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BRINGING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TOGETHER TO SERVE

"The Local Government Institute of Wisconsin will collaborate with others to find solutions for the efficient delivery and funding of local government services consistent with the needs of our citizens."

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For Immediate Release
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**Local Government Groups Release Study:
*Filling Potholes: A New Look at Funding Local Transportation in Wisconsin***

With local spending on Wisconsin roads declining by almost 20 percent in recent years due to stagnating transportation fund revenues and expenditure limitations at the local level, a group of local government associations is working to find meaningful solutions.

Today at a Capitol press conference, the Local Government Institute of Wisconsin (LGI) unveiled the results of a transportation study today to get at these transportation answers.

The study, *Filling Potholes: A New Look at Funding Local Transportation in Wisconsin*, was completed by the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance as commissioned by the LGI. The intent was to study the issues impacting the funding of local transportation budgets and develop recommendations for fixing the problem.

"One of our top responsibilities as local governments is to ensure a safe and effective transportation network," said Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) Executive Director Mark D. O'Connell. "Our transportation infrastructure impacts nearly every aspect of the lives of our citizens, from economic development to jobs to safe travels with our families. As local governments, we are caught between declining state and federal transportation funding and ever increasing transportation needs."

According to the executive summary of the LGI Study, *As transportation taxes and fees stagnated or were raided to cure general fund deficits, transportation aids to local governments suffered. In 1999-2001, 40% of state transportation fund spending was local assistance, compared to only 32% now. Local finance problems were exacerbated by other state aid cuts and state-imposed property tax limits. The result of this squeeze was an inflation-adjusted decline in municipal transportation spending from \$275 per capita in 2000 to \$227 in 2012. In only two states did the rate of local transportation spending decrease more than in Wisconsin during 2000-11.*

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“We have a transportation finance issue in our state that has been put off for too long,” said League of Wisconsin Municipalities Executive Director Jerry Deschane. “The time is now to address it before our economic growth is impacted. The LGI report shows the state transportation funding could be short between \$2 billion and \$6 billion over the next 10 years. It’s time to have a common sense discussion on this issue.”

The study also addresses how Wisconsin’s economy relies heavily on transportation. Goods and services traveling on roads, manufacturing jobs and tourists are all dependent on a safe and workable transportation network.

“This report shows what we’ve already known, that manufacturing, farming, and trucking make up a larger share of jobs and wages that any other state except Indiana,” said Wisconsin Towns Association Executive Director Mike Koles. “In addition, strong roads boost our \$11 billion tourism industry. For Wisconsin to grow and thrive, we can’t wait any longer to invest in our infrastructure.”

Filling Potholes: A New Look at Funding Local Transportation in Wisconsin, may be downloaded at www.localgovinstitute.org/publications.

A companion animated video explains in simple language the transportation problems facing Wisconsin residents and local units of government. This video may be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hn5zD8FD0hI>

The LGI was formed by the Wisconsin Counties Association, the League of Wisconsin Municipalities, the Wisconsin Towns Association and the Wisconsin Alliance of Cities (now the Urban Alliance) to promote greater cooperation and collaboration between units of government in the delivery of services.

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