

# Local Road Improvement Program Pilot Overview & Update

Mike Koles  
Executive Director  
Wisconsin Towns Association

Mark Servi  
Paladin Project Management Group LLC  
M&L Management Consultant LLC



# Learning Objectives

1. What is LRIP?
2. Why is there a pilot program?
3. What is the pilot program?
4. Results to date?
5. Next Steps?



## Local Roads Improvement Program

### Summary Report





# What is the Local Road Improvement Program?

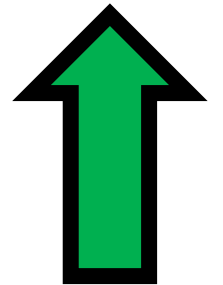
- Entitlement (TRI)
  - County Town Road Improvement Committee
- Discretionary (TRID)
  - 50-50 Competitive Grant Program
- Supplemental (LRIP-S)
  - Created in 2020
  - Up to 90-10 Competitive Grant Program
- Agricultural (ARIP)
  - Created in 2024
  - Up to 90-10 Competitive Grant Program
  - For specific “agriculture roads”



# Why: Increased Focus on LRIP & Grants

Year	Entitlement	Discretionary	Supplemental	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	\$ 10,525,216	\$ 15,347,225	\$ 39,054,900	\$ 64,927,341

297%  
Increase in  
Annualized  
LRIP in last 6  
Years



+4%

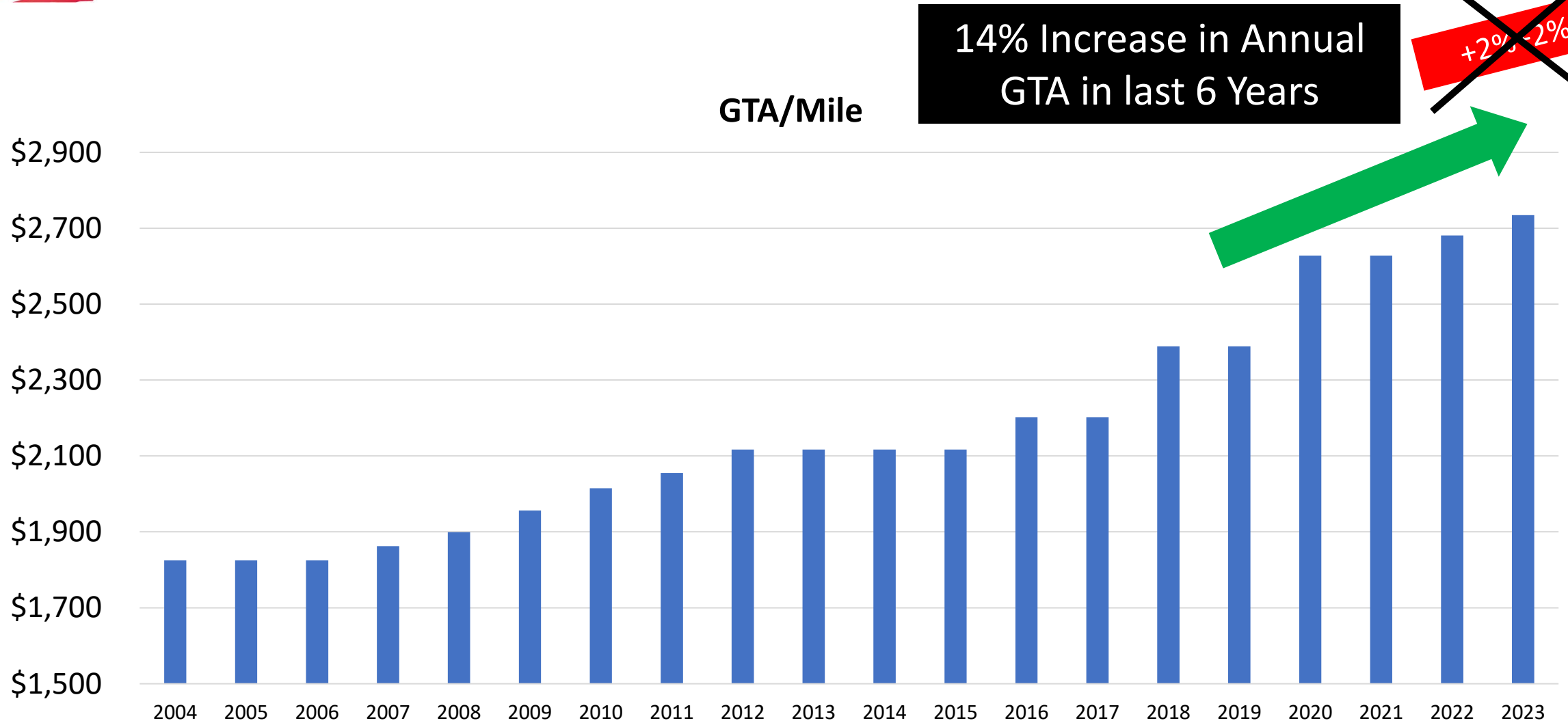
+4%

Repeated

Agricultural Road Improvement  
Program - \$150 Million



# Why: Increased Focus on LRIP & Grants





# IF THE FOCUS IS ON LRIP THEN FUTURE TOWN ROAD FUNDING REQUIRES IT TO BE FIRING ON ALL 8 CYLINDERS...



- Be governed by an effective code
- Produce Equitable Opportunity to Access to \$
- Produce Better Roads
- Maximize Local Decision Making



# Outdated Administrative Rules

- Trans 206 is the “law” that implements Wis. Stat. 86.31
- Written before the internet when George H.W. Bush was President
  - ✓ So antiquated it is simply ignored by some...but implemented exactly by others
- Written for a \$1.5M competitive grant program
  - ✓ Now \$64.9M for towns
  - ✓ Plus \$150M in ARIP
- Contains
  - Unrealistic timelines
  - Conflicts & inconsistencies
  - Vague language that has led to inventions that aren't positive



# Inequitable Opportunity

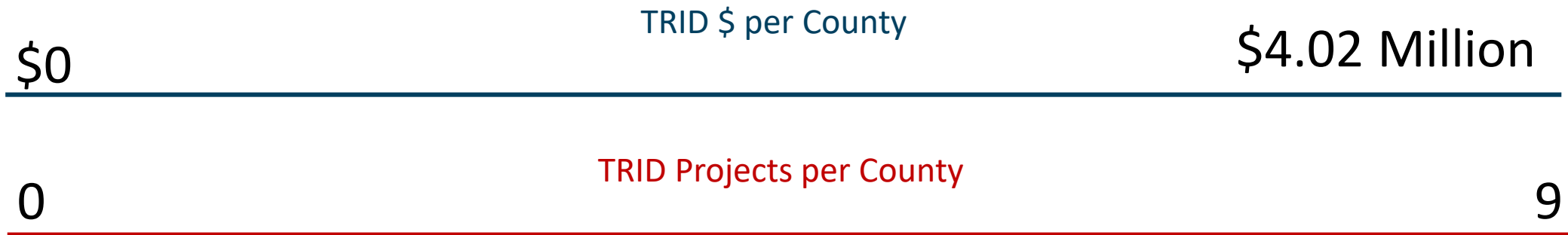
- Technical & Grant Writing Resources Vary
  - ✓ Internal Resources Vary
  - ✓ CHC Resources Vary
  - ✓ \$ to hire Resources Vary
- Differential Deadlines
- Differential Definition of Prioritization
- Unique Rules
- LRIP-S treated differently county to county





# Inequitable Outcomes

- Widely variable grant application numbers
- 30 Years of Discretionary Program (TRID) (1992-2021)



- 50% of the TRID Funding has gone to only 13 (18%) Counties



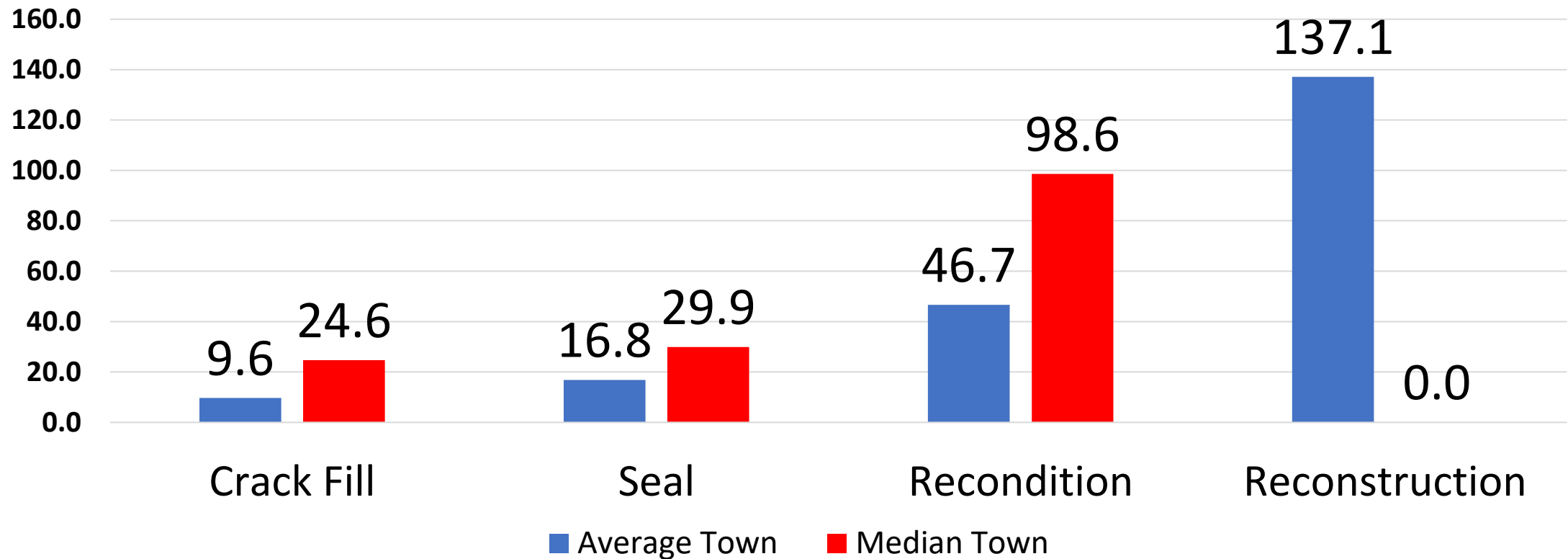
## Have we produced better roads?

	Most Efficient & Productive	2016 Average	2022 Average
Crack Filling	3 years	16.1 Years	9.2 Years
Sealing	5 – 7 Years	31.4 Years	16.8 Years
Recondition	20 – 35 Years	62.9 Years	46.6 Years
Reconstruction	40 – 70 Years	370.8 Years	137.1 Years



# Have we produced better roads?

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





## Do we maximize local decision making?

- CTRIC and CMSIC engagement varies from a lot to nearly being non-existent
- Inability to consistently prioritize across the state eliminated consideration of local prioritization
- Statewide committee is limited in its knowledge of local situation



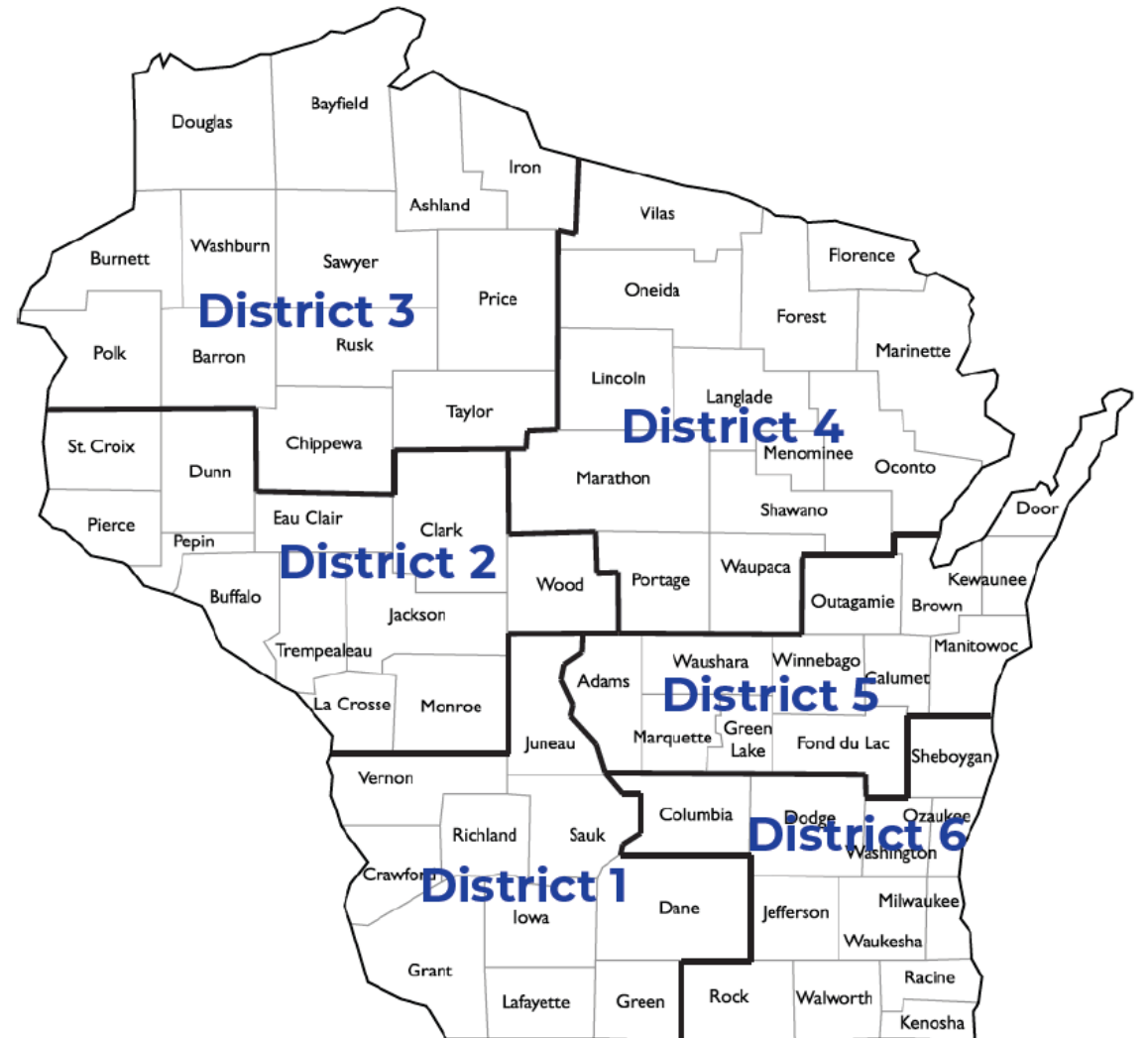
## Macro Level - What is the Fix?

- Rewrite Trans 206
  - ✓ Preferred solution by all
  - ✓ Pilot helps capture information to inform rewrite
- Ensure it is CONSISTENTLY interpreted and followed – Statewide
- Ensure equitable technical resources – Statewide
- Ensure equitable grant writing access – Statewide
- Achieve an Asset Management System for Town Infrastructure - Statewide



# The Pilot Program

- Implemented in 25 counties in northwest and west-central Wisconsin (WTA Districts 2 and 3)
- 3 facilitators hired by WTA replaced highway commissioners as program administration
- Facilitators paid exactly the same as highway commissioners





# The Facilitators

Emmer Shields (former Ashland County Highway Commissioner)  
[emmer.w.shields@gmail.com](mailto:emmer.w.shields@gmail.com)

- Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas, Iron, Price

Gary Kennedy (former Manitowoc County Highway Commissioner)  
[hwygaryk@gmail.com](mailto:hwygaryk@gmail.com)

- Clark, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau, Wood

Mark Servi (former Barron County Highway Commissioner)  
[hiwaymark@gmail.com](mailto:hiwaymark@gmail.com)

- Barron, Buffalo, Burnett, Chippewa, Dunn, Eau Claire, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, Rusk, St. Croix, Sawyer, Taylor, Washburn



# LRIP Program Administration

1. Convene CTRIC
2. Collect LRIP applications by November 1
3. Inform WisDOT of TRI projects chosen and provide TRID/TRIS applications by January 15<sup>th</sup>
4. Serve as administrative contact with WisDOT
5. Conduct TRI and TRID contract lettings upon request
6. Facilitate use of unused TRI funding





# Pilot Process

## 1. Pilot Kicks of August 29<sup>th</sup>

- Plan was for April kickoff, but late kickoff meant...
  - ✓ Limited information and education opportunities
  - ✓ Limited scoping services
  - ✓ Limited grant application review services
- In a perfect world, LRIP becomes a 365-day focus



# Pilot Process

## 2. Initial Information Provision & Outreach

- Two webinars
- Facilitator Letters to all Towns
- Attended as many WTA County Unit Meetings as possible
- Organized and attended the CTRIC kick-off meetings
  - ✓ Where the method of funding distribution for TRI projects was decided upon



# Pilot Process

## 3. Technical Scoping and Grant Narrative Review

- Grant Application scoping services
  - ✓ Right solution for location
- Grant Application review services
  - ✓ Review of project narratives
- This aspect had to be limited compared to what was and is hoped for



# Pilot Process

## 4. Application Review & Assistance

- Towns submitted applications and facilitators reviewed and worked with towns on changes for all three TRI, TRID, and TRIS programs.
- Typical issues included:
  - ✓ Incorrect project types
  - ✓ Incomplete applications
  - ✓ WISLR issues (ADT and PASER Rating)
- In general, pilot demonstrated need to increase education to help towns maximize program
  - ✓ Many new Town Officials new to program
  - ✓ Funding generally every other cycle at best, so lack of familiarity exists



# Pilot Process

## 5. CTRIC Meetings

- Determine TRI entitlement distribution
- Review and Consistently Rank all TRID and TRIS applications
  - ✓ CTRIC understands projects best
  - ✓ Ranking by peers in county
- Thanks to those who served on CTRIC
  - ✓ Many applications were reviewed and ranked
  - ✓ Strong agreement within each committee on rankings



## Pilot Process

### 6. Pilot added a Regional Town Road Improvement Committee

- Comprised of CTRIC Chairs from each county in each WTA District
- Reviewed and Ranked all applications in the District
- Used State Town Road Improvement Discretionary Committee Rules
  - ✓ At least one TRIS or TRID in each county
  - ✓ Only one project per District over \$1.5M in project costs
  - ✓ 70% state – 30% town cost share
- Ultimately relied heavily on local rankings with influence of regional ranking when necessary



# Pilot Improvements

## CHALLENGE

- Lack of consistent awareness raising, information, and education

## PILOT IMPROVEMENT

- All towns received exactly the same information
- This needs to be developed more
  - ✓ What is LRIP
  - ✓ How to select a project
  - ✓ Proper scoping
  - ✓ How to fill out an application



# Pilot Improvements

## CHALLENGE

- Statewide Town Road Improvement Committee determines TRID and LRIP-S grant criteria and parameters AFTER grants have been submitted

## PILOT IMPROVEMENT

- Statewide Town Road Improvement Committee determined TRID and LRIP-S grant criteria in late September allowing towns to tailor grant applications with full knowledge of the rules that are used to judge the grants





# Pilot Improvements

## CHALLENGE

- Lack of consistent technical and grant writing resources

## PILOT IMPROVEMENT

- Although limited due to delayed kickoff date, 81 towns received assistance
- Long term would like all towns to have access to these resources



# Pilot Improvements

## CHALLENGE

Lack of consistent application review assistance

## PILOT IMPROVEMENT

All towns received the same application review assistance



# Pilot Improvements

## CHALLENGE

TRIS not treated the same as TRID depending on the county

## PILOT IMPROVEMENT

TRIS and TRID treated identical in all counties



# Pilot Improvements

## CHALLENGE

- Lack of consistent timelines

## PILOT IMPROVEMENT

- All towns had exactly the same timelines to submit project applications
- Cycle kicked off two weeks earlier than normal
- Meant an additional six weeks for some towns
- Project development and application timeframe could be a lot longer with right program overhaul and adequate resources



# Pilot Improvements

## CHALLENGE

- Lack of consistent prioritization

## PILOT IMPROVEMENT

- Prioritization process was identical allowing for local input to be considered at the regional and state level
- Ultimately better project choice



# Pilot Improvements

## CHALLENGE

- Lack of equitable outcomes

## PILOT IMPROVEMENT

- TRID = \$2.6M for each district (16 projects in pilot)
- TRIS = \$6.5M for each district (32 project in pilot)
- Every county that applied got at least one project



## What's Next

1. Request the Department to Rewrite TRANS 206
2. TRANS 206 Rewrite allows opportunity to incorporate the successes of the pilot statewide
3. Request legislature to provide resources for technical and grant writing assistance