



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Emily Kent, Exec. Coord.
Office of the Mayor
(715) 421-8216

CITY OF WISCONSIN RAPIDS SEEKS TO ‘RE-VITAL-IZE’ LOCAL HIGHWAYS

Mayor, City Leaders Highlight Local Corridor Conditions, Community Impacts

Wisconsin Rapids – Today, Wisconsin Rapids Mayor Matt Zacher was joined by community leaders and local businesses to spotlight the need to revitalize the city’s aging roadways. The event, part of the statewide “Re-VITAL-ize” initiative, underscored how improved infrastructure is critical to enhancing safety, quality of life, and economic vitality in communities like Wisconsin Rapids.

“Roads are the lifeblood of our community, connecting us to neighboring regions and driving commerce,” said Mayor Zacher. “Our department of public works has done a great job of band-aiding our aging highways, but it’s not a long-term solution.”

Zacher went on to explain the need for a funding fix.

“It has to be sustainable year-to-year, not just one lump sum,” said Zacher.

Zacher was joined by several community leaders and local businesses including Staci Kivi of the Heart of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce, Mark Mueller of Wisconsin Rapids Ford, Domonic Flammini of Ace Hardware, and Meredith Kleker of the Wisconsin Rapids Area Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Kleker highlighted the economic and cultural impact of poor road conditions.

“First impressions matter, especially to tourists,” said Kleker. “They want a welcoming, safe, reliable roadway system that gets them to the fun places they want to see.”

Flammini described the challenges he faces as a local business owner along a busy Hwy 13.

“The intersection we have on the corner is dangerous. There’s accident after accident, and it’s hard to get customers into that entry point.”

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The “Re-VITAL-ize” campaign, led by the League of Wisconsin Municipalities and the Transportation Development Association, aims to raise awareness about the challenges communities face in maintaining roadways.

The recently enacted state transportation budget boosts funding for the State Highway Rehabilitation Program and includes inflationary adjustments for local transportation aids. However, local leaders warn that these steps are insufficient without a sustainable, long-term funding solution. The current funding model pits state and local road improvements against each other and often favors short-term patches over long-lasting solutions.

“While the current budget is a positive step, building upon recent budgets and keeping projects moving for the next two years, we fear that without a long-term fix to funding transportation, the state risks delayed projects and deteriorating infrastructure,” said Toni Herkert, government affairs director for the League of Wisconsin Municipalities.

The Re-VITAL-ize effort will continue throughout Wisconsin in the coming months with similar road tours in communities around the state. You can follow the efforts of “Re-VITAL-ize” on their Facebook page: [Re-VITAL-ize Wisconsin’s Community Highways](#).

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*The **League of Wisconsin Municipalities** advocates for Wisconsin’s cities and villages, large and small, urban and rural, speaking up for common-sense citizen-led government. Learn more at lwm-info.org.*

*Founded in 1971, the **Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin** promotes the vitality and safety of the state’s transportation system, including public transit systems, public-use airports, railroads, commercial ports, and roads. TDA’s members comprise business, labor, units of government, regional planning organizations, as well as individuals. tdawisconsin.org*

***Re-VITAL-ize Wisconsin Community Highways** is a statewide effort calling attention to long-overdue road improvements on state highways that run directly through the heart of Wisconsin’s communities. We aim to build support for a long-term, sustainable plan to support the transportation infrastructure these communities rely on daily.*