

# CLOSING OUT

THE KEY TO POST-COVID-19 REGIONAL SUCCESS IS FEDERAL INVESTMENT  
IN TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

BY DARRIN KELLY AND MATT SMITH

Business and labor leaders stand together to urge movement in Washington on a robust transportation and infrastructure package to help create jobs, enhance commerce and build up our region's infrastructure. The key to our region's recovery is a strong infrastructure and transportation system. They are the lifeline connecting critical resources – human and capital – and essential services.

With unemployment in the U.S. remaining at previously unimaginable levels and every country competing to demonstrate their superior ability to succeed in this new reality, investment in infrastructure — including public transit and all multimodal aspects — is essential to get our people back to work and more efficiently move our goods and services.

Many studies have noted the dire state of our nation's infrastructure. For example, the American Society of Civil Engineers gave the nation's infrastructure a D+ in its latest Infrastructure Report Card. Pennsylvania took a big step forward with Act 89 in 2013, but our infrastructure remains funded below the level that is adequate to just support existing capacity.

The cost of inaction far outweighs the cost of action. Immediate federal action on infrastructure in Washington will create jobs, improve our quality of life and add to our region's ability to be globally competitive. The Pittsburgh region is a perfect example of the importance of this investment.

An example of some of the innovative work we are doing in our region is the Pittsburgh International Airport. Our Terminal Modernization Program could be a model for a post-pandemic world of air travel.

Our region's inland waterways system, including the network of locks and dams, is vital for both our economy and quality of life. Locks and dams are vital for navigation, recreation, flood control and drinking water. Funding for this infrastructure is critical to our future.

Given the drastic drop in revenue since the beginning of the pandemic, federal policymakers need to prioritize funding for public transit. These transit systems link individuals, small businesses, and nonprofits and merit support to make it through the emergency and emerge better than before.

We need robust, smart and future-focused support to unlock our potential for transformative and innovative projects that can propel our region forward. We have the potential to be a global leader in new modes of transportation and the systems that will allow smart city technology to be deployed to make the flow of commerce more efficient.

The business and labor communities appreciate the scale of the investment required and unprecedented times require unprecedented solutions. The best path to create jobs and economic development, make our nation and region more globally competitive, and emerge better than before the pandemic, is to make generational investments in infrastructure and transportation. Our elected leaders in Washington must fund our nation's infrastructure.

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