State Legislative Session Ends – Yesterday the Senate and Assembly worked into the night and adjourned their legislative session early this morning. This update highlights the final status of a few key issues impacting local governments. A more comprehensive report will be issued next week. Thank you to all of our members who actively engaged in NYCOM’s successful advocacy efforts.

Transportation Funding:

Extreme Winter Recovery Program (i.e., pothole aid) – The entire $65 million in funding was restored and will be distributed to cities and villages as it has in recent years. Members of the Senate and Assembly heard our message loud and clear and fought to get this important aid restored. The base amount of CHIPS highway aid remains the same.

Arterial Maintenance Reimbursement – While the Legislature did not provide a long overdue increase in reimbursement funding for the 38 cities that maintain state arterial highways, we are pleased to report that both houses did pass our bill (A. 5990-A/S. 4048-A) to amend the statutory formula to reflect current (instead of 1987) road maintenance costs. NYCOM thanks Senator Tim Kennedy and Assemblywoman Nily Rozic for their stalwart efforts in achieving passage of this bill. We will now work with the sponsors and the Governor’s office to determine an acceptable means of implementing this legislation.

Zombie Properties – The Legislature gave final passage to an important tool in the fight to remove zombie properties from your communities. NYCOM thanks the bill sponsors, Assemblyman Bill Magnarelli and Senator James Skoufis, for their leadership in securing approval of A. 1859-A/S. 5079-A, the Zombie Property Remediation Act of 2019. This bill, if approved by the Governor, would authorize municipalities to compel mortgagees to commence and complete a mortgage foreclosure proceeding or to issue a certificate of discharge of the mortgage for any property which has been certified abandoned.

E-Scooters and E-Bikes – As NYCOM predicted last week, legislation (A. 7431-B/S. 5294-A) has been passed by the Senate and Assembly to authorize electric bicycles and electric scooters under New York law. NYCOM worked closely with the bill sponsors, Assemblywoman Nily Rozic and Senator Jessica Ramos, as well as the chairs of the Assembly and Senate Transportation Committees (Assemblyman Bill Magnarelli and Senator Tim Kennedy, respectively), to include language that ensures municipal control of shared systems of e-scooters or e-bicycles in your city or village. Upon being signed into law by the Governor, the bill’s provisions would go into effect in 180 days.
Proposed Expansion of Prevailing Wage to Publicly Supported Private Projects – NYCOM, our municipal association partners, and a broad coalition of business groups were successful in beating back legislative attempts to expand New York’s expensive prevailing wage system to private construction projects that receive public funds.

Proposed Legalization of Adult-Use Recreational Cannabis – While NYCOM did not take a position for or against legalization of cannabis, we did strongly insist on local control and local revenue if any such system was enacted. Ultimately, the Legislature did not pass legislation creating a state-regulated system for the cultivation and sale of recreational cannabis. Instead, the Senate and Assembly approved A. 8420-A (by Assemblymember Crystal Peoples-Stokes) and S. 6579-A (by Senator Jamaal Bailey), which decriminalizes possession of certain amounts of marijuana and expunges the records of certain prior convictions.

Proposed Interference with the Village Incorporation Process – During the waning days of the legislative session, a number bills were introduced that would have halted the democratic process of village incorporation through various new provisions, including creating a temporary moratorium on such incorporations, broadening the acceptable reasons for a town supervisor to disapprove a petition for village incorporation, allowing for the residents of the entire town to vote on an incorporation, and increasing the minimum population of a new village from 500 to 1,000 residents. NYCOM is pleased to report that none of these proposals passed.