



The plan “reflects our commitment to the safety, prosperity, and security of the American people,” Trump said.

# Plan’s tilt to local funds is a poor fit for LI, experts say

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President Donald Trump’s long-awaited infrastructure plan will do little to address Long Island’s road, bridge and transportation needs, in part because it relies on already-stretched local governments to kick in substantially more money for projects than they do already, experts said Monday.

The 53-page document released Monday by the White House proposes to leverage \$200 billion in federal spending over the next decade to generate up to \$1.5 trillion in infrastructure improvements, largely by counting on local governments to invest more and partner with private developers on projects.

The proposal would essentially reverse the current formula of having the federal government pay the lion’s share of an infrastructure project, with local governments kicking in smaller matching contributions.

“The good news is this White House is addressing a failing national infrastructure,” said Kyle Strober, executive director of the Association for a Better Long Island, a Long Island advocacy group. “The bad news is no Long Island government entity is even remotely capable of providing the 80 percent local cost share needed to repair a road, fix a bridge or build a sewer.”

Marc Herbst, executive director of the Long Island Contractors’ Association, a construction trade group, said Trump’s proposal to streamline the federal permitting process for projects so that it doesn’t take more than two years is “a big difference” for some long-discussed projects, such as the reconstruction of the Sunrise Highway/Montauk Highway merge in Oakdale.

“Some of those projects are on the drawing board for 10, 20 years. That’s ridiculous,” Herbst said.

Rep. Tom Suozzi (D-Glen Cove) similarly applauded the “effort to reduce bureaucracy and expedite construction” but expressed concern that the plan “does not deliver enough to Long Island and Queens,” including in the form of sewer, water

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and transportation projects.

“The president’s proposal to fix our nation’s crumbling infrastructure comes with great potential for our island,” said Rep. Lee Zeldin (R-Shirley). “Nowhere is this more important than on Long Island where repairing aging bridges, roads, water systems and public transit is essential for our local economy, environment and quality of life.”

While experts agreed that there is a place for public-private partnerships in forwarding some local infrastructure efforts, they said that the model would not work for many projects that have traditionally relied heavily on federal funding, such as LIRR station rehabilitations.

“The public person — the MTA — is not asking to get paid back. But the private person is not putting in money without getting a return,” said Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board member Mitchell Pally, of Stony Brook, who pointed to the Hudson Yards development project — built over the commercially valuable Long Island Rail Road’s West Side Yards property — as a good fit for private investment. “I’m not sure it fits Hicksville.”

Trump’s public-private push could bode well for one potential megaproject on Long Island, experts said. Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo’s proposed Long Island Sound tunnel or bridge could cost more than \$55 billion and would probably rely heavily on private backers, who would get their money back through tolls.

## infrastructure plan offered

federal money to leverage more than \$1 trillion in local and state taxes to fix America’s infrastructure, such as roads, highways, ports and airports. The administration released a 55-page “legislative outline” for lawmakers who will write the legislation.

With the plan heavily dependent on state and local dollars, Democrats warned it would raise tolls on commuters, sell off government-owned infrastructure to Wall Street and eliminate critical environmental protections.

The proposal lists Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport and Dulles International Airport as examples of assets that could be sold. Sen. Lamar

Alexander (R-Tenn.) warned that the proposal included studying whether the Tennessee Valley Authority, the nation’s largest public utility, should sell its transmission assets. He called it “a loony idea” with “zero chance of becoming law.”

The proposal features an injection of funding for new investments and speedier repairs of crumbling roads and airports. It also offers a streamlined permitting process that would reduce the wait time to get projects underway. Officials said the \$200 billion in federal support would come from cuts to existing programs.

Half the money would go to grants for transportation,

water, flood control, cleanup at some of the country’s most polluted sites and other projects.

States, local governments and other sponsors could use the grants, which administration officials cast as incentives, to cover no more than 20 percent of the costs. Transit agencies generally count on the federal government for half the cost of construction projects, and federal dollars can make up as much as 80 percent of some highway projects.

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