

# Wisconsin Towns Association 2011-2012 Legislative Agenda

1257 town governments in Wisconsin provide general government services to 1,709,491 residents (30.1% of total state population). 95% of the land area in Wisconsin is within towns. Towns maintain 62,038 miles of town highways, which is over half of all public highways in the state. Town government in Wisconsin is efficient and cost effective in the delivery of a full range of services including highways; fire, police, and ambulance service; tax assessment, billing, and collecting; conducting elections; providing solid waste and recycling services; providing sewer and water; plus a wide range of other services. **Wisconsin Towns Association (WTA) believes that to continue the efficient delivery of services towns must be able to retain local control and be allowed the flexibility to provide these services as determined by each town for their citizens and property owners.**

Therefore, WTA supports the following legislative issues as priorities in the 2011-2012 Legislative Session:

## Transportation Issues

Towns maintain 62,038 miles (approx. 55%) of the total public highway system in Wisconsin. The financial needs of towns and all local governments to maintain local highways, including town highways, continues to increase, while the state aids for local transportation have failed to keep up with these increased needs.

Therefore WTA: (1) supports the passage of a constitutional amendment to prohibit the transfer of transportation funds to the general purpose budget; (2) supports an increase in the per mile minimum of **\$150 per year** each year in the General Transportation Aids (GTA), an increase from the current per mile minimum of \$2,117 in 2011.

## Boundary Issues

Towns have the authority to adopt town comprehensive plans and enter extraterritorial zoning agreements with cities and villages. Counties do not need to be involved in the approval of extraterritorial agreements between towns and cities or villages. The approval of plats in areas under extraterritorial zoning agreements by counties is duplicative and costly for property owners. The actions of cities, villages or counties should not limit these authorities of towns.

Therefore WTA: (1) supports the passage of an amendment to Sec. 59.69 (3)(b) of Wis. Statutes that would provide counties “**may**” include city and village plans within the county comprehensive plan rather than the current “shall” include such plans; and (2) remove the county land division authority under Sec. 236.45 of any lands that are subject to an extraterritorial zoning agreement between a town and city or village.

## Prevailing Wage Law Changes

The changes in the 2009-2011 State Budget to reduce the prevailing wage rate law threshold to apply to public construction projects (including highways) over \$25,000 has greatly increased the cost of such construction projects to local governments.

Therefore WTA: supports the passage of legislation to repeal the changes to the prevailing wage law in Sec. 66.0903 of Wis. Statutes enacted in the past 2009-2010 State Budget and thus return the minimum threshold for prevailing wage law to \$234,000 for multi-trade projects and \$48,000 for single-trade projects plus return to an annually indexed adjustment of this threshold for inflation.

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