



## Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP) Guidelines and Requirements



**2024 – 2025 Program Cycle**  
Counties / Towns / Cities / Villages

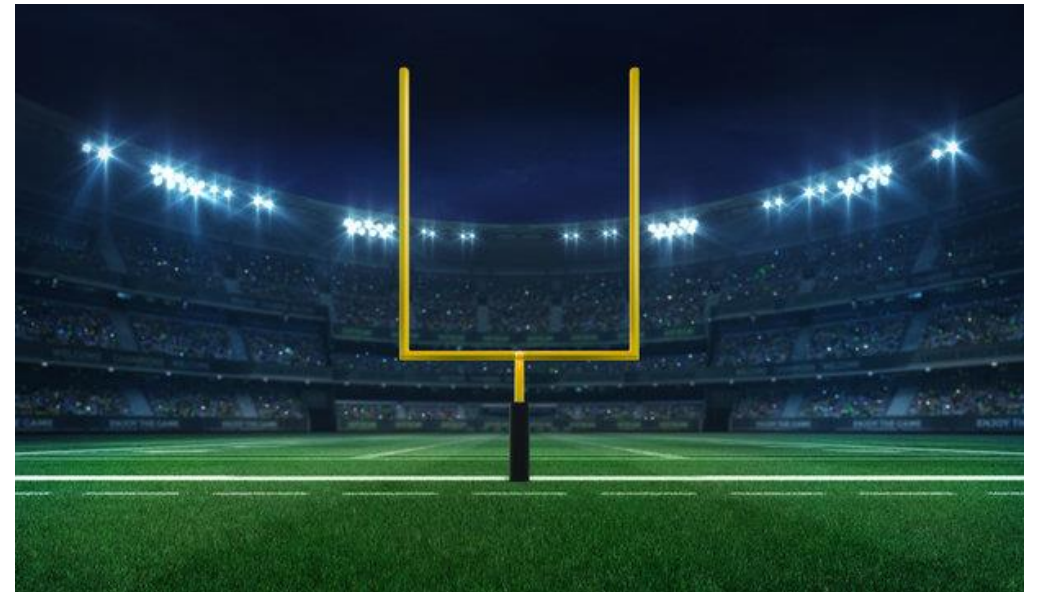
# LRIP Pilot Preliminary Results & Future Outlook





# Today's Objectives

- A. What is the LRIP Program?
- B. What is the LRIP Pilot?
- C. Why do we have an LRIP pilot?
- D. Preliminary Findings
- E. Next Steps





# What is the Local Road Improvement Program?

*“The Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP) was established in 1991 to assist local units of government in improving seriously deteriorating county highways, municipal streets in cities and villages, and town roads.”*

1. Entitlement
2. Discretionary
3. Supplemental
4. Agricultural



# What is the LRIP Pilot?

- Currently:
  - ✓ LRIP entitlement and discretionary is administered at the local level by the county highway commissioner.
  - ✓ Governed by outdated statutes and administrative code
  - ✓ Suffered from “policy creep” inside WisDOT
- Pilot:
  - ✓ Test in 25 counties in NW and West Central Wisconsin
  - ✓ Test a different administration model
  - ✓ Test potential changes that would have to be incorporated into statutes and code
  - ✓ Test making some to limit policy creep



# Funding Success: **TEAM** Effort



**Towns**  
**Counties**  
**Cities and Villages**  
**Private Contractors**  
**Laborers Unions**  
**Farm Bureau**





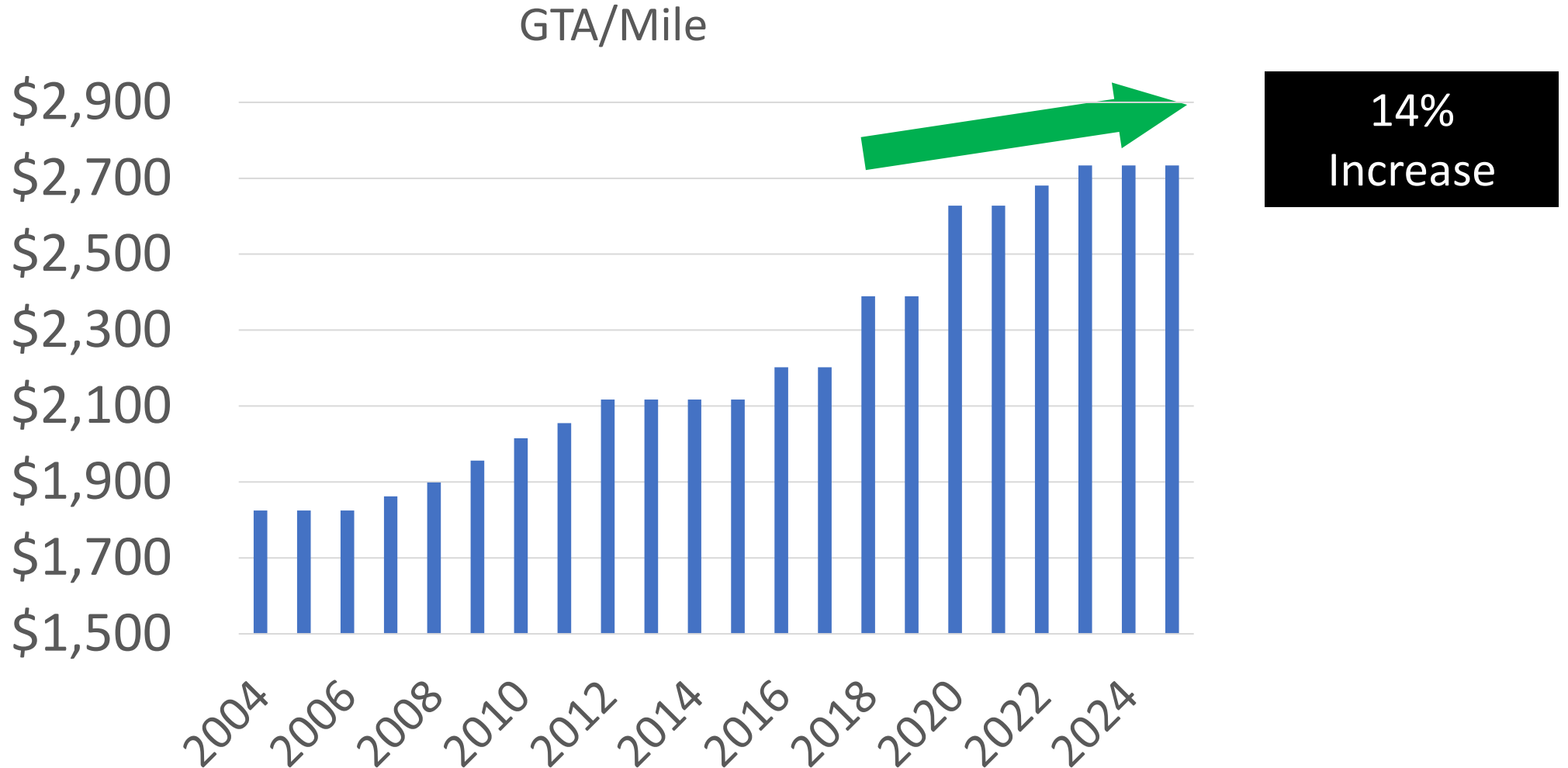
## Funding Success: Where?

Year	Entitlement	Discretionary	Supplemental	ARIP	Total
2018	\$ 10,028,936	\$ 11,887,200			\$ 21,916,136
2020	\$ 10,012,392	\$ 11,847,200	\$ 35,149,400		\$ 57,008,992
2022	\$ 10,120,400	\$ 24,347,200	\$ 39,054,900		\$ 73,522,500
2024	\$ 10,631,500	\$ 12,549,900	\$ 39,054,900	\$115,522,493	\$ 177,758,793

- ✓ Since 2018, the number of programs has doubled and funding has increased 711%
- ✓ MUCH greater focus by legislators and others on program performance



# Funding Success: Where?





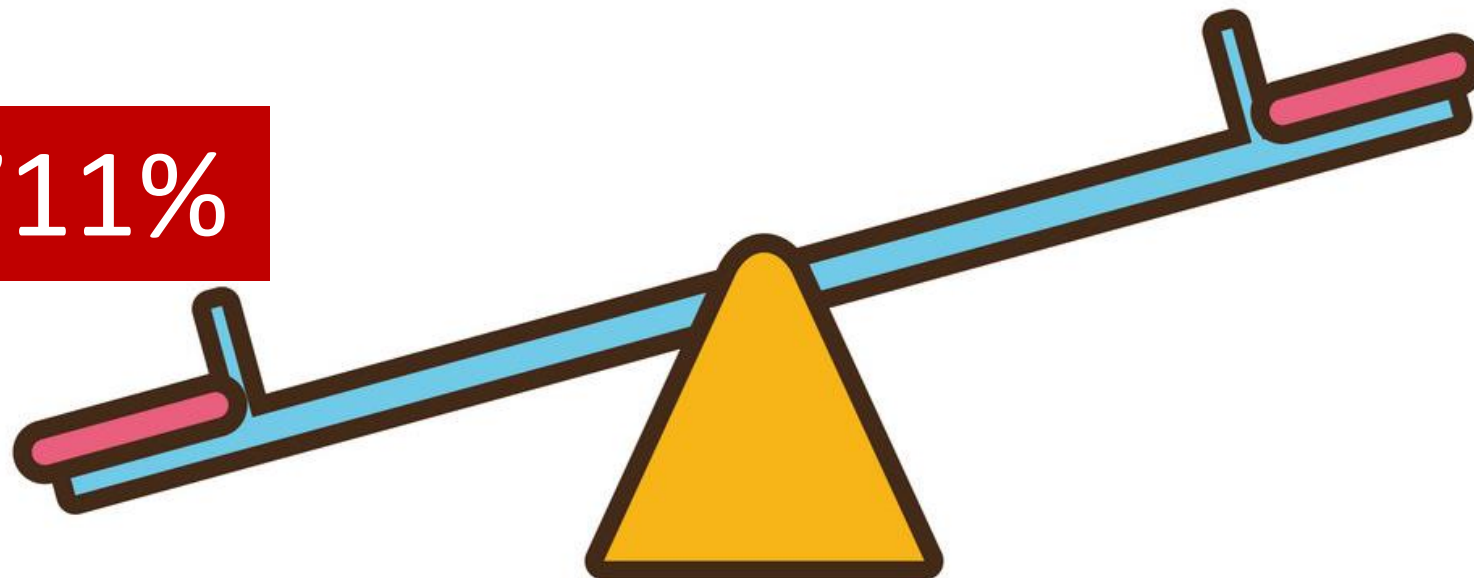


Why?

EASIER TO CUT

14%

711%





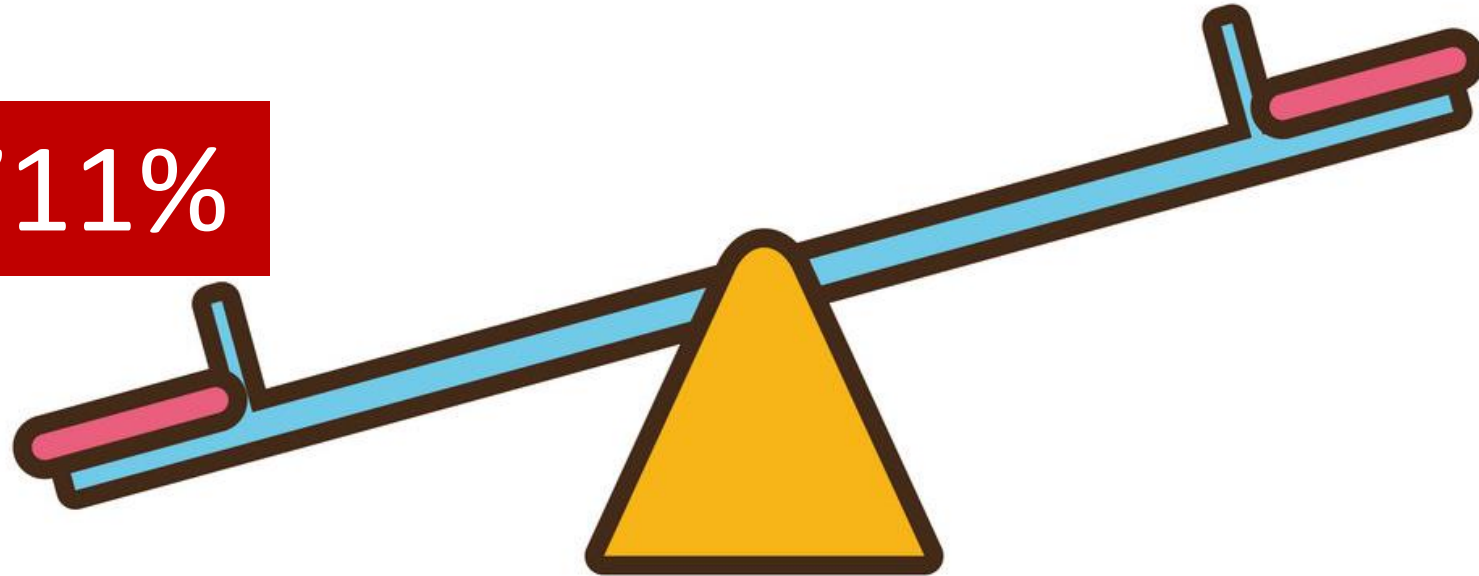


Why?

USES MORE  
GPR VS SEG

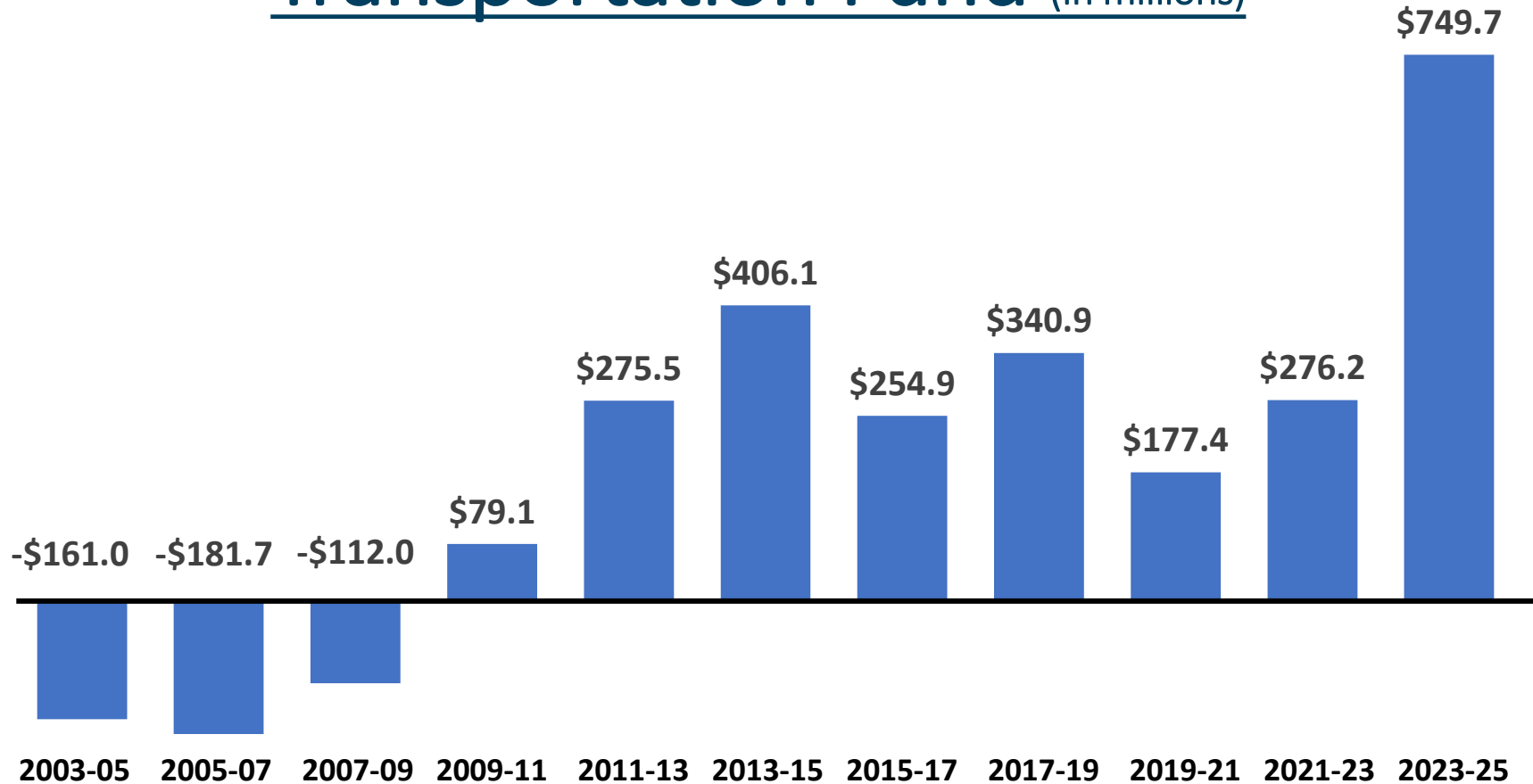
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# GPR Transfers to the Transportation Fund (in millions)



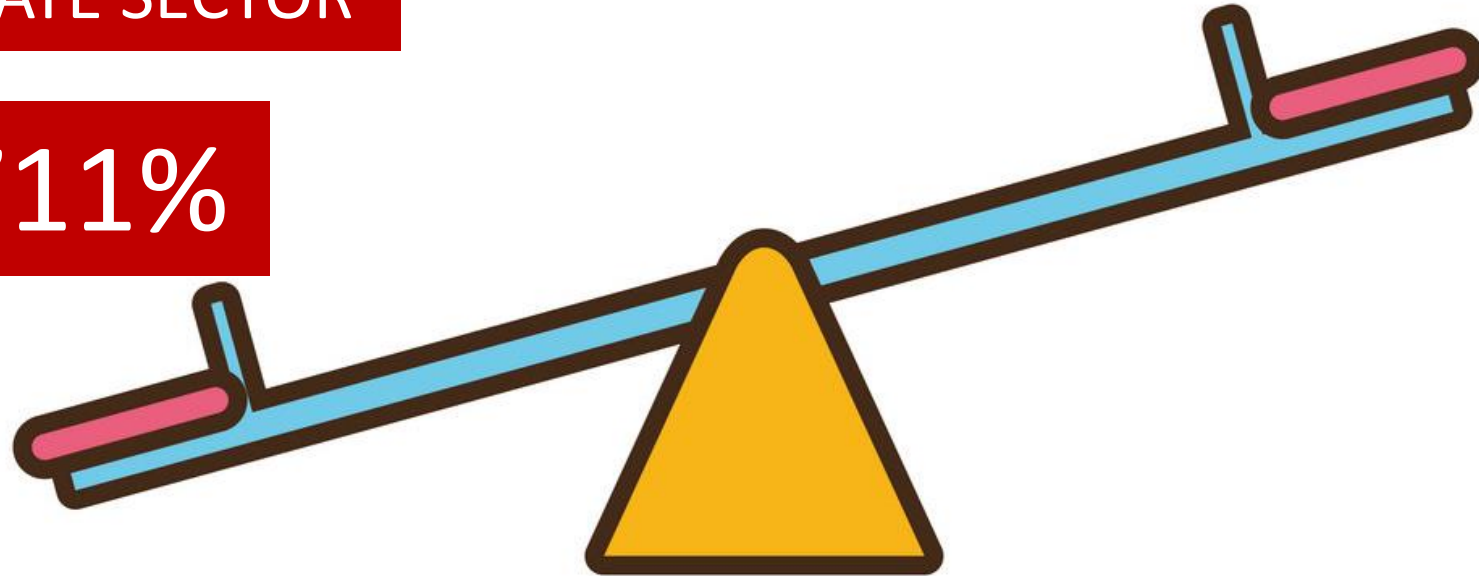


Why?

FUNDING  
GENERALLY  
FLOWS TO THE  
PRIVATE SECTOR

14%

711%





# The increase in LRIP funding is fragile



EASIER TO CUT

WE WILL NOT HAVE GPR SURPLUSES FOREVER

SIGNIFICANT NEEDS IN  
K-12, UW, MEDICARE, PRISONS

SOME TOWNS & LEGISLATORS  
ARE HAPPIER THAN OTHERS

UNHAPPY  
CONTRACTORS & UNIONS



# LRIP concerns threaten the coalition

- Cities attacked ARIP and produced the GTA veto
- One of the coalition members recently produced a proposal, which they apologized for, that would have killed ARIP
- Private sector feels counties and towns are producing a result where not enough funding is flowing to them





## Why do we have the LRIP Pilot?

- ✓ To study potential methods to fix the LRIP program
  - Protect the egg and fix the foundation
- ✓ A temporary bridge to a rewrite of TRANS 206 and any foundational statutes



Should your town have the  
same ability to access LRIP grants as  
your neighboring town?

- a. My town should have more access.
- b. My town should have less access.
- c. My town should have the same access.





## Finding #1: Towns have different access levels

### MORE

- Some towns get a lot of services from highway commissioner, including:
  - ✓ CTRIC facilitation
  - ✓ Project review and evaluation prior to submittal to WisDOT
  - ✓ Full scoping services
  - ✓ Partial or full grant writing services

### LESS

- Some towns receive only the services required by TRANS 206



## Finding #1: Towns have different access levels

### MORE

- Some county highway commissioners allow towns over three months to scope a project and write a grant application.

### LESS

- Some county highway commissioners require towns to submit grant applications for LRIP to them by November 1.
- This gives towns about 5 weeks to scope a project and write an application.
- This is required in TRANS 206.



## Finding #1: Towns have different access levels



**Commissioner and Town Official  
TURNOVER**



# CTRIC Chair Discussions: Inequitable Access

- *19 of 22 CTRIC Chairs thought the pilot created equitable opportunities*
  - ✓ *One thought they already existed for his county*
  - ✓ *One agreed the pilot made great strides, but needs to do more*
  - ✓ *One thought that the pilot should have led to all LRIP money just being split up between counties like entitlement and handed out on a rotational basis*



## CTRIC Chair Discussions: Inequitable Access

- *“The problem with having the program run like before the pilot is that the knowledge base and ability to help broadly varies between counties. It does tend to toss the grant writing in different directions and the person administering the program may or may not be a good fit.”*
- *“I do not feel access has been a problem in our county as the commissioner does everything for us.”*



## CTRIC Chair Discussions: Varying Timelines

- *“Having different timelines is a problem. We need to have a standard timeline for everyone. Longer is better. 60 days is OK. 90 days would be best.”*



## CTRIC Chair Discussions: Turnover Concerns

- *“We have a CHC with really no experience in LRIP or similar programs. There needs to be an alternative for towns in that situation or who have a commissioner that isn’t very helpful.”*
- *“We have not had a permanent commissioner for some time. Until the pilot, LRIP hasn’t worked for a number of years.”*
- *“Our facilitator has been great, but what happens if he retires? Will we get the same level of service with a new guy?”*

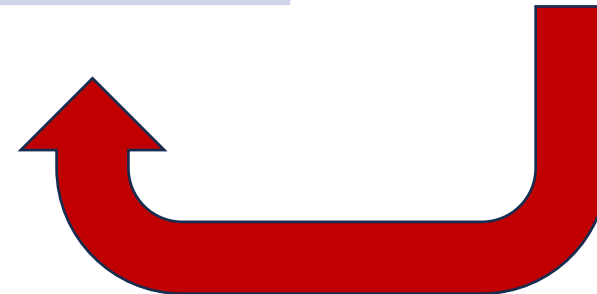




## Finding #2: Inequitable outcomes

	2016 Average	2022 Average
Sealing	31.4 Years	16.8 Years
Recondition	62.9 Years	46.6 Years
Reconstruction	370.8 Years	137.1 Years

LRIP has  
helped  
improve the  
average  
maintenance  
and  
replacement  
intervals





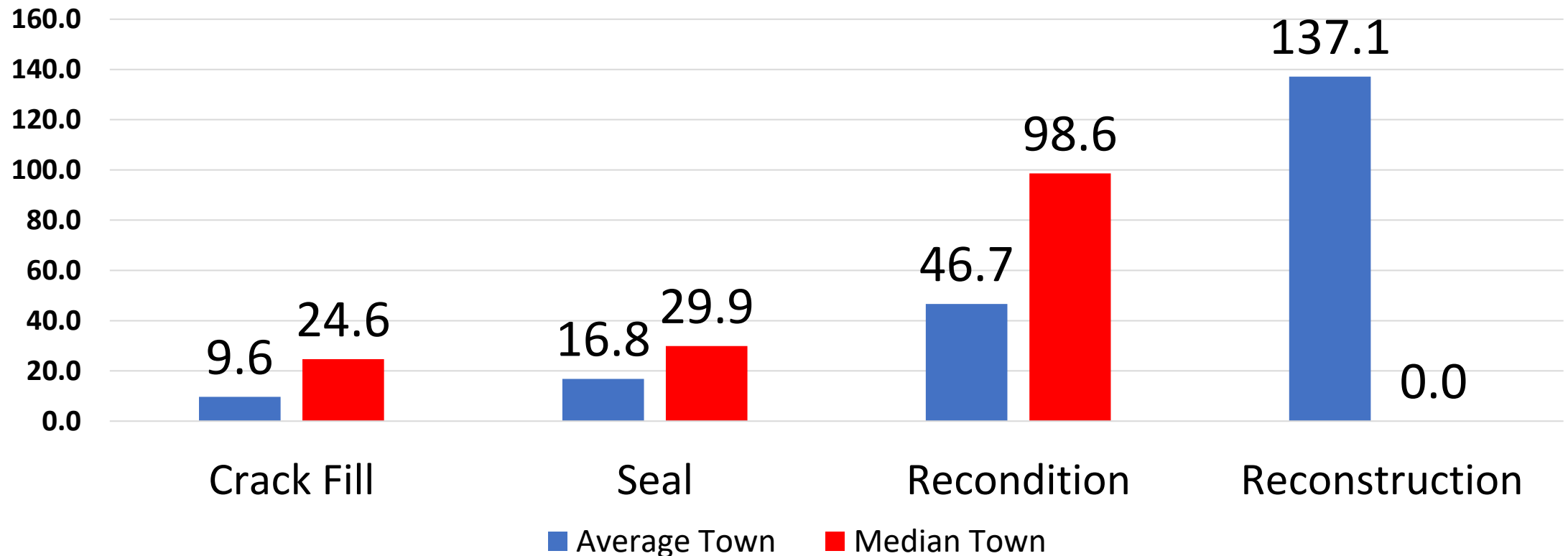
## Finding #2: Inequitable outcomes

- The average town road is chip sealed every 17 years...  
BUT half of town roads are chip sealed every 30 years...or worse.
- The average town road is reconditioned every 47 years...  
BUT half of town roads are reconditioned every 99 years...or worse.
- The average town road is reconstructed every 137 years...  
BUT half of town roads have abandoned reconstruction as a strategy.



## Finding #2: Inequitable Outcomes

Town Average vs. Median Maintenance/Replacement Cycle (years)





## Who is best equipped to choose the best local projects to receive town LRIP grants in your county?

- a. A local committee of 5 town officials.
- b. A statewide committee of 15 folks (12 town officials) that are likely not from your county.



## Finding #3: Failure to maximize local input

- The CTRIC (5 town officials) has two primary responsibilities:
  - Choose the entitlement projects
  - Rank the discretionary and supplemental projects
- In some counties, the CTRIC or the city/village version had failed to meet in previous cycles.
- In some counties, the town officials let the county highway commissioner make the decisions and rank the projects.
- Vastly different and odd ranking methodologies across the state prevented use of CTRIC rankings in all but the pilot region.



## CTRIC Chair Discussions

- *“The program decisions need to be as local as possible. The pilot did very well in this regard and was a big improvement.”*



How many of you would like  
to avoid an orange suit?







## Finding #4: Operating outside of the law

- LRIP related committees require adherence to open meetings and public records laws. This was largely not being followed.
- Failure to follow bidding laws
  - ✓ Real violation
  - ✓ Acting legally, but engaging in a violation of the real or perceived spirit of the law



# Open Meetings/Public Records

- Meeting of all town chairs to elect CTRIC was not posted or record taken
- CTRIC meeting was not posted or record taken
- CTRIC committee members must take care not to communicate in a manner that breaks open meetings law



## What are the LRIP bidding laws?

- LRIP projects must be advertised for bid in a newspaper as a Class 2 notice.
- Towns, cities, and villages generally may not use their own work forces or equipment on an LRIP project.
- All town projects must be under contract.
- LRIP projects must be let to contract to the lowest responsible bidder.



# What are the LRIP bidding laws?

- Towns can use the county highway department pursuant to the 10% rule.
  1. Written and sealed estimate provided to town prior to bid opening.
    - ✓ The source of the estimate must identified – who, what, how, etc.
  2. Private contractor bids are opened at a public bid opening.
  3. Written estimate is opened after the bids are opened.



# What are the LRIP bidding laws?

4. The town contracts with the lowest responsible bidder, or:
5. The town can contract with the county if:
  - ✓ ...the lowest bid exceeds the estimate by at least 10 percent
  - ✓ ...the town rejects all bids
  - ✓ ...town must provide opportunity to the two lowest bidders to provide information on the accuracy or lack thereof of the county estimate
    - The town can rebid if concerns are found.
  - ✓ ...the actual contract with the county, which can be awarded after the lowest bidder has been informed, is at least 10 percent below the lowest bidder

## NOTE:

- ✓ The town does not have to go with the county if the estimate is 10% lower. They can select the lowest responsible bidder or rebid.



# Common bidding violations

- Failure to follow the 10% rule procedures
  - ✓ A town was just refused reimbursement of \$41K because the county did not provide a sealed estimate and instead provided an estimate several weeks after the bids were opened and rejected.
  - ✓ In March, we had three LRIP bidding violations reported.
  - ✓ In March, a facilitator caught a bidding error committed by both the town and CHC that would have likely resulted in a reimbursement rejection. The town is rebidding.
  - ✓ In instances where facilitators have helped towns avoid problems, we have had CHCs either indicate they didn't understand the 10% rule or ask for the facilitator to "just look the other way."



## Real / Perceived violations of spirit

- Private sector bids are concrete, but county estimates are dynamic





## Finding #5: LRIP Education is Not Adequate

- Town officials lamented the demise of regional WisDOT in person meetings.
- CTRICs have indicated they never had to do any of this work before
- Pilot has been blamed for a lot of things
  - ✓ LRIP-web delays
  - ✓ The 10% rule
  - ✓ Creation of grant funding
  - ✓ Rejection of an entitlement project by the CTRIC
  - ✓ For the CTRICs decisions



## Finding #6: Education must include Myth Busting

- The pilot is permanent
- The CHC won't be able to work with towns if they don't administer LRIP
- The pilot is causing reimbursement delays



## Additional Findings...

- 1991 \$ vs 2025 \$
- Supplemental and ARIP not addressed in TRANS 206
- Towns have not been keeping up with road ratings and WISLR has severe flaws. Both are delaying reimbursement.



# Solutions

1. Create equity of opportunity
  - a. Same service levels
  - b. Same deadlines
  - c. Consistency despite turnover
2. Create environment to maximize local input
3. Create environment in which towns and counties operate within the boundaries of the law
4. Create more effective LRIP education



## Next Steps...

1. One more pilot is supported by the Secretary, WTA, and WCHA
2. One more pilot is supported by 20 of 22 CTRICs
3. Second pilot will occur if 20 County Highway Commissioners in pilot area support it by June 1
4. Secretary has indicated support for a statutory and Trans 206 rewrite with a new program in place by January 1, 2027
  - ✓ Would like a second pilot to further identify strategies to enhance the program
5. Collaborate with WisDOT, WCA, LWM, WCHA, and private sector to create more effective LRIP education