

2017 SCALE Legislative Platform

Prior Lake City Hall
Updated June 2017

Government Without Borders

Working Together to Strengthen Each Other

The mission of the Scott County Association for Leadership and Efficiency (SCALE) is to forge new and innovative ways in which government entities can collaborate to provide superior services while making the most of limited resources.



SCALE

Top Legislative Priority Areas



- SCALE recommends surplus state funds be used for capital projects, especially transportation and water quality improvement projects, and not be rebated to taxpayers. (The current biennium is now projected to end with a balance of \$678 million, after the statutory allocation of \$334 million to the budget reserve. General fund revenue growth continues into FY 2018-19. As a result, a \$1.4 billion balance is projected to be available for the upcoming FY 2018-19 biennial budget.

A fair amount of the surplus money was used in the transportation bill for transit (\$70M for Met Council Transit, \$16.8 for Greater MN transit, \$1 M for our suburb-to-suburb demonstration project) and roads. The small cities assistance program received \$16M, the Metro counties received \$10M, township roads received \$4M, etc. Other money was spread around other budget bills. Some of the forecasted ongoing money was used for tax cuts.

SCALE

Working together for improved capital investments.



- SCALE supports the \$25.6 million state bonding request from Scott, Dakota, and Hennepin counties for a new Medical Examiner's Facility.
- \$2.68 million was approved in the bonding bill for design of the facility.
- SCALE supports adequate funding (an estimated \$6 million cash and \$10 million bonding authorization) for the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to buy wetland replacement credits for the local road wetland replacement program.
- \$5 million in cash from the General Fund was appropriated early in the session, and \$5 million more was included in the bonding bill.

SCALE

Avoiding natural disasters.



- SCALE supports a combination of general obligation bonds and cash to adequately fund local flood mitigation needs.
- The Prior Lake Spring Lake Watershed District is seeking \$50,000 to manage the low-flow gate of the Prior Lake Outlet Structure. It is also seeking a \$225,000 grant for design and permitting for flood storage construction projects on secured easements in the upper watershed.
- The City of Jordan is identifying several flood mitigation projects, and they expect to seek state grants to assist with those projects.
- \$11.555 million was appropriated in the bonding bill for flood hazard mitigation grants for publicly owned capital improvements to prevent or alleviate flood damage. Local entities may apply for these grants. Priorities will be determined by DNR commissioner.

SCALE

A better transportation system.



SCALE supports additional general obligation bonding dollars or surplus cash for local roads and bridges, including the County and Municipal Turnback Accounts.

Turnback account was funded at past level. The \$49.2 million in the Local Bridge Program provides \$32.7 million for specific bridges, leaving \$16.5 million in non-earmarked funds. Combined with the \$25 million in the transportation bill for local bridges, this provides \$41 million in funds for local bridges on the waiting list. For the Local Road Improvement Program, there is \$90.5 million in earmarked projects out of the \$115.9 million in funds, leaving \$25.3 million in non-earmarked funds for a solicitation.

SCALE

A better Minnesota.



- SCALE supports the \$11 million bonding request for Metro Parks.
- \$5 million was approved in the bonding bill for Metro Parks. Scott County will receive a portion of this based on a pre-determined formula. It will generally be used to repay the County for past parkland purchases.

SCALE

Strengthening communities



SCALE supports workforce housing grants that include funds for existing housing in need of rehabilitation.

\$105 million was approved for the Housing Finance Fund. Of that, \$13 million was earmarked for housing rehabilitation. Another \$10 million was included in the bonding bill for public housing rehabilitation.

SCALE

Working together for improved capital investments.

SCALE supports addressing deficiencies in the state's transportation infrastructure. SCALE supports additional funding for road projects that impact economic development (Corridors for Commerce, TED funds).

- ***Transportation bill*** provides \$235 million in new revenue for roads and bridges and an additional \$71 million in general fund dollars for Metropolitan Area transit for the next two years. In the following biennium, the estimate is about \$444 million or \$222 million per year in additional funds.
- **\$940 million in additional trunk highway bonds** are authorized for the Corridors of Commerce program (\$300M) and the State Road Construction program (\$640M) along with \$25 million per year in cash from the Trunk Highway Fund for Corridors of Commerce for the next four years.

SCALE

Supporting local control.



SCALE opposes any legislatively-imposed sales tax for transit/transportation.

Despite the Governor's recommendation to impose a metro-wide sales tax for transportation, the Legislature did not entertain the idea. Non-CTIB counties still have the ability to set their own transportation sales tax up to .5 percent. With the impending dissolution of CTIB, all counties in MN will soon have this option.

SCALE

A better transportation system.



- SCALE supports changing the condemnation process to require property owners, in cases where negotiations have failed to reach agreement and the property owner has hired an appraiser, to disclose their appraisal prior to the deadline for the governmental agency to make its final written offer. (Alternatively, the owner's appraisal should be submitted at least 30 days before a condemnation commissioner's hearing.)
- No action on this issue this session.

SCALE

A better transportation system.



- SCALE supports the elimination of all legislative restrictions on the Dan Patch commuter corridor and the review of transportation opportunities in the corridor.
- No action on this issue this session.

SCALE

A better transportation system.



- SCALE supports additional funding for the suburb-to-suburb bus transit program.
- \$1 million demonstration project grant provided for one more year.

SCALE

A better Minnesota.

- SCALE supports an increase in mental health funding and infrastructure to serve the mentally ill, including an increase in the number of mental health crisis beds.
- \$1.25 million grant provided to Carver County to assist with the opening of a Crisis Intervention Center in Chaska, a partnership with Waconia Ridgeview Hospital.
- Additional funds approved for larger state facilities and mental health grants.
- \$4.8 M for redesigning intensive mental health services for children.



- SCALE supports additional funding for costs associated with foster care and out-of-home placement, including the extra costs for local law enforcement and County Attorneys related to child abuse cases.
- Additional funds for foster care permanency, social services for those 18-21 reentering foster care.

SCALE

A better Minnesota.



- SCALE supports inflationary increases in the K-12 general education formula.
 - 2 percent inflationary increase approved.
 - SCALE supports additional efforts to ensure students are able to read by third grade.
 - \$2.65M was added to the Reading Corp program.
- SCALE supports early childhood education scholarships targeted for at-risk children, as well as funding for parent education and home visitation programs for at-risk families. \$50M in new funds were directed toward a new school readiness plus program and \$20.6M was added to the early learning scholarship program. *Funding for family home visiting start-up and expansion increased by \$12M. The fee for public health nurses increased to \$140 for evidenced-based home visiting.*

SCALE

A better Minnesota.

- SCALE supports updating Minnesota drivers' licenses to meet Homeland Security requirements for identification and travel.
- Federally compliant drivers' licenses were approved and should be available beginning in October 2018.
- SCALE supports additional crisis intervention training funds for law enforcement. \$6M was appropriated from the General Fund for each of the next four years for crisis intervention training.



- SCALE requests the state to address the inadequacies in the MN Eligibility Technology System (METS).
- A proposal to defund METS was stopped, but there was no funding increase approved.

SCALE

A better Minnesota.



- SCALE seeks to retain the current Legacy funding formulas for parks and trails.
- The formula remained unchanged, resulting in \$35.5M for Metro Regional Parks. Scott County will receive about \$1.1 million in the next biennium. The bill also includes language to allow locally elected officials to select their own projects for the funds they receive.

SCALE

Improving water quality, soil stabilization



- SCALE supports BWSR's base budget request so there will be funds available for SWCD's for soil stabilization projects, buffers, water quality, and flood response.
- The Board of Water and Soil Resources received its base funding request of \$22M for the biennium from the Clean Water Legacy Fund.

- SCALE supports a statutory language change that would allow landowners who enroll in *local* conservation programs to preserve their ag classification for property tax purposes. (This is already permitted for state and federal conservation programs.)
- The language was approved with a requirement that the landowner be paid a minimum of \$50 per acre for their participation in the local conservation program and apply to the assessor for continued ag classification.

SCALE

Better governance.



- SCALE supports changing the Metropolitan Council governance model so its members are elected officials in conformance with recommendations from the alliance of local governments.
- Despite strong efforts, no changes were approved.