

POLICY AGENDA

The New York Building Congress is a non-partisan public policy coalition of more than 400 business, labor, professional and governmental organizations serving the design, construction, and real estate industry. The Building Congress supports public policies that promote infrastructure investment, smart planning and development, and improved project management practices

NEW YORK STATE PRIORITIES

ENACT A RESPONSIBLE, FULLY FUNDED TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM FOR NEW YORK..

A well-functioning statewide transportation network is essential for safety, mobility, and economic growth. The 2015–2019 MTA capital program faces a \$15 billion shortfall. The New York State Department of Transportation 2015–2019 capital budget has not been announced but will exceed existing funding sources.

New revenues requiring legislative approval will be needed to fund both programs. The Building Congress encourages consideration of the following funding sources, which illustrate options available to legislators:

- Dedicate the \$5 billion in bank settlement funds.
- Add a uniform toll on vehicles entering the Manhattan central business district, which raises \$1.5 in new revenues.
- Increase the Petroleum Business Tax from 18 cents to 36 cents.
- Remove the artificial cap on the gasoline sales tax, which leaves hundreds of millions of dollars of gasoline untaxed whenever the price of gas exceeds \$2. The State could collect an additional \$385 million for gasoline priced at an average of \$3.79 per gallon.
- Increase the MTA region sales tax surcharge by one-quarter of one percent (or 1 penny for every \$400) would generate an additional \$549 million per year for the MTA.
- Reinstating the Commuter Tax, which could bring in \$775 million annually.

PASS THE EMERGENCY RESPONDER ACT.

State legislation indemnifying members of the building industry when it responds to a declared emergency is a matter of public safety. A strong liability protection law will allow the industry to respond decisively during catastrophic events such as Superstorm Sandy or 9/11.

RENEW DESIGN-BUILD LEGISLATION.

For three years, the State was authorized to use the design-build project delivery method, speeding projects to completion and saving millions of dollars. Authorizing legislation expired at the end of 2014, leaving key State agencies with only one way to procure construction services. Design-build, used to rapidly advance major projects such as the Tappan-Zee replacement bridge, must be reauthorized to allow similar projects of State importance to proceed.

AUTHORIZE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.

Several important State infrastructure projects are only achievable when a private builder is assigned broader responsibility for design, construction and upkeep, in order to speed delivery and offer government more cost certainty. While the State has used public private partnerships on a very limited basis, legislation authorizing their broader use has not advanced.

ACT ON THE PORT AUTHORITY'S AIRPORTS AGENDA.

The Port Authority recently delayed selection of a team to construct the LaGuardia Airport Central Terminal Building while preparing a master planning strategy for all of its airport assets. Both actions must move forward in 2015 to ensure the airports are able to support the extraordinary growth in regional air travel and its vital economic impacts.

IMPROVE THE PENN AND MOYNIHAN STATION TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR.

Four major projects located around Penn Station are critical to the City's future: completion of a new Moynihan Station; implementation of the Amtrak Gateway project; west side access for Metro North trains; and improving conditions at Penn Station. A local, state and federal interagency initiative is essential to advance these objectives, particularly in light of the explosive growth on Manhattan's Far West Side and Amtrak's assessment that it will eventually have to close the region's only other cross-Hudson commuter rail tunnel for repairs.

SECURE THE STATE'S FAIR SHARE OF FEDERAL FUNDING.

Legislation to provide long-term federal funding for New York's transportation systems has been repeatedly delayed, and the Highway Trust Fund, which supports federal investment, is structurally insolvent. It is essential that State and local leaders urge New York's congressional delegation to lobby for a well-funded, multiyear transportation bill that provides full support to the MTA, and State and City transportation agencies.

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NEW YORK CITY PRIORITIES

ENSURE ADEQUATE FUNDING AND SPENDING ON THE NEW YORK CITY CAPITAL PROGRAM.

The de Blasio Administration's current capital budget funds roads, bridges, schools, parks and environmental facilities at levels close to recent historic highs. The Building Congress will look closely at the Administration's February and May budgets to determine actual spending patterns at key City agencies and look at its first Ten Year Capital Plan to ensure key priority areas are being addressed.

INCREASE SUPPORT FOR THE MTA CAPITAL PROGRAM.

The Independent Budget Office recently reported that the City's contribution to the MTA capital program has shrunk in both nominal and adjusted terms. If the City's contributions had kept up with inflation, it would be contributing \$350 million a year. Instead, it provides just \$100 million, even less in nominal terms than it did in the 1980s. The City must contribute more to maintain the system that allows it to function.

ADVANCE THE EAST MIDTOWN REZONING PROPOSAL.

The City must advance an East Midtown rezoning plan, which will permit responsible renewal of New York City's premier office district, and facilitate infrastructure investment, job growth and expansion of the City's tax base. The rezoning should enter the public approvals process by 2015, and should embody common sense principles that maximize usable FAR.

CREATE A PROCESS FOR WORKING WITH THE BUILDING INDUSTRY DURING AN EMERGENCY.

The NYBC Task Force on New York City Storm Preparedness advocated a more efficient process for emergency construction procurement. Since Superstorm Sandy, no such policy has been developed. The Building Congress will advocate establishment of emergency procurement measures missing from recently passed emergency response laws.

IMPROVE PROJECT DELIVERY.

The City is working to improve capital project delivery. The Building Congress has highlighted key areas for improvement and will monitor progress:

- Eliminate burdensome procurement practices to speed mobilization and reduce City costs.
- With State authorization, implement design-build project delivery.
- Improve internal agency project management.
- Improve M/WBE programs to increase participation.

ENGAGE IN THE EFFORT TO IMPROVE THE PENN AND MOYNIHAN STATION TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR.

The City has acknowledged the importance of a new trans-Hudson commuter rail connection and improved rail access to Manhattan's West Side. The Building Congress will encourage the City to act on four key infrastructure projects in this critical transit corridor, including a new Moynihan Station, the Amtrak Gateway project, West Side Access for Metro North trains, and an improved Penn Station. These projects will require funding, zoning, and infrastructure assistance from the City.