



Restore Pennsylvania: Transportation Capital Projects

A safe and reliable transportation network is essential for Pennsylvania residents, businesses, and visitors, and improving and maintaining our extensive multimodal system requires stable, sufficient funding. Increased options for reliable modes of transportation bolsters opportunities for employment, secures access and quality of life for people of all ages, travel modes, and abilities, and expands options to explore Pennsylvania’s tourism destinations, all of which will garner economic growth for every industry, community, and Pennsylvania resident.

Restore Pennsylvania will accelerate the progress of projects to resurface, repave and repair “four-digit” rural roads and provide technical assistance and funding for dirt and gravel roads. It will also support new capital transit projects throughout the commonwealth.

Infrastructure Challenge Being Addressed

With more than 120,000 miles of state and local highways, Pennsylvania has one of the largest transportation networks in the country. Maintaining this sprawling network requires continuous investment. The needs are particularly pressing for “four digit” state-maintained secondary, low-volume routes, many of which have not received attention for too long.

Pennsylvania has roughly as many state-maintained road miles as New England, New York, and New Jersey combined, and keeping our large system in good repair requires continued investment. The American Society of Engineers’ 2018 “infrastructure report card” gives Pennsylvania a D+ rating for the quality of its roads and bridges, and a D for its transit.

In addition, Pennsylvania has more than 25,000 miles of unpaved roads, about 17,500 of which are owned by local municipalities and provide access for the state’s agriculture, mining, forestry, and tourism industries as well as more than 3.6 million residents. Maintenance needs for these roads have been exacerbated by heavy rain throughout 2018. Weight restricting or closing bridges decimates commerce and quality of life. Detours make transporting goods to market costlier and risk dire consequences by causing delays in emergency service responses. Twenty-eight percent of locally owned bridges are in poor condition. Local bridge replacement costs range from \$1 million to \$3 million.

After spring and summer storms caused more than \$125 million of damage from flooding and landslides on state roadways last year, most of the money for rural and commercial roadway improvements had to be repurposed for emergency repairs. Conservation districts across the state that administer Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road Programs also face increased need from the unprecedented rainfall.

Additionally, transit systems of all sizes are struggling to upgrade to meet the shifting needs of residents, commuters, and visitors. In some instances, transit systems built decades ago have not kept pace with growing populations. Rural transit systems have difficulty funding needs ranging from new bus shelters to maintenance facilities for vehicles through farebox revenues. In many communities, high priority expansion projects have been studied extensively and are awaiting funding to move forward. In many others, applications for infrastructure upgrades are waiting for funding to become available.

Detailed Description of Proposed Funding Usage

1. Local road and bridge updates and repairs, increased bike and pedestrian access

Restore Pennsylvania will provide funding to the Multimodal Transportation Fund for a competitive grant program that will fund the construction, reconstruction, or maintenance of roads and bridges owned or maintained by a county, municipality, person, association or corporation, other than highways or bridges owned, controlled or maintained by the Department of Transportation or any tolling authority. Funding through Restore Pennsylvania will also be used to increase bike and pedestrian paths and access.

2. Maintenance of secondary routes/four-digit roads

A program will be created within the Department of Transportation to fund the maintenance of secondary routes in rural counties, which are defined as counties with a population not exceeding 150,000.

3. Dirt, gravel and low-volume road maintenance

Restore Pennsylvania will provide additional funding to Pennsylvania's Dirt Gravel, and Low Volume Road Maintenance Program. This program provides funding to eliminate stream pollution caused by runoff and sediment from the commonwealth's comprehensive network of unpaved and low volume public roads and creates a more environmentally and economically sustainable low volume road network through education, outreach, and project funding.

Funding will be directed to the State Conservation Commission, which allocates money annually to the 65 of Pennsylvania conservation districts responsible for administering the program at the county level. A portion of the program's funding is directed towards paved or sealed low volume roads with 500 vehicles per day or less. The program's goal is to implement Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance Practices aimed at reducing the environmental impacts of public roads, while reducing long-term maintenance costs. Both rural and urban areas benefit from the paved low volume road program. Many counties have incorporated program funding and goals into broader management plans concerning Municipal Separate Sewer Systems (MS4) and Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs).

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Bureau of Forestry also administers a portion of this program and receives increased funding through Restore Pennsylvania. The Bureau of Forestry funds projects on State Forest roads throughout Pennsylvania.

4. Assistance for Programs of Statewide Significance

Restore Pennsylvania will provide funding to the Public Transportation Trust Fund for the purpose of providing financial assistance for Programs of Statewide Significance. Projects meeting the following criteria would be eligible for funding:

- Project leverages federal and/or local funding.
- Project operating funds have been identified and local commitment to ongoing local match responsibilities as outlined in the public transportation law has been identified and documented.

- Project focuses on achieving a state of good repair for existing assets, safety enhancement in line with federal requirements for safety improvement included in the FAST Act, American with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements that improve transit access for people with disabilities.
- If current assets are deemed to be in a state of good repair, then expansion and demonstration projects/service may be considered that meet requirements established for demonstration projects in Section 1516 (e) of the Public Transportation Law.

Examples of eligible applicants may include local transportation organizations, transportation companies, or agency or entity of the Commonwealth.