throughout the state. There were 219 applications submitted requesting \$152 million.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

- Created in 2002 (state program)
- 2018 was the first year the legislature allocated state general obligation bonds towards this program.
- In 2018, the legislature allocated \$2 million, which funded 12 projects throughout the state. There were 29 applications submitted requesting \$6.7 million.

One of the great benefits of these programs is they are available to all local agencies (counties, cities, and townships) throughout the entire state. Attached are two maps of the LBRP and LRIP programs showing the locations of projects that have been funded and constructed under these programs. Another item to highlight is that the local agencies are contributing sometimes up to 50% of the total costs using their local funds to develop and construct these projects. This has shown to be a great partnership between the state and local agencies.

The project evaluation and selection process for these programs is well known and well supported by the counties and cities who these funds go to directly support. Local agencies are consulted in the development of the existing processes for these programs and currently have a direct role in project evaluation and selection of them. After projects are selected, this information is provided to local agencies and posted on MnDOT's website under the Office of State Aid because that is where the local agencies go to find out about these programs.

One of the more important items that we would like to highlight is the significance of these programs for the local agencies to continue to provide critical improvements to our transportation system. This investment in the local road infrastructure is vitally important to support the state's economy from small to large businesses. As can be seen from the local bridge waiting list and the last solicitations for the LRIP and SRTS programs, the need is high. We would appreciate your support in the legislature's continued investment in these programs.

Prior to making any changes to the evaluation, selection, and notification processes for these programs, MCEA and CEAM would appreciate the opportunity to discuss them with you and the committee so we can be part of the process in shaping these programs that are very important to us and local economies.

Sincerely,

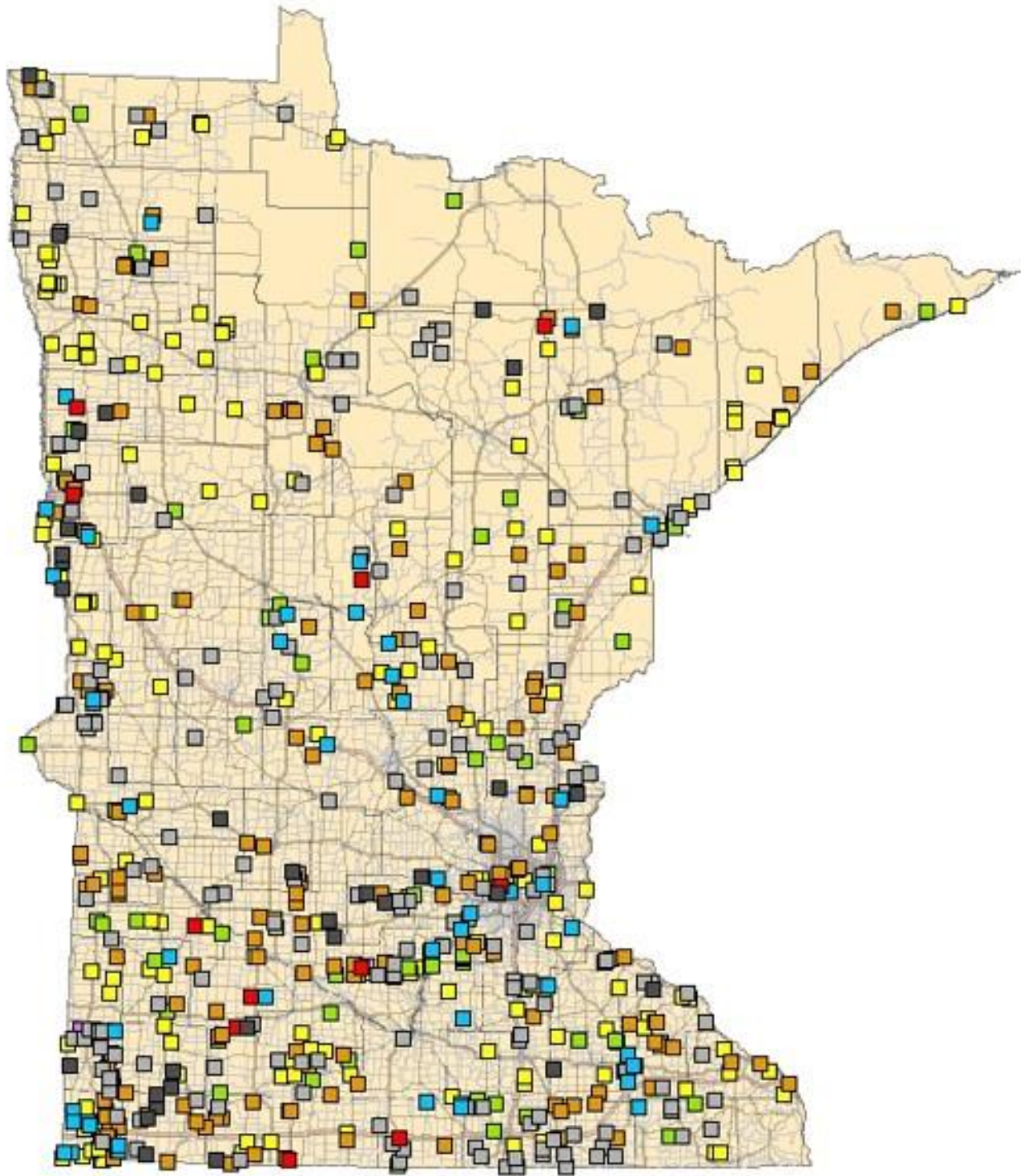


Jodi Teich
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Local Bridge Replacement Program (LBRP) Local Projects Constructed from 2006-2017



**Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP)
Local Projects Constructed from 2005-2017**

