



Construction Industry Round Table

CIRT Legislative News

A force for positive change in the design / construction industry

02/12/2018 - White House Rolls-Out Details of its Infrastructure Initiative

Today, the White House released a more detailed outline of its vision for a renewed Infrastructure plan for the nation. As part of the “roll-out” key Administration officials hosted a conference call with a cross-section of organizations and groups (including CIRT) interested in the policy initiative. CIRT found a great deal to be supportive of, with many of the key points closely in line with the Round Table’s own [Vision Statement](#), particularly with respect to alternative financing, streamlining, and workforce needs. The Administration’s proposal also garnered praise from the well-respected Reasons Foundation, which noted the “nuanced approach is not intended as a massive ‘stimulus’ program, which is not what America needs. What we do need is much better targeting of investment to infrastructure projects that deliver better value for money.” It remains to be seen if the initiative can achieve these goals, but it is clear that much of what is proposed is aimed at changing the status quo, and reaching for new approaches, which will be the focus of A/E/C industry efforts along with CIRT to pass. The White House release on its infrastructure proposal stated in part:

BUILDING A STRONGER AMERICA: PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP’S AMERICAN INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVE

“We will build gleaming new roads, bridges, highways, railways, and waterways all across our land. And we will do it with American heart, and American hands, and American grit.” – President Donald J. Trump

BUILDING AMERICA’S INFRASTRUCTURE: Today, President Donald J. Trump released his legislative goals to rebuild our Nation’s crumbling infrastructure. The six principles include:

- \$200 billion in Federal funds to spur at least \$1.5 trillion in infrastructure investments with partners at the state, local, tribal, and private level
- New investments in rural America, which has been left behind for too long
- Decision-making authority will return to state and local governments
- Regulatory barriers that needlessly get in the way of infrastructure projects will be removed
- Permitting for infrastructure projects will be streamlined and shortened
- America’s workforce will be supported and strengthened

STIMULATE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT: President Trump’s plan will lead to at least \$1.5 trillion in investments to rebuild our failing infrastructure and develop innovative projects.

\$200 billion in Federal funds will spur at least \$1.5 trillion in new infrastructure investments.

Federal infrastructure spending will promote State, local, and private investments and maximize the value of every taxpayer dollar.

Of the \$200 billion, \$100 billion will create an Incentives Program to spur additional dedicated funds from States, localities, and the private sector.

Applications for the Incentives Program will be evaluated on objective criteria, with creating additional infrastructure investment being the largest factor.

The Incentives Program will promote accountability, making Federal funding conditional on projects meeting agreed upon milestones.

\$20 billion will be dedicated to the Transformative Projects Program.

This program will provide Federal aid for bold and innovative projects that have the potential to dramatically improve America's infrastructure.

The program will focus on projects that could have a significant positive impact on States, cities, and localities but may not attract private sector investment because of the project's unique characteristics.

\$20 billion will be allocated to expanding infrastructure financing programs.

Of the \$20 billion, \$14 billion will go to expanding a number of existing credit programs: TIFIA, WIFIA, RRIF, and rural utility lending.

\$6 billion will go to expanding Private Activity Bonds.

\$10 billion will go to a new Federal Capital Revolving Fund, which will reduce inefficient leasing of Federal real property which would be more cost-effective to purchase.

A new fund will allow some incremental revenues from energy development on public lands to pay for the capital and maintenance needs of public lands infrastructure.

INVEST IN RURAL AMERICA: Rural America's infrastructure has been left behind for too long, and President Trump's plan will make sure it is supported and modernized.

\$50 billion of the \$200 billion in direct Federal funding will be devoted to a new Rural Infrastructure Program to rebuild and modernize infrastructure in rural America.

The bulk of the dollars in the Rural Infrastructure Program will be allocated to State governors, giving States the flexibility to prioritize their communities' needs.

The remaining funds will be distributed through rural performance grants to encourage the best use of taxpayer dollars.

INCREASE STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITY: President Trump's proposal will return decision-making authority to State and local governments, which know the needs of their communities.

Funds awarded to State and local authorities, such as through the Incentives Program and the Rural Infrastructure Program, will be allocated to infrastructure projects they prioritize.

This empowers States and localities to make more infrastructure investment decisions and prioritize projects based on the needs of their communities.

The plan will expand processes that allow environmental review and permitting decisions to be delegated to States.

The plan will also allow Federal agencies to divest assets that can be better managed by State or local governments or the private sector.

ELIMINATE REGULATORY BARRIERS: The President's plan would eliminate barriers that prevent virtually all infrastructure projects from being efficiently developed and managed.

The President's plan will:

- Provide more flexibility to transportation projects that have minimal Federal funding but are currently required to seek Federal review and approval.
- Incentivize the efficient development and management of water infrastructure, in part, by providing more flexibility to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its partners.
- Give the Department of Veterans Affairs the flexibility to use its existing assets to acquire new facilities by allowing it to retain property sale proceeds and exchange existing facilities for construction of new facilities.
- Expand funding eligibility for land revitalization projects through the Superfund program and establish tools to help manage their legal and financial matters.

STREAMLINE PERMITTING: President Trump's infrastructure proposal will shorten and simplify the approval process for infrastructure projects.

Working with Congress, we will:

- Establish a "one agency, one decision" structure for environmental reviews.
- Shorten the lengthy environmental review process to two years while still protecting the environment.
- Eliminate certain redundant and inefficient provisions in environmental laws.
- Create two new pilot programs to test new ways to improve the environmental review process.

INVEST IN OUR COUNTRY'S MOST IMPORTANT ASSET – ITS PEOPLE: The President is proposing reforms so Americans secure good-paying jobs and meet the needs of our industries.

The President's plan would reform Federal education and workforce development programs to better prepare Americans to perform the in-demand jobs of today and the future.

This includes:

- Making high-quality, short-term programs that provide students with a certification or credential in an in-demand field eligible for Pell Grants.
- Reforming the Perkins Career and Technical Education Program to ensure more students have access to high-quality technical education to develop the skills required in today's economy.
- Better targeting Federal Work-Study funds to help more students obtain important workplace experience, including through apprenticeships.

If you have any questions about CIRT's position, please contact Mark Casso, Esq., NAC, President of the Construction Industry Round Table (CIRT).