

# Dakota County 2025 Capital Priorities – At a glance



VI-2025

## COUNTY ROAD 50 AND INTERSTATE 35 BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS

### STATE REQUEST

**\$51.6 million for I-35**

**\$40.8 million – I-35 bridges, County Road 50 interchange**

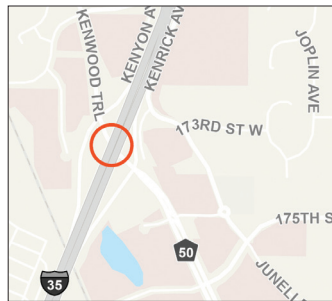
**\$10.8 million – County Road 50 improvements**

### COUNTY MATCH

**\$10.9 million for County Road 50 interchange**

County Road 50 at Interstate 35 in Lakeville is insufficient for the increasing traffic volume, and pedestrian safety is impaired along the county road. Additionally, the interstate in this corridor needs improvements to accommodate a growing population, improve safety and extend E-ZPass managed lanes from Burnsville to Lakeville.

State bonding in 2025 would help reconstruct the two interstate bridges at County Road 50 and two railroad bridges south of the interchange. The new bridges will be built to carry three lanes in each direction when future interstate improvements are made. New freeway ramps will be built connecting County Road 50 to the interstate. Funding would also provide a fourth lane on County Road 50 under the I-35 bridges and other improvements near the interchange, including pedestrian and bicycle connections along the road under I-35.



## THOMPSON COUNTY PARK INCLUSIVE RECREATION ENHANCEMENTS

**\$4 million**

Dakota County invested \$3 million at Thompson County Park in recent years, completing a first phase of improvements identified in a new park master plan.

In 2023, the Legislature provided \$2 million for design of further park enhancements, including to improve community access and extend an ADA-accessible trail system. An additional \$4 million in state funding would allow for construction of those enhancements.



## THE RECYCLING ZONE PLUS

**\$8 million** (Capital Assistance Program)

Dakota and Scott counties have a combined 603,000 residents — more than 10 percent of the state population. Each county operates residential household hazardous waste and recycling facilities, but they cannot handle expected population growth. Also, there are large areas of Dakota and Scott counties that are underserved for this type of waste disposal and recycling.

Dakota and Scott counties have partnered on plans for the Recycling Zone Plus, a new facility in Lakeville to properly manage household hazardous waste and recyclables from both counties and other metro area residents. The Legislature provided design and land acquisition funding through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Capital Assistance Program (CAP), but additional funding is needed for construction.

## COUNTY BUILDING ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS

**\$8.4 million** (Renewable Development Account)

**\$4.4 million – Solar installations**

**\$4 million – Building system updates**

Dakota County is committed to reducing energy use in county-owned facilities and remaining a state leader in energy conservation.

The county's energy efficiency proposal includes installing a total of 700 kilowatts of solar canopies at seven county locations. It also includes energy-efficient HVAC system updates at four facilities, including the Dakota 911 dispatch center.

The county is requesting \$8.4 million from the Minnesota Renewable Development.

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# Dakota County 2025 Policy Priorities – At a glance



VI-2025

## MODERNIZE HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS AND TECHNOLOGY

Minnesota's human services programs and technology are complex and outdated. Recent state modernization efforts have not kept up with evolving technology.

The state can change that by providing counties that deliver these services with modernized systems that give clients more control over their services and focus on efficiency and the use of data to improve services. The Legislature should also fund projects and technology that simplify program rules.

Counties will support efforts to rapidly develop solutions that meet these goals.

Dakota County recommends the following legislative actions:

- Support modernization projects that improve client and staff use, while increasing equity and access to services for all Minnesotans.
- Provide implementation funds to cover county costs associated with these investments.
- Establish an innovation fund for counties to co-develop solutions.

## SUSTAINABLE CRISIS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FUNDING

Communities across Minnesota face urgent and unprecedented mental health challenges. Dakota County has responded by developing effective crisis services. The county has expanded services to handle crisis calls transferred from Dakota 911, embed social workers in 10 public safety agencies and provide more timely crisis response. It also built the Crisis and Recovery Center in West St. Paul.

Most of the county's expanded services rely on one-time aid, including American Rescue Plan funds. To ensure proven crisis services can continue, the Legislature should create a long-term funding plan. In the meantime, Dakota County recommends increasing funding for crisis services grants, creating an equitable formula for state crisis grant funds and providing \$3.4 million in one-time funding to support existing services.

## MNCHOICES REASSESSMENT PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

MnCHOICES assessment and support planning are important for seniors and individuals with disabilities who need home and community-based services. It ensures eligibility, informed choice and identifies cost-effective care options. However, counties, which administer this state program, need a more efficient reassessment process to better serve existing clients and erase a backlog of first-time applications.

An annual MnCHOICES reassessment takes a total of 7-8 hours. That is excessive if the individual's situation has not changed. This lengthy process can be traumatizing to the individual and their family. It also contributes to overall program delays.

Dakota County recommends the Legislature create a shorter and more efficient MnCHOICES reassessment process if an individual's condition is stable and unchanged. The county also recommends the state change the annual comprehensive reassessment requirement to once every two or three years, or sooner if there is a significant change in an individual's condition.

## HOUSING SUPPORT OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT ALLOCATION

Minnesota law requires counties and tribes to oversee Housing Support benefits, but they do not receive dedicated funding to carry out this state program.

Housing Support pays for room and board and some supportive services for seniors and adults with disabilities who have low incomes. Dakota County supports 1,198 people on Housing Support. The county maintains 214 Housing Support agreements with vendors for 727 properties.

Housing Support agreements allow providers to collect a 5-percent administrative fee on all housing payments. There is no similar administrative fee available to counties and tribes, yet the state requires them to perform numerous Housing Support functions.

The state should provide a management allocation to counties and tribes for administering Housing Support. Without it, this is an unfunded mandate.

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## INCREASED SCORE FUNDING FOR STATE WASTE MANDATES

Metro counties face a growing number of state waste management requirements without a proportionate increase in Select Committee on Recycling and the Environment (SCORE) funding.

In 2024, 27 percent of the Solid Waste Management Tax revenue was still being redirected to the state's General Fund instead of to counties to carry out state-required waste management plans. State funding has not kept pace with the investment needed to achieve state waste objectives. Without this state support, counties must use their own funding.

While the Minnesota Legislature in 2023 redirected an additional 3 percent of the solid waste management tax to SCORE, 77 percent of Dakota County's waste management plan funding is still from other sources.

Increased SCORE funding to metro counties will reduce the reliance on local funding sources to meet state-required waste management objectives.

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