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TRIP REPORT FINDS KEY TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS NEEDED TO SUPPORT STATE'S AND TWIN CITIES' GROWTH FACE A FUNDING "RED LIGHT"; MINNESOTA IN NEED OF CRITICAL TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS TO IMPROVE STATE'S HIGHWAY, TRANSIT, BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

Eds.: The report includes information, including funding status, on 20 critically needed transportation projects in the Twin Cities area and 30 critically needed transportation projects in Greater Minnesota. These projects would enhance quality of life by improving access, relieving traffic congestion, improving safety, supporting economic development opportunities and improving physical conditions.

St. Paul, MN – More than half of the key transportation improvements identified by TRIP as being critically needed in the state, including the Twin Cities' area, are unfunded, jeopardizing future quality of life gains in the region due to an inadequate transportation system. These transportation projects would support the state's future development by improving access, safety and conditions according to a new report released today by [TRIP](http://tripnet.org), a Washington, DC based national transportation organization.

The TRIP report "[*Project Green Light: Moving Minnesota's Top Transportation Improvements Forward*](#)," lists critically needed transportation improvements in Greater Minnesota and the Twin Cities region, including projects to operate, maintain, build, expand or modernize roads, highways, bridges, mass transit systems, rail, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. These improvements, which were selected by TRIP, would enhance development throughout the region and the state by increasing personal and commercial mobility, easing congestion, improving safety and conditions and enhancing Minnesota's desirability as a place to live, visit and do business.

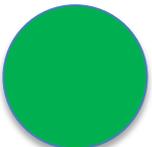
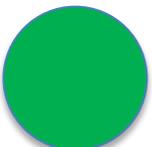
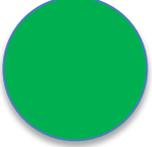
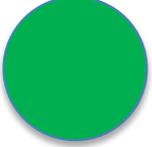
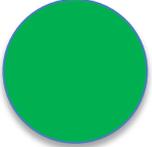
But the report finds that most of the critically needed projects in Greater Minnesota and the Twin Cities area lack adequate funding. TRIP rated each needed transportation improvement as either having a green light, a yellow light or a red light in terms of the availability of funding.

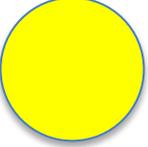
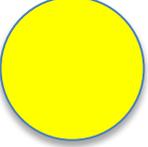
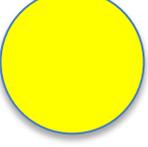
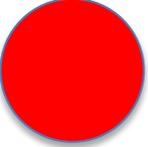
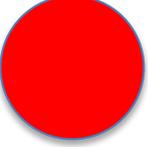
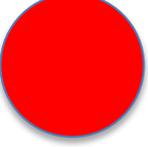
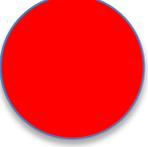
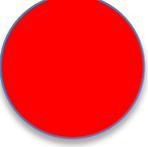
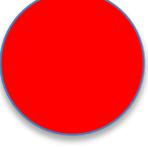
In Greater Minnesota, TRIP finds that six of the state's 30 key transportation projects identified in the report have a green light, to signify that full funding is available or is anticipated to be available by 2019; three projects are rated a yellow light because either a portion of needed funding is anticipated to be available by 2019 or the funding is uncertain; and 21 projects are rated a red light because funding is not currently available and, under current funding, is not anticipated to be available through 2019.

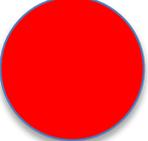
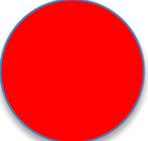
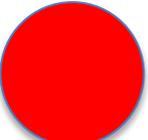
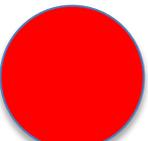
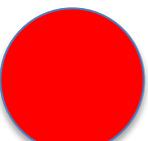
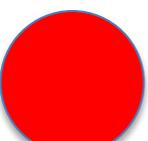
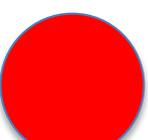
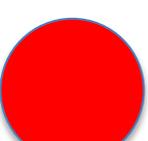
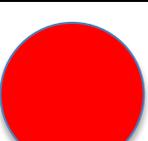
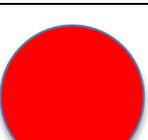
In the Twin Cities area, TRIP finds that only one of the region’s 20 key transportation projects identified in the report has a green light, to signify that full funding is available or is anticipated to be available by 2019; five projects are rated a yellow light because either a portion of needed funding is anticipated to be available by 2019 or the funding is uncertain; and 14 projects are rated a red light because funding is not currently available and, under current funding, is not anticipated to be available through 2019.

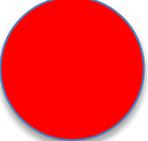
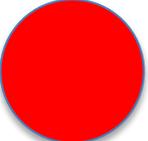
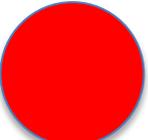
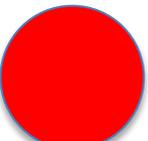
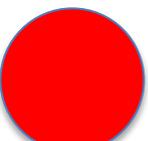
"Throughout Minnesota there are many needed transportation projects that are ready to go, but we don’t have the funding to begin construction," said Russell Hess, political coordinator of the Laborers District Council of Minnesota & North Dakota. "Now is not the time to take our foot off the gas. The legislature must invest in transportation this year to help create jobs and keep Minnesota economically competitive."

The Greater Minnesota’s 30 transportation improvements, as determined by TRIP, needed to support a high quality of living in the region and to support the region’s development goals and their funding status are listed in the following table. Additional information on these projects can be found in [Appendix B](#) of the report.

	<p>Statewide safety improvements. These proactive safety improvements would reduce the incidences of fatal and serious crashes</p>
	<p>Expand TH 371 to four lanes from Nisswa to Jenkins. This project, which will cost a minimum of \$62 million would expand TH 371 from two lanes to four lanes from Nisswa to Jenkins. Expanding this inter-regional corridor would improve the movement of traffic, enhance economic development and improve safety.</p>
	<p>Rehabilitation or replacement of the I-90 bridge over TH 52 near Rochester. This project, which will cost a minimum of \$4 million would rehabilitate or replace the I-90 bridge over TH 52 near Rochester, which is a key inter-regional corridor and provides access to the Regional Trade Center.</p>
	<p>Rehabilitation or replacement of I-90 bridge over TH 63. This project, which will cost a minimum of \$3 million, would rehabilitate or replace the I-90 bridge over TH 63.</p>
	<p>Pavement improvements to TH 2 in Deer River. This project, which will cost approximately \$1 million, would include pavement preservation, resurfacing and reconstruction projects on TH 2 in Deer River to replace badly deteriorated pavement surfaces and attain ADA compliance.</p>
	<p>Reconstruction and improvements to streetscape of TH 371B in Brainerd. This project, which will cost a minimum of \$12 million, would include reconstructing and improving the streetscape of TH 371B in Brainerd to include pedestrian and bicycle amenities and ADA compliance. It would provide needed pavement replacement in conjunction with improvements for all modes of travel.</p>

	<p>Replacement of TH 210 bridge over Mississippi River in Brainerd. This project, which will cost a minimum of \$75 million, would replace the TH 210 bridge over the Mississippi River in Brainerd. This bridge is the main link between Baxter and Brainerd.</p>
	<p>Restore TH 53 highway connection from Eveleth to Virginia. This project, which will cost at least an additional \$30 million, would restore TH 53 highway connection from Eveleth to Virginia, which was lost due to mining activity. This inter-regional corridor provides a critical connection from all points south to the city of Virginia.</p>
	<p>Pavement overlay on I-94 from Clearwater to Monticello. This improvement, which will cost a minimum of \$26 million, would use a pavement overlay to preserve the pavement of I-94 between Clearwater and Monticello, a primary corridor from the Twin Cities to the northwest. This improvement will preserve the pavement to allow for smoother movement of traffic and freight.</p>
	<p>Additional maintenance and operations improvements to statewide Trunk Highway system. This project, which will cost a minimum of \$10 million annually, would provide system-wide maintenance and operations improvements to Minnesota's Trunk Highway system. Improvements would include pavement patching, bridge maintenance, guardrail repairs, snow and ice control, and traffic signal timing. Proper maintenance keeps the infrastructure in good condition longer and extends the time between rehabilitation or reconstruction. Keeping roads clear of snow and ice improves roadway efficiency, saves driving time and improves safety.</p>
	<p>Add a center turn lane to TH 371 in Walker. This project, which will cost a minimum of \$7 million, would add a center turn lane to TH 371 in the City of Walker. This improvement would reduce crashes and enhance safety.</p>
	<p>Pavement and roadside infrastructure preservation on minor trunk highways. This project, which would cost an additional \$275 million per year, would involve pavement preservation, resurfacing and reconstruction projects to replace badly deteriorated pavement surfaces on minor arterial and collector trunk highways. These roadways serve as vital corridors to rural areas of the state and provide critical farm to market connections. Funding shortages will divert scarce resources to the principle arterial and Interstate system.</p>
	<p>Additional operating and capital revenues for bus and paratransit systems. This project would provide additional operating and capital revenues to support bus and paratransit systems throughout the state. These improvements would provide residents with access to jobs, education, health care, shopping and recreation. Paratransit systems enhance the mobility of the elderly and persons with disabilities.</p>
	<p>Congestion relief on I-94 from St. Michael to St. Cloud. This project would ease congestion on I-94 between St. Michael and St. Cloud. This route is an Interstate freight route and the primary corridor from the Twin Cities to the northwest. It experiences peak-time delays due to congestion. Reducing travel delays would improve freight movement and reduce lost time for travelers.</p>
	<p>Adding passing lanes on TH 34 in Detroit Lakes. This project, which will cost a minimum of \$2 million, would add passing lanes to TH 34 from TH 59/TH 34 to Highland Drive in Detroit Lakes. This improvement will provide more efficient traffic movement, enhance economic development prospects for the area and improve safety.</p>

	Reconstruction and streetscape improvements of TH 371 in Hackensack. This project, which will cost a minimum of \$6 million, would reconstruct TH 371 in Hackensack to include improvements to the streetscape with pedestrian and bicycle amenities and ADA compliance. It would provide needed pavement replacement in conjunction with improvements for all modes of travel.
	Expansion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are an important part of the multimodal transportation network. This project, which is estimated to cost an additional \$50 million annually statewide, would allow local and state governments to construct additional bicycle and pedestrian facilities beyond only those that can be included in existing highway projects to meet the growing demand.
	Complete the four-lane expansion of TH 14 from Rochester to Mankato. This project, which will cost a minimum of \$150 million, would widen TH 14 from two lanes to four lanes from CR 43 to Dodge Center, completing the four-lane connection between Rochester and Mankato. This improvement will improve traffic movement, enhance economic development and improve safety.
	Expand TH 169 to four lanes from Scenic to Pengilly. This project, which would cost from \$35 to \$46 million, would widen TH 169 from two lanes to four lanes from Scenic to Pengilly, completing the four-lane connection between Grand Rapids and Hibbing. This improvement will improve traffic movement, enhance economic development and improve safety.
	Expand TH 19 to four lanes from Northfield to I-35. This project, which would cost from \$35 to \$40 million, would expand TH 19 from two to four lanes from Northfield to I-35. This route is the primary access between I-35 and Northfield, a major educational center. This improvement will improve traffic movement, enhance economic development and improve safety.
	Expand TH 14 to four lanes from Nicollet to New Ulm. This project, which would cost from \$70 to \$140 million, would expand TH 14 from two to four lanes from Nicollet near TH 15 to New Ulm. This inter-regional corridor is listed as a “freight bottleneck”. This improvement will improve traffic movement, enhance economic development and improve safety.
	Improving the connection to TH 10 through Wadena. This project, which would cost from \$45 to \$55 million, would improve the connection to TH 10 to the east and west through the Wadena area. This improvement will improve traffic movement, enhance economic development and improve safety.
	Expand TH 23 to four lanes from New London to Paynesville to Richmond. This project, which will cost a minimum of \$70 million, would expand TH 23 from two to four lanes from New London to Paynesville to Richmond, which would complete the four-lane connection between Willmar and I-90. This improvement will improve traffic movement, enhance economic development and improve safety.
	Intersection improvements on TH 61 in Duluth. This project, which will cost a minimum of \$3 million, would complete intersection improvements on TH 61 at 40 th Avenue East in Duluth. Improvements could include conflict reduction, improved sight distances and access management, which would reduce the incidences of traffic crashes at that location.
	Interchange improvements at TH 52 in Dakota County. This project, which will cost between \$7 to \$13 million, would include interchange improvements on TH 52 at CR 86 in Dakota County. These improvements would reduce the occurrence of traffic crashes in that area.

	Intersection improvements to TH 14/TH 15 in New Ulm. This project, which will cost between \$5 and \$50 million, would improve the intersection of TH 14 and TH 15 in New Ulm. Improvements could include conflict reduction, improved sight distances and access management to reduce the occurrence of crashes.
	Intersection improvements to TH 14 in the City of Eagle Lake. This project, which will cost a minimum of \$3 million, would improve intersection safety on TH 14 in the City of Eagle Lake. Improvements could include conflict reduction, improved sight distances and access management to reduce the occurrence of crashes.
	Intersection improvements to TH 60/TH 71 in Windom. This project, which will cost between \$2 and \$3 million, would improve the intersection of TH 60 and TH 71 in Windom. Improvements could include conflict reduction, improved sight distances and access management to reduce the occurrence of crashes.
	Intersection improvements to TH 169 and CR 4 in Zimmerman. This project, which will cost a minimum of \$40 million, would improve the intersection of TH 169 and CR 41 in Zimmerman. Improvements could include conflict reduction, improved sight distances and access management to reduce the occurrence of crashes.
	Reconstruction of TH 210 in the City of Cromwell. This project, which will cost a minimum of \$3 million, would reconstruct TH 210 in the City of Cromwell in order to provide flood mitigation and safety improvements that will reduce the number of crashes.

Turning the red lights, which currently face many of the state’s critically needed transportation improvements, to green lights, will require increased transportation investment at the local, state and federal level. But a lack of adequate funding of the federal program may result in a significant cut in federal funding for the state’s roads, highways, bridges and transit systems. In fact, the impact of inadequate federal surface transportation revenues could be felt as early as summer of 2014, when the balance in the Highway Account of the federal Highway Trust Fund is expected to drop below \$1 billion, which will trigger delays in the federal reimbursement to Minnesota and other states for road, highway and bridge projects, which would likely result in states delaying or postponing numerous projects. And if a lack of adequate revenue into the Federal Highway Trust Fund is not addressed by Congress, funding for highway and transit improvements in Minnesota could be cut by \$695 million billion for the federal fiscal year beginning October 1, 2014.

“Giving the green light to the many critically needed transportation projects in the Twin Cities area and around the state is going to require increased funding from all levels of government,” said Will Wilkins, TRIP’s executive director. “Unfortunately, unless Congress acts this year to adequately fund the Federal Highway Trust Fund, Minnesota is going to see its federal funding decrease dramatically starting this summer, making it that much more difficult to green light these needed improvements.”