

On Monday, the White House released the much-anticipated \$1.5 trillion [Infrastructure Plan](#) which includes \$200 billion in federal funding over 10 years. The release of the Plan ended months of speculation on what would be included, what funding levels the Administration would call for, and what percentage of that funding would be federal. The 55-page document outlined a **“roadmap for the Congress to draft and pass the most comprehensive infrastructure bill in our Nation’s history,”** according to the White House release, and includes a series of grants and loans to improve America’s aging infrastructure.

Infrastructure Plan Summary

The Plan comprises several key areas:

- **Infrastructure Incentives Program** “. . . would encourage increased State, local, and private investment in infrastructure. This program would provide for targeted Federal investments, encourage innovation, streamline project delivery, and help transform the way infrastructure is designed, built, and maintained.”

Federal funding for this Program is cited as **\$100 billion** in the form of grants for “surface transportation and airports, passenger rail, ports and waterways, flood control, water supply, hydropower, water resources, drinking water facilities, wastewater facilities, stormwater facilities, and Brownfield and Superfund sites.”

- **Rural Infrastructure Program** “. . . would provide for significant investment in rural infrastructure to address long-unmet needs. This investment is needed to spur prosperous rural economies, facilitate freight movement, improve access to reliable and affordable transportation options, and enhance health and safety for residents and businesses. Under this program, States would be incentivized to partner with local and private investments for completion and operation of rural infrastructure projects.”

The Rural Infrastructure Program is allotted **\$50 billion** in federal dollars, 80 percent of which would go to governors’ offices and 20 percent would be reserved for rural performance block grants. Eligible projects would include:

- Transportation: roads, bridges, public transit, rail, airports, and maritime and inland waterway ports;
- Broadband (and other high-speed data and communication conduits);
- Water and Waste: drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, land revitalization and Brownfields;
- Power and Electric: governmental generation, transmission and distribution facilities; and
- Water Resources: flood risk management, water supply, and waterways.

In respect to distribution of funds, the **Plan calls for the creation of a “rural formula,”** calculation based on rural lane miles and rural population adjusted to reflect policy objectives.

- **Transformative Projects Program** “. . . would provide Federal funding and technical assistance for bold, innovative, and transformative infrastructure projects that could dramatically improve infrastructure. Funding under this program would be awarded on a competitive basis to projects that are likely to be commercially viable, but that possess unique technical and risk characteristics that otherwise deter private sector **investment.**” **The Plan states that applicants would aim to include “ambitious, exploratory, and ground-breaking project ideas that have significantly more risk than standard infrastructure projects, but offer a much larger reward profile.”** The infrastructure sectors covered by this program could include transportation, clean water, drinking water, energy, commercial space, broadband sectors, and others.

Federal funding for the Transformative Projects Program would be set at **\$20 billion.**

- **Infrastructure Financing Programs** “. . . would dedicate **\$20 billion** of the overall amount to advance major, complex infrastructure projects by increasing the capacity of existing Federal credit programs to fund investments and by broadening the use of **Private Activity Bonds (PABs).**” **These programs include \$14 billion** for increasing the capacity of existing federal lending programs and \$6 billion for the expansion of PABs.
- **Other Details of the Plan :**
The Plan allows for the remaining **\$10 billion** in federal investment to go toward a Federal Capital Revolving Fund which would serve to finance purchases of federally owned civilian real property. Additionally, the Plan seeks to reduce permitting burdens on a large scale by creating greater efficiencies and eliminating redundancies in a number of current processes. Lastly, the Plan places a focus on workforce development by expanding access to education and workforce development programs (such as Pell grant eligibility), reforming career and technical education, strengthening ties to the workforce for college students (specifically through reforms to the Federal Work Study program), and reforming licensing requirements for individuals seeking a job on an infrastructure project.

Federal Funding Breakdown

Infrastructure Incentive Grants	\$100 billion
Rural Formula Funds	\$50 billion
Transformative Project Fund	\$20 billion
Infrastructure Financing Programs	\$20 billion
Federal Credit Programs (\$14 billion)	
Private Activity Bonds (\$6 billion)	
Federal Capital Revolving Fund	\$10 billion
Total	\$200 billion

Response from Congress

The Trump Administration's Plan is facing both praise and criticism among members in Congress. While House Republicans like Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Greg Walden (R-OR) and Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Communications and Technology Chairman Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) are **praising the President's commitment to improving national infrastructure**¹, other Republicans have expressed concern over the high price tag the Plan carries. Democrats have stated that the Plan will be largely ineffective since so little of the funding will actually come from federal dollars. Congressional broadband advocates on both sides of the aisle have expressed concern that no dedicated carve-out exists for broadband in the Plan.

The White House has asked Congress to **“act soon on an infrastructure bill that will: stimulate at least \$1.5 trillion in new investment over the next 10 years, shorten the process for approving projects to 2 years or less, address unmet rural infrastructure needs, empower State and local authorities, and train the American workforce of the future.”** Given the variety of responses to the Plan, Connected Nation will continue to track forthcoming infrastructure legislation and conversations as we keep a close eye on opportunities for ubiquitous broadband access for Americans.

For more information about broadband policy developments please contact Connected Nation at policy@connectednation.org, and [Subscribe via RSS to Connected Nation's Policy Briefs](#).

¹ <https://energycommerce.house.gov/news/press-release/ec-leaders-statement-president-trumps-infrastructure-plan/>