

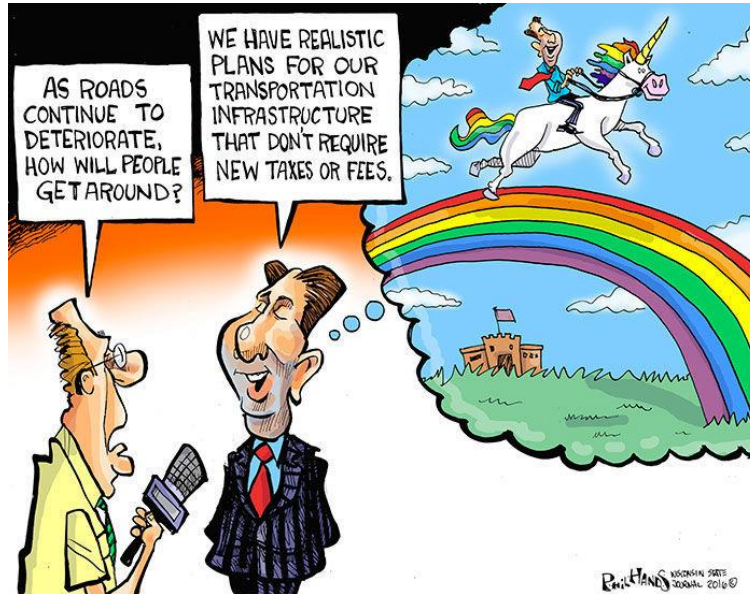
**For Immediate Release**

December 15, 2016

**Contact:** Representative Gordon Hintz

608-266-2254

## Memo: Transportation Costs Ballooning under Republican Inaction



**MADISON-** Last week, the Assembly Committee on Transportation held an informational hearing on the Department of Transportation (DOT)'s 2017-2019 budget request. Despite having had control of the Governor's office and Legislature for three budgets covering six years, Republicans have done nothing to address Wisconsin's transportation funding crisis while Wisconsin's roads and bridges continue to fall into an alarmingly high level of disrepair.

A Legislative Fiscal Bureau memo released today by Rep. Gordon Hintz (D-Oshkosh) shows that the cost of projects delayed by Gov. Walker and Republicans in the 2015-17 budget and under the Department's 2017-19 budget request, based on the construction project inflation costs alone, will be as much as \$147.7 million by the time of the next state budget. In addition to the \$147.7 million in inflationary costs, the Wisconsin DOT verified in the memo that the state will spend an additional \$20 million per year to maintain the deteriorating roads that are supposed to be replaced in southeast Wisconsin while funding is delayed for the Southeast Wisconsin Freeway Megaprojects Program.

**"Budgeting is about investing in priorities. Unfortunately, Governor Walker and Republicans have only shown themselves to be weak and unwilling to responsibly budget for the transportation infrastructure needs of our state,"** said Rep. Hintz. **"Under their 'leadership', the amount of transportation dollars going to pay debt has doubled. However, as this memo shows, those needs don't go away. The costs to future taxpayers is increasingly expensive. Now, in addition to doubling the amount of spending going towards paying off debt, Wisconsinites can look forward to as much as \$167.7 million in project delay costs by 2019-20, which will add to future tax bills as well."**

While projects in southeastern Wisconsin are delayed due to Republican inaction, the cost of maintaining these roads during the delay adds additional costs to the state. Governor Walker's own DOT confirms this self-inflicted cost when quoted in the memo, stating:

*“Significant delays to the expansion projects typically brings throw-away costs for interim treatments to maintain serviceability until reconstruction can occur. Typically, at least 50% of the total expansion project cost offsets rehabilitation that would otherwise need to occur over the life of the corridor in the absence of the expansion project.*

*“In the situation of an ongoing severely constrained southeast Wisconsin freeway megaprojects program, an additional \$200 million in costs will need to be absorbed by SHR over the next 10-years [an average of \$20 million per year] to address critical structure and pavement replacement needs on potential southeast corridors that would otherwise have been absorbed by more timely southeast Wisconsin freeway megaprojects. This trend will get significantly worse in 10-years as this work can't be delayed forever...”*

**“Leadership is about making the big decisions that will impact our state for years to come, not pandering for applause from some right-wing interest group which has no concern for Wisconsin's future. Our state infrastructure – whether it be our universities, state buildings, roads or bridges – is literally falling apart,”** said Rep. Hintz. **“Meanwhile, as projects and repairs are ignored, costs to maintain our infrastructure are steadily increasing. What family or business would ever make decisions this way?”**

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