

TRANSPORTATION FOR AMERICA'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

The time has come to elevate the national conversation about infrastructure beyond the breadth and cost of it — we need an examination of exactly which projects we are investing in and why. America's current federal transportation program does not bring us the returns we deserve for the sums we invest. There's far too little accountability for accomplishing anything measurable and tangible with the billions we spend and we urgently need a new way of doing business. To get us there and truly realize the benefits of robust federal transportation infrastructure investments, we need a renewed focus on fixing our existing system first and foremost, on investing new dollars in only the smartest projects, and on creating new mechanisms to measure what we get in return for our money.



PROVIDE REAL FUNDING

We need real federal funding, not just new ways to borrow money or sell off existing assets, to rebuild our transportation systems. Historically, economic development and opportunity have depended on federal investments in transportation that connect communities and allow businesses to bring goods to market. Direct federal investment funded the construction of our highways, bridges, and transit systems, creating economic opportunities. Today, deteriorating transportation infrastructure—the result of years of reduced federal investment—is a roadblock to continued economic growth. Real funding, invested according to the principles outlined here, will rebuild the nation's transportation infrastructure and restore economic opportunity.



FIX THE EXISTING SYSTEM FIRST

We must immediately fix the transportation system we have and fund needed repairs to aging infrastructure. If we have a house with a leaky roof, it's only prudent to fix the roof before building a new addition. Our transportation systems are no different.

Congress should dedicate federal transportation formula dollars to maintenance to make sure the system is returned to a state of good repair, is resilient, and works for all users; before funding new projects that bring years of additional maintenance costs. The application of federal performance measures to both the state and metro area programs would help prioritize needs and ensure that the greatest of them are addressed first.



BUILD SMART NEW PROJECTS

At a time when transportation resources are scarce, it is critical that funds go only to the best new projects. Competition, local control, and objective evaluation can ensure that federal funds flow to the projects that deliver the greatest benefits for taxpayers. When communities are given the opportunity to compete for federal funds, they work harder to put forward projects that maximize return on investment, provide creative solutions, and involve a diverse range of stakeholders. Congress should direct new federal transportation dollars through competitive processes, such as the TIGER and transit Capital Investment Grant programs, which are accessible directly to city, county, regional, and state governments. Merely adding new funding into existing and outdated formula funding programs will not deliver the transformative projects that deliver long-term economic growth.



MEASURE SUCCESS

Investments in transportation are not an end in and of themselves. They are a means to foster economic development and improve all Americans' access to jobs and opportunity. Agencies should be held accountable by evaluating how well their investments help achieve their regions' goals. Newly available data and tools allow agencies to measure—better than ever before—how well transportation networks connect people to jobs and other necessities. The federal government should harness these tools so that state departments of transportation and metropolitan planning organizations can ensure that federally funded investments are effectively connecting people to economic opportunity.



Transportation for America

★ America must invest and innovate
to strengthen our economy, our communities. ★

**Strong local economies are the foundation
of a strong national economy.**

Across the country, business, civic and elected leaders understand that a strong transportation network drives the success of our local economies.

They know local employers need to be able to recruit and retain workers both within and from outside their home communities, and they need efficient ways to get their goods to market. Workers of all incomes need affordable, dependable access to jobs. And our cities, suburbs and towns must be able to attract talent and compete on a global scale.

In communities across the country, local leaders are responding to new economic challenges with innovative plans for their transportation networks. But alone, they lack the resources, and the control over them, to build and maintain the infrastructure their economies demand.

At the same time, transportation funding at all levels of government is shrinking rather than growing, due to slackening gas tax receipts and budget cuts.

This situation threatens America's ability to compete economically. Transportation for America is bringing people together to change it, in Congress and state houses across the nation.

We envision a strong national economy in which federal and state governments team up to invest in infrastructure and innovation in our local communities – the true engines of economic success.

If we invest in creating a strong, modern transportation system for the 21st century, we will be creating prosperous cities, towns and suburbs where businesses thrive and people of all incomes and ages can live healthy and productive lives.

WHO WE ARE



Transportation for America is an alliance of elected, business and civic leaders from communities across the country, united to ensure that states and the federal government step up to invest in smart, homegrown, locally-driven transportation solutions. These are the investments that hold the key to our future economic prosperity. t4america.org [@t4america](https://twitter.com/t4america)