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OHIO MUNICIPAL LEAGUE DETAILS MUNICIPAL NEED FOR INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING IN
TESTIMONY TO GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
INFRASTRUCTURE

COLUMBUS, OH – The Ohio Municipal League submitted testimony before Governor DeWine's Advisory Committee on Transportation Infrastructure" on Wednesday, February 6th. The testimony, detailing how important it is for municipalities to be able to fund transportation infrastructure, is below in its entirety:

“Members of Governor DeWine’s Advisory Committee on Transportation Infrastructure:

On behalf of the Ohio Municipal League and our 750 members, I want to thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on the current needs and challenges that Ohio’s municipalities face in properly funding transportation infrastructure across the state.

The Ohio Municipal League and Ohio Mayor’s Alliance have been working with our member municipalities on understanding transportation infrastructure needs. We are part of a broader coalition of stakeholders interested in securing more transportation infrastructure funding at the state and local level.

Last week, Governor Mike DeWine announced the creation of a transportation infrastructure advisory committee. In announcing the panel, Governor DeWine said: “Investing in Ohio’s transportation network is also an investment in the future of Ohio’s high-performance economy We must ensure that our transportation system is not only safe and reliable, but that it also strengthens our economy by offering accessibility for current and new businesses.”

Ohio municipalities, our state’s economic engines, share this view. Municipalities are home to over 8.5 million citizens and over 80 percent of Ohio businesses. Municipal roadways provide critical first and last mile connections for employment, commerce, social services, health care and culture and recreation.

Our municipal roadway system is part of a statewide roadway network that spans over 250,000 lane miles and 44,000 bridges with over 300 million vehicle miles traveled annually.

Municipalities maintain over 70,000 lane miles and 2500 bridges and have an annual count of over 100 million vehicle miles traveled. The most well-traveled portion of this municipal system, about 21,000 lane miles of local connectors and arterials and highways, carry over a quarter of all vehicle miles traveled in Ohio.

In sum, the municipal transportation network connects the vast majority of our citizens to jobs and our companies to markets. We share the Governor’s view that investing in our transportation network is also an investment in our high-performance economy.

National Problem

Reports are plenty that show the mismatch between transportation infrastructure needs and funding at the national, state, and local level. Testimony to this committee documents these challenges in Ohio.

Municipalities invest in a variety of transportation assets, including roadways, curbs and gutters, bridges, sidewalks and pedestrian paths, storm sewers, traffic signals, street lights, public transit systems and airports.

Although municipalities face needs with all of these transportation assets, today we are focusing primarily on roadways and bridges and related investments, such as traffic signal management. This approach is taken because the roadway system is generally the largest area of municipal transportation investment.

As you can imagine, with over 900 independent municipalities in our state, there is not one place to go to document every need and funding source, but it is fair to say, like other units of government, our communities face infrastructure funding challenges. In a recent survey of OML members, we learned:

- 94% of respondents indicated they believe there is a significant gap between annual transportation funding and needs. The respondents' estimates of this annual funding gap ranged from 20% to 200%.
- Over 45% of respondents noted that they are trying to catch up on deferred maintenance or deteriorated infrastructure due to funding shortfalls in the past ten years.

Key Needs

Understanding that Ohio is not in a position to meet every state and local transportation need, we focus on ways to partner on the state-local roadway network that link citizens to work and companies to markets, including:

- **Roadway Investment:** Maintenance needs of these critical roadways will vary, so, municipalities propose that local governments work with the state to prioritize these lane miles and to create a ten-year maintenance cycle program for these critical roadways.

To put this into perspective, Ohio's municipalities maintain over 70,000 lane miles of roadway. About 21,000 lane miles of these roads are "well-traveled" critical, high use state highways and local arterials and connectors shouldering over a quarter of all vehicle miles traveled in our state. A ten-year maintenance program covering all of these lane miles would treat about 2100 lane miles per year. This would assure that every line mile of this important system is maintained appropriately. *The estimate for the municipal portion of this need is \$400 million a year.*

- **Bridge Investment:** Local governments maintain over two-thirds of the state's 44,000 bridges. Although counties maintain most of these bridges, municipalities maintain 2453 bridges. *The needs estimate for a 30-year maintenance program for these municipal bridges is about \$50 million a year.*
- **Traffic Management and Smart Technology:** More funding to install, operate and maintain traffic management and emerging smart technology would improve safety and efficiency and reduce congestion on the high use roadways. Since the life cycle costs of these systems are evolving rapidly, best practice research will establish the installation and maintenance cycle of these new systems. *The initial estimate for the municipal portion of this need is \$50 million a year.*
- **Transportation Planning and Emerging Technology Best Practice Training:** There also is a need for good planning and training to help localities make the best infrastructure investment decisions, like

establishing effective pavement condition ratings and best practice training for managers and line staff on traffic management and emerging smart transportation matters. ***Funding for this need would be developed and paid for within the budgets of the above three components.***

Municipalities also recognize other important needs, including:

Creation of Long-Term Transportation Funding Study Commission to analyze and make policy recommendations that address the ongoing shift away from gas fueled vehicles to alternative fuel vehicles and greater use of public transportation and online work all of which destabilize gas tax revenue growth and related transportation funding. Consideration of a vehicle miles traveled fee should be included in this analysis.

Restoration of Local Government Fund cuts – which totaled nearly 50 percent since 2011. Local governments, including municipalities, use these funds for general government purposes, including transportation infrastructure.

More Public Transit Funding- the need for greater support for public transit is important in small villages and big cities as our citizens look for transportation choices for work and every day travel.

In the very near future, the League will be releasing policy positions outlining our recommendations for funding solutions to these challenging issues facing our municipalities and state. We look forward to working with you to advance this important work.

Thank you for your service to this committee and I appreciate your consideration of the challenges facing Ohio's cities and villages. Together we can rebuild our state and provide a brighter future for all Ohioans."

The Ohio Municipal League is a non-profit organization that represents the collective interests of Ohio's cities and villages before the General Assembly. Of Ohio's 931 municipalities, 751 of them are members of OML. To find out more visit www.omloho.org.

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