

GOVERNMENT WITHOUT BORDERS

Working. Smarter. Together.



SCALE

Scott County Association
for Leadership & Efficiency



2019

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

A Brief History

The Scott County Association for Leadership and Efficiency (SCALE) was formed in the spring of 2003 to encourage greater efficiencies and leadership in public service through enhanced communication, collaboration of services, and sharing of resources. Members include elected and appointed officials from the cities, schools, and townships within Scott County, the Shakopee Mdwakanton Sioux Community, and Scott County. (See membership list on back page.)

SCALE members meet monthly to discuss ways in which local governments can continue to maximize the value of taxpayers' money through cooperating in mutual service areas, such as public safety, parks and recreation, transportation, community development, and general government.

The mission of SCALE is to explore new and innovative ways in which government entities can collaborate to provide superior services while making the most of limited resources. Core values include relationships, innovation, influence, partnerships, education and leadership.



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2019 SCALE Legislative Priorities

The Scott County Association for Leadership and Efficiency (SCALE) wants all of its residents to be stable, educated, connected, and contributing to our communities. Through this, SCALE proposes the following Legislative Priorities for 2019. We believe that these changes will help us work smarter together to promote safe, healthy, and livable communities for our residents in efficient and effective ways, providing funding from the appropriate levels of government while new development pays for itself.

SCALE members developed these priorities and chose a top priority in each of six areas: Transportation; Early Literacy; Housing; Workforce Readiness; Health and Safety; and Responsible Government. These proposals support SCALE's Live. Learn. Earn. initiative. The following is our vision for our community, some of the challenges currently being faced, and why we need legislative changes.

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Building A Better Transportation System

Goal: Ensure access to safe, reliable, and affordable transportation options that connect people to jobs, goods, and services.

Challenges:

- Congestion on the regional system – Between 2010 and 2017, the number of congested miles on the major regional highways serving Scott County residents who commute out of the County (169 and 35W) has increased by nine miles; by 2040, all major river crossings serving the County will be congested.
- Lack of transportation options:
 - On evenings/weekends for employees/residents (import low wage earners and export County higher skill sets)
 - Reverse commute options for employers

Scott County remains one of the fastest growing counties in Minnesota. There is a great and intensifying need to invest in transportation infrastructure at the State, regional, and local level. The County, with support from the cities, has implemented a wheelage tax, ½ cent sales tax, and levies over \$5 million for transportation infrastructure every year. In addition, the cities and townships levy for transportation needs. The state needs to keep pace with the regional investments to meet projected growth in our SCALE communities.



Trunk Highway 169 and 41 Grading

The top transportation priority selected by SCALE is:

Support funding for local bridges, local roads, turnback accounts, and state programs such as the Corridors of Commerce or Transportation Economic Development (TED) funds:

- Support the use of the sales tax on auto parts being distributed to the Highway User Trust Fund.
- Continue the current leased motor vehicle sales tax formula that supports Greater Minnesota transit, metro/suburban county highways, local bridges, and the highway trust fund.
- Use the one-time fund balance to complete projects such as updates to TH 169 from Marschall Road to I-494 or the reconstruction of the 35W/494 interchange.



Additional transportation priorities include:

Support street infrastructure fees: In growing areas, it is critical that new development pays for itself. Documented fees for new street infrastructure should be allowed to ensure that development is planned, connected, and pays for itself without distributing these costs to current residents. Additionally, it is important that park dedication, building inspection, and storm sewer fees remain in place.

Support repeal of the 2002 Law that prohibits the study of the Dan Patch Line: Study of this corridor could lead to relief of congestion at existing river crossings or provide recreational uses such as biking or walking in Scott County. It further supports efforts to study the viability of the Dan Patch Line for alternative modes of transportation.

Support continued funding for Suburban Transit needs (e.g., the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority's route 495 between the Marschall Road Transit Station and the Mall of America and other reverse commute routes):

- Revise the formula to allocate additional Regionally Allocated Motor Vehicle Sales Tax (RAMVST) to Suburban Transit providers.

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Enhance Early Learning

Goal: Ensure children are developmentally on track and prepared for educational success.

Challenges: In 2018, for the fifth straight year, more than a third of Scott County 3rd graders were not reading at grade level.

- Future achievement is predictable by grade 3
- High school dropouts and unprepared graduates require additional public services throughout life

In Scott County, we have more than 2000 third graders, and in 2018, only 61.4 percent of them were reading at grade-level. Working backward from that data point, we know that third-grade reading is connected to kindergarten readiness and early childhood experiences. SCALE partners offer many programs that support kindergarten readiness, but these efforts are isolated, which yields limited impact. To ensure all children are ready for kindergarten it is critical that early childhood programs coordinate efforts, share actionable data, and engage families as leaders and partners.

The top early learning legislative priority selected by SCALE is:

Support data sharing between Human Services, Public Health, and Education Departments: If agencies can share actionable data, they can coordinate services and leverage existing programs to improve student outcomes. For example, counties have data that identifies “at-risk” youth prior to their engagement with school districts, and sharing that data would help connect those families with existing programs and resources. Additionally, data sharing across state departments is critical for longitudinal program evaluation.



Additional early learning priorities include:

Expanding access to high-quality child care and education programs by funding flexible, parent-directed scholarships: Early learning scholarships allow eligible families to find and choose quality programs (operating in centers, homes, non-profits, faith communities, and schools) that meet their needs.

Increase access to basic sliding fee child care: Access to child care is critical for families to maintain self-sufficiency, but funding levels have resulted in families being waitlisted. Increased funding and/or simplified wait list priorities would move more families toward economic stability.

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Increase Affordable Housing

Goal: Create housing options that give people in all life stages and of all economic means viable choices for safe, stable, and affordable homes.

Challenges:

- In Scott County, 57 percent of senior renters -- and 29 percent of senior homeowners – pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing
- Since 2000, rental rates have risen 13 percent while renter incomes have fallen by 0.2 percent
- Point-in-time counts show a growing number of homeless households in Scott and Carver Counties
- Aging apartment complexes that have been for senior or workforce housing will age out of the affordability rate, creating a gap in affordable rental units in the County

SCALE supports many of the recommendations from the Governor’s Task Force on Housing. SCALE’s Live. Learn. Earn. Housing Work Group has identified a lack of workforce housing in our communities and is realizing increasing housing costs are making entry level homes unrealistic for young families. SCALE had identified a need for 520 workforce housing units between 2010 and 2020. Since 2013, there have been 353 workforce units built or approved. Though progress has been made, SCALE is still 167 units shy of its ten-year goal.

SCALE’s top legislative priority related to housing is:

Develop tax incentives to keep rental units affordable to low-wage families by using targeted support from local and state governments: Due to the low vacancy rate in the county, it is important to keep existing affordable units affordable. If this is not addressed, we will need to develop many additional units to achieve our workforce housing target.

An additional housing priority includes:

Create tax credits to incentivize the construction of affordable homes in Minnesota communities, including the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for residential developments that encourage workforce housing: In order to meet the suggested inventory for affordable and workforce housing, we will need to continue to find creative and affordable ways to increase housing options in this segment of our housing inventory.



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Enhance Workforce Readiness

Goal: Elevate each person's contribution to the community through a rich variety of local employment opportunities and career pathways.

Challenges:

- Low state and local unemployment rates
- Changing demographics
- Projected job openings by 2020 in Minnesota are expected to reach 500,000
- Three-quarters of those openings will be created by retiring workers
- Lack of post-secondary options locally

Scott County has a long-term vision of 50 percent of its population working within the County with a livable wage job by 2030.

Currently, about 40.6 percent of our residents live and work in Scott County. To ensure that our employers have the talent they need and that we employ all people in our community, SCALE's workforce team is looking at several local public/private partnerships.



SCALE's top legislative priority related to workforce readiness is:

Invest in youth training: Support efforts to invest in Minnesota's critical Pre-K, K-12 and Post-Secondary education programs to prepare youth for competitive employment and life-long learning.

An additional legislative priority for workforce readiness includes:

Ensure continued funding for employment and training funds: There is still a need for worker training and retraining to meet the needs of our employers and residents.



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Improve Health and Safety

Goal: Ensuring the health and safety of our citizens through an array of services that meet the needs of the community.

Challenges:

- One in five Americans lives with a mental disorder (43.8 million); estimates indicate that nearly two-thirds of all people with diagnosable mental illness do not seek treatment. The population in Scott County in 2017 was 145,827; this would mean that 29,164 Scott County citizens may be in need of some form of treatment or support.
- Approximately one in five youth ages 13 – 18 (21.4 percent) experiences a severe mental disorder at some point during their life. For children ages 8 – 15, the estimate is 13 percent.
- The percent of residents who believe mental health is a moderate or major concern has grown from 24 percent in 2011 to 56 percent in 2016 (source: Scott County Residents Survey).
- Restrictions on data sharing challenge public safety and may inhibit the best way to assist individuals with special needs.
- Excess surface water floods homes and public infrastructure.
- Water quality is degraded by invasive species such as carp.
- Adequate parks and trails are needed to provide healthy activities for the public.

SCALE communities provide basic safety and health services every day. Through police and fire or mental health services, there is daily contact with our 145,000 residents. Our local water plans support flood control and water clarity, which impact the health and safety of our residents. Our regional and local parks provide healthy activities for all residents.

SCALE’s top legislative priority related to health and safety is:

Support data privacy sharing between medical, mental health, public safety, education, and child protection: There are several reasons why this is so critical.

- A police officer that is approaching a home situation could potentially be advised if a resident is suffering from mental health issues and also make appropriate connections to the mental health crisis team.
- Police officers must wait for in-custody hospital patients as information, such as anticipated release, cannot currently be shared meaning police officers must wait at the hospital until release – wasting valuable time towards public service.
- If schools and mental health professionals can share data, the coordination of care can be improved for these students.





Cedar Lake paddle boarding

Additional legislative priorities for health and safety include:

Support ongoing funding for mental health programs and infrastructure:

- Support continued or increased funding for mental health services, including School Linked Mental Health with our school districts and intermediate school districts. The Scott County Mental Health Center serves approximately 1,000 students each year across 36 districts across the metro. In addition, they provide day treatment services onsite at Southwest Metro. Despite this presence, waiting lists and need continue to outweigh availability.
- Support increased mental health infrastructure funding that includes mobile crisis, children’s residential, adult mental health initiative funding, and targeted case management. A comprehensive evaluation of mental health funding and how those funding streams impact each other needs to be completed to sustain and enhance existing programs, thus allowing for gaps to be filled in service delivery.

Change the Department of Natural Resources Rules 6260.2400 et al by legislation to allow any licensed commercial fisherman the ability to go into any assigned inland commercial fishing areas and remove invasive common carp: Current rules only allow the commercial fisherman assigned to a particular inland fishing area to do the removals. This change is supported by the MN DNR.

Secure \$200,000 in Flood Hazard Mitigation Funding to help support the Prior Lake/Spring Lake Watershed District’s first flood storage projects.

Support the current formula for dispersing Legacy Parks and Trails funds: This will allow the metro parks to continue their park development and active lifestyle programming. With the vast majority of Minnesota State Parks in Greater Minnesota, this is an equitable distribution, with 40 percent going to Metro Parks, 40 percent to DNR, and 20 percent to Greater Minnesota Regional Parks.



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Providing Responsible Government

SCALE's mission is to forge new and innovative ways in which government entities can collaborate to provide superior services while making the most of limited resources. Being able to provide effective and efficient services is at the core of SCALE.

SCALE's top legislative priority to advance responsible government is:

Support changing the Metropolitan Council governance model: Support members being locally elected officials in conformance with recommendations from the Alliance of Local Governments and the Federal Highway Administration.

Additional legislative priorities for responsible government include:

Create a separate state account for students who become Wards of the State: This would be used to pay educational costs associated with these students. Currently, whichever school district they reside in at the time of the Ward determination becomes responsible for the ongoing educational costs. This is problematic for the Jordan School District, with the County's Juvenile Alternative Facility (JAF) being located in its district.

Allow early voting for 19 days prior to Election Day: This would follow the timeframe in which to pre-register to vote (which ends 20 days before an election), allows voters to have a more expeditious voting experience, and provides cost savings to counties and cities.

Seek more equitable methods to fund schools such that "property poor districts" have access to equitable resources and revenue.

Oppose cap on fees for placement of cell industry equipment on public property: Local governments have a responsibility to maintain public property and keep it safe for the public. Laws that take away governments' ability to recoup costs for permit placements and structural analyses create a public cost that should be borne by the cell industry.



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Some of SCALE's Many Accomplishments

A safer and more efficient transportation system, including a Unified Transit Plan

Improved public safety by providing training for first responders through our SCALE Regional Public Safety Training Facility, joint prosecution services, emergency response unit (SWAT), coordinated crime analyst/analysis, and public safety radio, mobile data computers, and communication

Fiber Optic connectivity

Significant economic growth and development with the assistance of our First Stop Shop and the Unified Economic Development, Land Use, and Transportation Plan

Shared employee training programs and classes

Improved services, reduced costs, and enhanced quality of life for our residents and businesses



www.scaleinfo.org

For more information about SCALE, visit
www.scaleinfo.org

CITIES

Belle Plaine	(952) 873-5553
Elko New Market	(952) 461-2777
Jordan	(952) 492-2535
New Prague	(952) 758-4401
Prior Lake	(952) 447-9800
Savage	(952) 882-2660
Shakopee	(952) 233-9300

TOWNSHIPS

Belle Plaine	(651) 307-0101
Blakeley	(612) 860-0836
Cedar Lake	(612) 308-0871
Credit River	(952) 440-5515
Helena	(952) 758-4505
Jackson	(952) 445-6495
Louisville	(952) 445-8715
New Market	(952) 461-1920
St. Lawrence	(952) 492-3284
Sand Creek	(952) 423-8177
Spring Lake	(952) 492-7030

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Belle Plaine Public ISD #716	(952) 873-2400
Jordan Public School District #717	(952) 492-6200
New Prague Area ISD #721	(952) 758-1700
Prior Lake-Savage ISD #719	(952) 226-0000
Shakopee Public ISD #720	(952) 496-5000
Shakopee Area Catholic Schools	(952) 445-3387
SouthWest Metro Intermediate District	(952) 567-8104

COUNTY ENTITIES

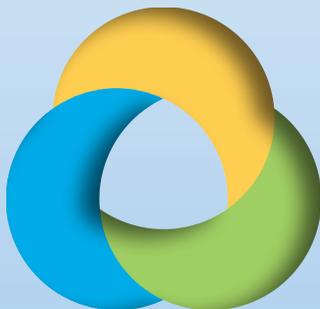
Scott County	(952) 496-8100
Scott County Community Development Agency	(952) 402-9022
Scott County Township Association	(612) 490-6363

TRIBAL COMMUNITY

Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community	(952) 445-8900
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REGIONAL ENTITIES

Metro Cities (AMM)	(651) 215-4000
Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA)	(952) 882-7500
Prior Lake - Spring Watershed District	(952) 440-0067
Scott Soil and Water Conservation District	(952) 492-5425
Three Rivers Park District	(763) 559-9000



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