

# Hold agencies accountable to the taxpayer



How are we deciding to spend billions of dollars, and what are we getting out of it? While the [latest American Society of Civil Engineers Infrastructure Scorecard](#) praised the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and raised their grade for the nation's road infrastructure from a D to a D+, the report had to rely on data that was only as recent as 2022, the first fiscal year of Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) implementation, before the actual impact could be measured.

Post-pandemic, basic data on the transportation system has been slow to roll out, with delayed fatalities data and missing road conditions data. Congress needs to be able to make informed decisions, and increased accountability from states would help ensure a return on the nation's investments in infrastructure.

## Policies to improve the state of the system

- 1. Set a national goal for conditions and performance that the federal program must achieve.** Major increases in funding over time have led to marginal improvements in asset conditions and the overall state of good repair. To improve the transportation system, we need well-defined priorities for the program. Whether it's well-maintained bridges and eliminating pavement in poor condition in the National Highway System or job access parity between cars and transit, the federal government will never go anywhere if it does not set goals for where we need to go.
- 2. Connect investments with priorities.** Some states and MPOs have taken the lead in incorporating processes that align priorities from their long range plans with their State and Regional Transportation Improvement Programs. Congress should build on these methods to ensure that federal investments align with federal priorities.
  - Rework the FHWA's Transportation Performance Management System to be more accountable, transparent, and useful to connect project investments to target achievement.
  - If states are failing to hit safety and repair targets, redirect federal dollars to these purposes.
  - Incentivize performance by enabling bonus formula funding for states that make significant progress toward ambitious safety and repair targets.

3. **Connect projects to national priorities and make investment data easily accessible to the public.** Federally funded investments should be accessible and transparent, not require constituents to spend excessive time just to understand whether their priorities are being ignored.
- USDOT should set standards for [STIPs and TIPs](#) that include a clear and understandable description of each project programmed for funding, providing accessible information to the general public, including how it will help the state meet one or more of its priority goals.
  - States and MPOs should be required to develop and apply transparent project selection criteria for the programming of federal transportation investments that align with federal goals, with clear justifications for how each project in the STIP/TIP aligns with federal targets.
  - STIPs and TIPs should be hosted on FHWA and FTA's websites in informative, accessible, tabular formats.

For questions or more information, please contact our policy team at [info@smartgrowthamerica.org](mailto:info@smartgrowthamerica.org)



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