

Meeting Purpose: In response to the influx of Infrastructure Funding that is coming to Minnesota, the purpose of the meeting is to coordinate efforts for the year so we can be most effective in informing, educating, and influencing folks on MN's infrastructure needs. But more specifically... what audiences are we trying to reach, what are the messages, and who is doing what. MN Legislative Session - January 31 – May 21

Meeting Notes

MN2050 – need to reinvent what MN2050 is doing towards their vision.

GAC – using a two prong approach; understanding what the needs are and having a clear representation of what we are asking for. Educate, inform, increase awareness

ROG – tool to outreach and educate the general public in order to increase advocacy for infrastructure investment in Minnesota.

- Review budgetary needs for MN2050, ROG and Asset Mgmt.
 - Focus on ROG website updates; MN2050 public outreach (and financial partners); GAC (asset mgmt.)

Infrastructure Funding (IIJA)

- Senator Johnson Stewart believes we are in a good position to influence the outcome of the federal funding. We need to collaborate and offer up the knowledge of the needs in the state.
- Today money isn't the problem; it's what to do with it when we have it and how to get it into the right hands for the most need.
- Much of the infrastructure funding that is coming to MN (2/3) is identified for roads/bridges. How do we influence how those \$'s are dispersed?
- What money is identified for water/sewer is for lead service pipe replacement
- Possibly some flexible money available in "reconnecting communities" as it is less defined

MN Needs

- Very much have a lack of knowledge related to the full spectrum of needs across the state.
- PFA has a needs list for water and wastewater, nothing for storm. Road and bridges needs are much further along.

Identified Priorities to Develop Key Messages

- Sustainable, dedicated funding needed for water, wastewater (all Minnesota assets); could use IJA funds for seed money.
- Understanding MN needs (asset management)
- Influencing IJA related to Roads/bridges
- All Minnesotans deserve reliable, safe and affordable systems that maintain their quality of life.

MN2050 focus for 2022

- Focus on re-engaging partners; establish a group that can be active in advocacy and help shape and support the efforts of Raise Our Grade, MN
- Assist in the development of key messages
- Encourage members to be active on ROG, MN Facebook group

Government Affairs focus for 2022

- Assist with the development of key messages
- Carry key messages to the legislature
- Encourage members to be active on ROG, MN Facebook group
- Develop a statewide infrastructure commission - clean, reliable, affordable water and responsible wastewater treatment for ALL people in Minnesota. Work with elected officials (Senator Johnson Stewart) to help redefine the role of the existing Legislative Water Commission
 - Need a sub-committee to identify goals
 - Include AWWA and APWA on these committees
 - Meeting with the existing commission director
 - Senator Johnson Stewart will reach out to the existing Commission to see how to be best effective
 - Joel will connect with his past representative to see if he is interested in being a part of this effort

Raise Our Grade, MN focus for 2022

- Assist in the development of key messages
- Update the website when the new ASCE Report Card is released in April
- Website update to include short case studies identifying the need and reinforcing the key messages

- Encourage members to be active on ROG, MN Facebook group
- Building stories (case studies) of needs across the state. Focusing on water and wastewater and the lack of funding but increasing regulations
 - Use 2022 Capital Requests for basis of short stories
 - Engineers/Elected officials who applied can served as a resource (including Senator Johnson-Stewart)
 - Focus on water, wastewater, storm sewer
 - Attempt to get congressional district equity (if possible)
 - Senator Johnson-Stewart or MMB (budget.finance.mmb@state.mn.us) could supply list of submittals?
 - Typical issues with rural communities (big facilities/expensive needs; no tax base; maintaining health)
 - Sewage Treatment Plants (Albert Lea & Austin)
 - Wilder – failing septic tanks; they need \$4M to build a trunk line to a neighboring community

Next meeting – more detail on infrastructure money distribution; continue planning how to approach existing commission and how we can influence; developing key messages.

UPDATE: Since the last meeting we have met with representatives of the existing water commission and they feel that what needs to happen is a coordinated “one message” across all organizations/associations, basically the MN2050 partner group. The focus needs to be on getting that group united and active.