

Summary of Staff Proposed Updates to the Dakota County Legislative Platform

Capital Investment

Proposed Additions:

- CSAH 54/68 Mississippi River Trail Extension - \$24,000,000
 - Purpose of request: A proposal to construct a trail from Hastings all the way to Red Wing, through Prairie Island Indian Community, coupled with road reconstruction. Focus on CSAH 54 reconstruction with off-road trail and CSAH 54/68 roundabout. All elements would be safety improvements. Estimated cost of \$20M.
- TH 77 Northbound Lane Addition - \$19,622,592
 - Purpose of request: MnDOT has identified improvement alternatives from 494 to 138th in Apple Valley, which are being considered to move forward for design through the TH 77 Congestion Mitigation Study. Construction is being considered for 2026.
 - Fill the northbound third lane gap between 138th and I-35E in Apple Valley. \$45M
- Mississippi River Greenway - \$4,000,000
 - Purpose of request: Focus on projects in the Connecting People to the Mississippi River Plan - projects would include Wayfinding, Crossing Safety, Overlooks/User Amenities, and Natural Area restoration. Estimated cost of \$4M.

Recommended Removals:

- *Mississippi River Greenway Pedestrian/Railroad Separation - \$6,500,000*
- *South St. Paul Library Construction - \$4,700,000*

Other changes:

- Dollar amounts for capital projects revised based on updated construction costs.

Environmental Protection

Proposed Additions:

- State and federal funding opportunities that will assist the county in investing in energy efficiency, GHG reduction, clean energy production and Fleet Electrification.
 - Purpose of request: Dakota County has adopted both an Energy Efficiency and GHG Reduction strategy, as well as a Fleet Electrification Strategy to guide current and future investments that will benefit the County and its taxpayers now and into the future. The county is currently installing a 1MW solar application at the Empire Maintenance Facility, developing plans for installing improved LED and mechanical system upgrades, and expanding its EV Charging Station infrastructure and number of electric and hybrid vehicles. We are also looking at opportunities for additional solar array and solar carport applications that will offset County facility energy consumption.

An infusion of State or Federal funds into local county projects will reduce the fiscal impact on county taxpayers and allow investment in new technologies and clean energy opportunities that will have long term positive impact on our community. The county has committed to investing at least \$1M on energy efficiency and GHG reduction efforts

Summary of Staff Proposed Updates to the Dakota County Legislative Platform

in 2023. Additional State or Federal funding will allow the county to leverage additional financial resources to these efforts.

Recommended Removals:

- *The continued use of the Local Recycling Development Grant (LRDG) to support county waste abatement efforts.*
- *Efforts to delegate the authority to issue and regulate groundwater appropriations permits to County governments that have a state Delegated Well Program.*

Other changes:

- A reference to eliminating the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease has been removed and now only refers to slowing the spread.

Health and Human Services

Proposed Additions:

- Approval of a six- to 12-month pilot program allowing Minnesota counties to complete the Department of Human Services (DHS) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) training at the county-level.
 - Purpose of request: The Department of Human Services requires all new eligibility specialists/financial workers to attend a four-day virtual training to learn the basics of the SNAP program and the MAXIS system navigation. This training is required by DHS before access to the production region of the MAXIS system is granted by DHS. On average, DHS offers the training one-time per month with a maximum classroom size of 20 workers statewide. Counties are limited to five classroom spots per training but may request an exception if space allows. If a training session is full, a county cannot have a newly hired employee trained by DHS until the next available class that has an opening. This results in some employees leaving the county because they are not able to do the work they were hired to do or not being able to offer a position to a qualified applicant who has a conflict with the DHS training dates.

Many counties also provide an extensive county level training to all new workers to learn the SNAP program and MAXIS system. The training provided by and in Dakota County for SNAP training is approximately 12 weeks.

The DHS training structure requires counties to fill vacancies around the DHS set training schedule, not around the needs of each county. Counties may need to limit how many vacancies they fill depending on the classroom space available for the DHS training class, not based on the number of vacancies the county needs to fill.

Dakota County, with support from additional counties, would like to pilot an in-house SNAP training that is available when needed and will support the consistent onboarding, training and success of our newly hired employees.

- Benefits to Dakota County: E&EA would be able to hire employees into the FASII position on a timeline that works for the needs of the department, allowing the full hire

Summary of Staff Proposed Updates to the Dakota County Legislative Platform

group to remain on one training timeline, also hiring the necessary amount of staff to fill the FASII vacancies.

- Interventions that address workforce challenges and service delivery impacts including:
 - increased service rates and wages for people providing direct service delivery within the Health and Human Services system;
 - incentives, including education, to attract new workers and providers to direct service delivery;
 - grants to pilot family and community-based prevention strategies that empower consumer choice and lower burden on county case-loads; and
 - multi-year assessment and action by policy makers to address systemic root causes.

Recommended Removals:

- *Use of State ARP funds to augment funding for local initiatives that mitigate pandemic impacts on the most vulnerable in Minnesota.*
- *Amending Minn. Stat. § 256.043, subd. 3(d), to remove a provision which would appropriate approximately 50 percent of the state's settlement allocation to county social service agencies via the existing Opiate Epidemic Response Fund distribution mechanism for statutorily prescribed use(s).*

Local Government

Proposed Additions:

- The amendment of Minn. Stat. § 216G.05 to require that the permitting state agency, rather than county boards, be required to hold a public meeting regarding the construction or operation of a pipeline.
- Efforts to adjust the Homestead Market Value Exclusion formula to support homeowner property tax relief by increasing the market value threshold and including an index to adjust annually with changing residential market values.

Recommended Removals:

- *Authority to create a service district, by adoption of resolution, for the purpose of levying upon a portion of Dakota County to finance governmental services benefiting a service area within a county.*

Public Safety and Corrections (New Category)

Proposed Additions:

- An amendment to Minn. Stat. § 398.34, allowing park ordinance violations to be punishable by administrative fines.
 - Purpose of request: MN Stat. 398.34 classifies such violations as misdemeanors. "Every ordinance relating to any matter specified in subdivision 2 shall have the force and effect of law, and a violation of any provision thereof shall be a misdemeanor."

Dakota County (and potentially other Regional Park Implementing Agencies) is interested in a change to the state statute regarding park ordinance violations, to allow

Summary of Staff Proposed Updates to the Dakota County Legislative Platform

for our park ordinance violations to be punished with administrative fines instead of having to issue a misdemeanor that ends up on people's records.

Transportation

Proposed Additions:

- Efforts to encourage railroads to work with local governments on opportunities to improve safe crossings near and along rail corridors.
- State and local acquisition of rail corridors that are currently under- or un-utilized to improve non-motorized transportation systems.

Federal

Proposed Additions:

- Efforts to encourage railroads to work with local governments on opportunities to improve safe crossings near and along rail corridors.
- State and local acquisition of rail corridors that are currently under- or un-utilized to improve non-motorized transportation systems.