



WISCONSIN TOWNS ASSOCIATION

Empowering Town Officials

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2021-22 Legislative Priorities

1. Transportation

WTA supports a long term, sustainable, and equitable solution to growing Wisconsin's economy and ensuring public safety through road infrastructure investment across the entire state. Towns have 62,000 miles, or over 53%, of Wisconsin's roads that serve as a critical "first" and "last" mile link to the state's economy. Historic severe underfunding of this economic backbone has resulted in an unacceptable **371 year replacement cycle** for town roads. Even simple maintenance schedules do not allow for adequate preservation of the existing investment. Seal coating, for example, which should take place every 5 – 7 years actually, occurs every 32 years on average. WTA supports:

- A. Increased per-mile general transportation aids (GTA).
- B. Fixing the 85% - 15% cost cap problem that prevents many towns from leveraging their share of state transportation funding.
- C. Fixing the negative impact that disaster aid has in the GTA calculation.

2. Broadband

Widespread broadband access is vital to Wisconsin's socioeconomic and educational success. Unfortunately, vast areas of Wisconsin, largely rural, have been left behind without adequate access. WTA supports a multipronged strategy to achieve statewide "**real**" speeds of **25mbps download/3mbps upload by 2025** throughout all of Wisconsin. This strategy should include:

- A. Increased funding.
- B. Accurate mapping of "real" service availability.
- C. Increased industry transparency to ensure efficient and effective use of taxpayer subsidies.
- D. Technical assistance for local government.

3. Volunteer Fire / EMS

The overwhelming majority of fire and EMS first responders in Wisconsin are volunteers. This system of **volunteerism saves taxpayers billions** of dollars. Financial and volunteer shortages, however, threaten the ability of local governments to continue to provide quality life-saving services. Investment in local volunteers today will safeguard these life-saving services and avoid a much larger financial burden in the future. WTA supports:

- A. Allowing for towns to fund EMS using the same options available to fund fire protection under §60.55(2).
- B. Fully fund Length of Service Award.
- C. Providing a \$1,000 income tax credit for volunteer fire/EMS personnel.
- D. Providing a \$400 income tax credit for unreimbursed volunteer fire/EMS expenses.
- E. Providing a college tuition reimbursement for volunteer fire/EMS personnel with a premium reimbursement for Registered Nurse and Certified Nursing Assistant degree recipients.
- F. Providing a business tax incentive for those businesses that allow volunteer fire/EMS personnel to leave their job during the workday.
- G. Allowing online classes to satisfy certain training requirements.

4. Land Use

WTA supports **intergovernmental collaboration**. Unfortunately, recent actions and unique interpretations of time proven statutes by several cities and villages have disrupted the potential for collaboration, negatively impacted the voice of town citizens, and jeopardized private property rights. WTA supports fixing for these new inventions so that private property rights, town citizen voices, and the potential for intergovernmental collaboration are restored.

- A. Work to limit jurisdictions from being able to condemn property outside of their jurisdiction.
- B. Prevent the value of the five year annexation payback provision from being negatively impacted by extraterritorial authority, use value taxation, or land ownership.
- C. Reform “island” annexation.
- D. Work with stakeholders to establish orderly annexations that reduce conflict and promote intergovernmental cooperation.
- E. Modify extraterritorial zoning authority.

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