NFHS Policy Debate Topic Paper

United States Infrastructure Policy

Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase development of domestic infrastructure.

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Introduction and Topic Significance

Over the last ten years, there have been a series of significant public infrastructure collapses, suggesting the nation's once world-class infrastructure may be entering a period of steep decline.

> Erik Sofge. "Rebuilding America Special Report: How to Fix U.S. Infrastructure." Popular Mechanics. April 9, 2008. Associate Editor of Popular Mechanics. Accessed Online: http://www.popularmechanics.com/technology/engineering/rebuilding-america/4258053
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> To many Americans, the I-35W disaster wasn't an isolated tragedy, but the latest in a barrage of infrastructure failures—from the northeastern blackout in 2003 and the breached New Orleans levees in 2005 to falling concrete in Boston's Big Dig in 2006. Perhaps the nation had passed a tipping point and was entering a period of steep physical decline.

Despite these incidents, there has not been a significant effort to improve the nation's infrastructure. Even funding included for transportation improvements in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) does not begin to address the nation's crumbling infrastructure.

> Larry Kohle. "Incoming APWA president: Infrastructure needs funding" American City and County. September 1, 2009. President, American Public Works Association. Accessed Online: http://americancityandcounty.com/pubwks/larry-koehle-apwa-president-infrastructure-funding-200909/
>
> There's no question that the economic downturn has had a noticeable effect on public works agencies, and [ARRA] is a step in the right direction in creating jobs. But, it really isn't the solution for the lack of investment in infrastructure. The work that's being done from the funds that are being provided is all needed, of course, and they do provide some investment in infrastructure, but the funding is still lacking at the local level, especially on transportation and water, wastewater and environmental programs.
>
> Nearly three-quarters of the funding has gone to short-term, road paving projects rather than long-term work, like repairing our bridges and building new highways. There isn't adequate commitment to long-term funding for the significant shortfall that we see right now in infrastructure spending. So, although we appreciate the stimulus funding, and we're making every effort to use that funding to do shovel-ready projects, there are significant needs still out there that are being underfunded.

Recently, President Obama called on Congress to improve the country's infrastructure in his 2011 State of the Union Address. He stated,

> The third step in winning the future is rebuilding America. To attract new businesses to our shores, we need the fastest, most reliable ways to move people, goods, and information -- from high-speed rail to high-speed Internet.
>
> Our infrastructure used to be the best, but our lead has slipped. South Korean homes now have greater Internet access than we do. Countries in Europe and Russia invest more in their roads and railways than we do. China is building faster trains and newer airports. Meanwhile, when our own engineers graded our nation's infrastructure, they gave us a "D."
>
> We have to do better. America is the nation that built the transcontinental railroad, brought electricity to rural communities, constructed the Interstate Highway System. The jobs created by these projects didn't just come from laying down track or pavement. They came from businesses that opened near a town's new train station or the new off-ramp.

> So over the last two years, we've begun rebuilding for the 21st century, a project that has meant thousands of good jobs for the hard-hit construction industry. And tonight, I'm proposing that we redouble those efforts.
>
> We'll put more Americans to work repairing crumbling roads and bridges. We'll make sure this is fully paid for, attract private investment, and pick projects based [on] what's best for the economy, not politicians.
>
> Within 25 years, our goal is to give 80 percent of Americans access to high-speed rail. This could allow you to go places in half the time it takes to travel by car. For some trips, it will be faster than flying –- without the pat-down. As we speak, routes in California and the Midwest are already underway.
>
> Within the next five years, we'll make it possible for businesses to deploy the next generation of high-speed wireless coverage to 98 percent of all Americans. This isn't just about faster Internet or fewer dropped calls. It's about connecting every part of America to the digital age. It's about a rural community in Iowa or Alabama where farmers and small business owners will be able to sell their products all over the world. It's about a firefighter who can download the design of a burning building onto a handheld device; a student who can take classes with a digital textbook; or a patient who can have face-to-face video chats with her doctor.

Despite, President Obama's call for infrastructure improvements, it is doubtful that the federal government will make significant progress in the near future. The amount of spending necessary to bring the condition of the United States' infrastructure into good condition is drastic. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, approximately $1.1 trillion must be invested over the next five years to significantly improve the nation's infrastructure[1]. Additionally, given the status of the nation's economy, finding new resources for capital improvements will be difficult[2]. Further compounding matters, President Obama faces a difficult political environment, with Republicans controlling the House of Representatives and focusing on reducing domestic spending.

Adding additional interest to the topic, President Obama may feature infrastructure improvements as a central theme of his re-election campaign. If this were to occur, debaters would be afforded a unique opportunity to discuss the topic at the same time the electorate considers these capital improvements.

If substantial investments are not made into our public infrastructure, the future consequences are wide-ranging and significant.

> American Society of Civil Engineers. "2009 Report Card of America's Infrastructure." Accessed Online: http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/sites/default/files/RC2009_full_report.pdf
>
> Infrastructure has a direct impact on our personal and economic health, and the infrastructure crisis is endangering our nation's future prosperity. For the safety and security of our families, we can no longer afford to ignore the congested roads, aging dams, broken water mains, and deficient bridges we face every day. As a society, we must become better stewards of the environment through the use of sustainable infrastructure practices. The quality of life for this and future generations depends on our willingness to rise to the challenge.

For these reasons, I propose that policy debaters spend the 2012-13 academic year debating the merits of improvements to the United States infrastructure. What follows is a description of the important aspects to consider, possible areas of argumentation, a description of terms, and a list of possible resolutions.

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[1] 2009 Report Card of America's Infrastructure.

[2] Infrastructurist.com. "Obama outlines infrastructure goals, but not how to finance them" http://www.infrastructurist.com/2011/01/26/obama-outlines-infrastructure-goals-but-not-how-to-finance-them/

Issues to Consider

The main idea behind this topic is for the affirmative to substantially increase the United State's efforts to improve its infrastructure. There are three major issues to consider:

First, how infrastructure improvements feature in upcoming political discussions will drastically shape the topic's development. President Obama's inclusion of infrastructure policy in the 2011 State of Union suggests that the issue may be a central theme of his re-election campaign. Providing further evidence of the importance of this issue to the current administration, infrastructure policy changes were featured prominently in President Obama's FY 2012 budget proposal. In his budget request, President Obama called on congress to provide $128 billion for transportation, up from $77 billion in FY 2010. President Obama recommended those dollars be allocated towards the following topic related areas, including; high-speed rail, "livable communities", a National Infrastructure Bank, broadband internet connections, and public transportation. Whether Congress authorizes or appropriates any funding towards these initiatives cannot be determined. Crafting a resolution so that political events do not render the topic undebatable will be a major task of the wording committee.

Second, developing limits for the term "infrastructure" will be difficult. A core aspect of the topic is devoted to improving our transportation systems. At a minimum, developing new or enhancing existing bridges, roads, and high-speed rail lines should be included in the topic. However, it is questionable whether or not transportation infrastructure related to nation-to-nation travel should be included in the topic. Should efforts to improve the United States' boarders, point-of-entry checkpoints, and ports be apart of the topic? If so, the breath of the topic on transportation infrastructure alone is significant. The committee will need to decide if this is a "transportation" topic or if the resolution should include other systems in need of development. A debate on efforts to improve our infrastructure cannot take place without a discussion of transportation issues, but we are not sure that a transportation topic alone would be interesting enough to withstand a year's worth of debates.

Another issue regarding topic limits revolves around what constitutes the term "infrastructure." Some topic authors suggest that capital improvements to buildings owned by governments are a part of the nation's infrastructure. However, we are not certain that efforts to build new arts facilities, repair schools, or beautify parks should be a part of the topic. We also are not sure whether or not this issue will matter.

A third and final concern revolves around energy policy. While infrastructure improvements are needed in our energy grid, the topic should be crafted to avoid replicating the alternative energy incentive discussion in the 2008-09 resolution.

The paper suggests some answers to these questions. As a starting point, I suggest the following topic wording:

Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase development of domestic infrastructure.

Areas of Argumentation

Affirmative Cases

Potential affirmative cases could include direct spending on particular developments or policy structures designed to enhance infrastructure developments. Some case areas would include:

Dams/Levees – many dams and Levees need significant maintenance and upgrading. Some Levees and Dams are under the direct control of the federal government, while others are under local control. "In the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, Congress passed the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007. The Act required the establishment and maintenance of an inventory of all federal levees, as well as those non-federal levees for which information is voluntarily provided by state and local government agencies. The inventory is intended to be a comprehensive, geospatial database that is shared between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), FEMA, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the states."[3] Potential affirmatives could call on the federal government to directly repair federally owned levees and dams or offer assistance to towards local communities to repair locally owned levees and dams.

> Sofge, Erik. "Rebuilding America Special Report: How to Fix U.S. Infrastructure." Popular Mechanics. April 9, 2008. Associate Editor of Popular Mechanics. Accessed Online: http://www.popularmechanics.com/technology/engineering/rebuilding-america/4258053
>
> There are more than 83,000 registered dams in the United States, and federal law requires them all to receive regular inspections. When the Ka Loko Dam breached, it had never been examined. A civil probe found that the dam's owner had been uncooperative—inspectors made two attempts but never gained access. They may have been lulled by a bureaucratic blind spot: Years before, Hawaii had classified the dam as "low-hazard," implying that even if it failed, lives wouldn't be at risk. "It's called hazard-classification creep," says Dan Johnson, a civil engineer with GEI, a geotechnical consulting firm that specializes in water resources. "When a lot of dams were built, they were considered low hazard. If one failed, it would maybe wash out an antelope. But today, that's a city."

Energy Grids – the infrastructure that delivers energy is maintained by private companies, public agencies, and public-private partnerships. This infrastructure is aging and is not keeping up with the nation's growing demand for energy. Potential affirmatives could call for the federal government to make expenditures direct to these entities to improve the capacity of the energy delivery system.

> Sofge, Erik. "Rebuilding America Special Report: How to Fix U.S. Infrastructure." Popular Mechanics. April 9, 2008. Associate Editor of Popular Mechanics. Accessed Online: http://www.popularmechanics.com/technology/engineering/rebuilding-america/4258053
>
> "Our grids today are more stressed than they have been in the past three decades," says Kevin Kolevar, assistant secretary for electricity delivery and energy reliability at the Department of Energy. "If we don't expand our capacity to keep up with an increase in demand of 40 percent over the next 25 years, we're going to see healthy grids become increasingly less reliable." Today, with the grid operating flat-out, any disruption—like the downed transmission line that sparked the 2003 blackout in the Northeast—can cripple the network.

[3] 2009 Report Card of America's Infrastructure.

Bridges – Bridges in the United States are built, maintained, and are funded with a mixture of state and federal dollars. Many of those bridges are in disrepair. Potential affirmatives could call for the federal government to increase in funding devoted to bridges in an effort to improve the condition of existing structures.

> Sofge, Erik. "Rebuilding America Special Report: How to Fix U.S. Infrastructure." Popular Mechanics. April 9, 2008. Associate Editor of Popular Mechanics. Accessed Online: http://www.popularmechanics.com/technology/engineering/rebuilding-america/4258053
>
> "The I-35W bridge was labeled 'structurally deficient' for 16 years," says Jesus de la Garza, a professor of civil and environmental engineering at Virginia Tech. "That meant it was due for reconstruction at some time in the future." Had the work taken place, the catastrophe wouldn't have occurred. (According to a preliminary finding of the National Transportation Safety Board [NTSB] released in January 2008, steel gusset plates had fractured, owing mainly to a flaw in the original design.) There are 153,521 structurally deficient or functionally obsolete bridges in the United States, and, like the I-35W bridge, many remain on the nation's to-do list for decades. "The crisis is deferred maintenance," de la Garza says. "**We have too much to build and not enough funding**."

Drinking Water and Waste Water Systems – The drinking water and waste water systems in the United States are aging and will be in need of repair shortly. The cost of repairing these systems is significant and individual citizens may not be able to finance the repair costs. Potential affirmatives could call for the Federal Government to subsidized part of the system replacement costs. Other affirmatives may choose to focus on the quality of drinking water. Recently there have been concerns over the safety of drinking water. Potential affirmatives might create additional federal standards to improve quality of drinking water.

> American Water Works Association. "Dawn of the Replacement Era: Re-investing in Drinking Water Infrastructure." May 2001. Accessed Online: http://www.win-water.org/reports/infrastructure.pdf
>
> Extrapolating from our analysis of 20 utilities, we project that expenditures on the order of $250 billion over 30 years might be required nationwide for the replacement of wornout drinking water pipes and associated structures (valves, fittings, etc). This figure does not include wastewater infrastructure or the cost of new drinking water standards. Moreover, the requirement hits different utilities at different times and many utilities will need to accelerate their investment. Some will see rapidly escalating infrastructure expenditure needs in the next 10–20 years. Others will find their investment decisions subject to a variety of factors that cause replacement to occur sooner or at greater expense, such as urban redevelopment, modernization, coordination with other city construction, increasing pipe size, and other factors.
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> Overall, the findings confirm that replacement needs are large and on the way. There will be a growing conflict between the need to replace worn-out infrastructure and the need to invest in compliance with new regulatory standards under the Safe Drinking Water Act. In addition, the concurrent demands for investment in wastewater infrastructure and compliance with new Clean Water Act regulations, including huge needs for meeting combined sewer overflow (CSO) and stormwater requirements, will compete for revenue on the same household bill.
>
> Ultimately, the rate-paying public will have to finance the replacement of the nation's drinking water infrastructure either through rates or taxes. AWWA expects local funds to cover the great majority of the nation's water infrastructure needs and remains committed to the principle of full-cost recovery through rates. However, many utilities may face needs that are large and unevenly distributed over time. They must manage a difficult transition between today's level of investment and the higher level of investment that is required over the long term. Facing an inexorable rise in infrastructure replacement needs driven by demographic forces that were at work as much as 100 years ago, compounded by the negative effects of changing demographics on per-capita costs in center cities, many utilities face a significant challenge in keeping water affordable for all the people they serve.

Broadband/Internet Access – obtaining internet access in rural parts of the United States is difficult. Beyond simply acquiring internet access, studies indicate that the system delivering internet access is inadequate and failing behind other countries. Potential affirmatives might call for the federal government to expand access and re-organize the infrastructure to catch up with other countries.

> "Why Broadband Service in the U.S. is so awful: and one step that could change it" Scientific American. October 2010.
> Accessed online: http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=competition-and-the-internet
>
> The average U.S. household has to pay an exorbitant amount of money for an Internet connection that the rest of the industrial world would find mediocre. According to a recent report by the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University, broadband Internet service in the U.S. is not just slower and more expensive than it is in tech-savvy nations such as South Korea and Japan; the U.S. has fallen behind infrastructure-challenged countries such as Portugal and Italy as well.
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> The consequences are far worse than having to wait a few extra seconds for a movie to load. Because broadband connections are the railroads of the 21st century—essential infrastructure required to transmit products (these days, in the form of information) from seller to buyer—our creaky Internet makes it harder for U.S. entrepreneurs to compete in global markets. As evidence, consider that the U.S. came in dead last in another recent study that compared how quickly 40 countries and regions have been progressing toward a knowledge-based economy over the past 10 years. "We are at risk in the global race for leadership in innovation," FCC chairman Julius Genachowski said recently. "Consumers in Japan and France are paying less for broadband and getting faster connections. We've got work to do."
>
> It was not always like this. A decade ago the U.S. ranked at or near the top of most studies of broadband price and performance. But that was before the FCC made a terrible mistake. In 2002 it reclassified broadband Internet service as an "information service" rather than a "telecommunications service." In theory, this step implied that broadband was equivalent to a content provider (such as AOL or Yahoo!) and was not a means to communicate, such as a telephone line. In practice, it has stifled competition.
>
> Phone companies have to compete for your business. Even though there may be just one telephone jack in your home, you can purchase service from any one of a number of different long-distance providers. Not so for broadband Internet. Here consumers generally have just two choices: the cable company, which sends data through the same lines used to deliver television signals, and the phone company, which uses older telephone lines and hence can only offer slower service.
>
> The same is not true in Japan, Britain and the rest of the rich world. In such countries, the company that owns the physical infrastructure must sell access to independent providers on a wholesale market. Want high-speed Internet? You can choose from multiple companies, each of which has to compete on price and service. The only exceptions to this policy in the whole of the 32-nation Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development are the U.S., Mexico and the Slovak Republic, although the Slovaks have recently begun to open up their lines

Specifically, Congress could change the National Broadband Plan into a rural broadband program.

> Jeffrey Rosen. Nonresident Senior Fellow, Governance Studies. The Brookings Institution "Universal Service Fund Reform: Expanding Broadband Internet Access in the United States" April 2011
> Accessed Online: http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2011/04_universal_service_fund_rosen.aspx
>
> The National Broadband Plan (NBP), drafted by the Federal Communication Commission and released in 2010, seeks to provide all Americans with affordable broadband Internet access.[11] Doing so will not be cheap; analysts project that developing the infrastructure necessary for full broadband penetration will require $24 billion in subsidies and spending.[12] President Obama's stimulus package has already set aside $4.9 billion to develop broadband infrastructure,[13] and some small ongoing federal programs receive an annual appropriation to promote broadband penetration.[14] However, these funding streams will only account for one-third of the $24 billion necessary to achieve the FCC's goal of full broadband penetration.[15] Moreover, developing infrastructure alone is not enough; many low-income Americans are unable to afford Internet access, even if it is offered in their locality.
>
> To close this funding gap and to make broadband more accessible, the National Broadband Plan proposes to transform the Universal Service Fund – a subsidy program that spends $8.7 billion every year to develop infrastructure and improve affordability for telephone service – into a program that would do the same for broadband Internet.

High Speed Rail – passenger rail has long been on the decline in the United States. This decline has promoted excessive automobile and airline traffic. While the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act offered funds to create high-speed rail projects around the country, several Governors have refused funding. Additionally, long-term funding beyond the stimulus does not exist. Potential Affirmatives could call for the federal government to increase its commitment to developing a high-speed rail network across the United States, creating a long-term commitment.

> Bryan Walsh. "Can High-Speed Rail Succeed in America?" Time Magazine. January, 29, 2010. Accessed Online: http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1957575,00.html
>
> We want to start looking deep into the 21st century and say to ourselves, There's no reason why other countries can build high-speed rail lines and we can't," Obama told a crowd in a University of Tampa arena. "Right here in Tampa, we're building the future."
>
> That's a nice sentiment, but America's antiquated rail system will have to advance a long way just to make it to the present, let alone the future. U.S. intercity railroads are a laughingstock compared with those in most other developed nations — and, increasingly, even those in developing nations like China, which is investing more than $300 billion to build more than 16,000 miles of high-speed track by 2020.
>
> Today you can travel the 250 miles from Paris to Lyon on the high-speed TGV in two hours. Covering a similar distance from Philadelphia to Boston takes some five hours, and that's on an Amtrak Acela train, the closest thing the U.S. has to high-speed rail. "Every other major industrialized nation has recognized that high-speed rail is key to economic growth and mobility," says Petra Todorovich, director of the America 2050 program at the Regional Planning Association. "It's time for America to realize that as well."

Solid Waste – There is a growing concern that America's solid waste systems are not responding to changes in the trash the nation generates. Of particular concern are phased-out electronic devices. As these items are disposed, there is a potential environmental impact. Potential affirmatives could call for the Federal Government to expand its oversight on solid waste systems and issue national standards for how to dispose of these materials. Other affirmatives may take a more broad approach by addressing the growing quantity of solid waste.

> American Society of Civil Engineers. "2009 Report Card of America's Infrastructure." Accessed Online: http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/sites/default/files/RC2009_full_report.pdf
>
> Of the 254 million tons of solid waste generated in 2007, 85 million tons, or 33%, were recycled or composted compared to 30.1% in 2000; 32 million tons, or 13%, were burned in waste-to-energy (WTE) plants; and 137 million tons, or 54%, went into landfills compared to 55.3% in 2000.1
>
> While the improvement in recycling rates is encouraging news, such issues as the improper disposal of electronic equipment and the emission of green- house gasses from landfills pose continued challenges. The EPA estimates that in 2005 waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) amounted to approximately two million tons, most of which was discarded in landfills. Only between 345,000 and 379,000 tons were recycled.3 End-of-life electronics may contain such materials as lead that are hazardous to the environment when not handled and disposed of properly. No national standard on the recycling of WEEE exists, and uncoordinated state regulations can discourage consumers from recycling.4

National Infrastructure Bank – Initially proposed by Senators Dodd and Hagel in 2007, the idea is that the United States Federal Government would create a bank similar to the FDIC to augment existing federal resources, act as a centralized entity to provide financing, and invest in worthy infrastructure developments. Affirmatives could fiat the creation of a National Infrastructure Bank, which would provide needed funds to infrastructure projects across the country.

Douglas Rediker and Heidi Crebo-Rediker. "Financing America's Infrastructure: Putting Global Capital to Work". New America Foundation. June 29, 2008.
Accessed Online: http://newamerica.net/files/Financing_America_Infrastructure.PDF

If the nation's infrastructure needs are apparent, so too are the limits on available funds in federal, state, and local government coffers. In this presidential election year, we can see these limits clearly, as the nation's spending priorities are magnified by electoral politics. Although significant government funding will likely continue to play a key role in the development of public infrastructure, the scale of our funding needs increasingly compels us to look beyond government to close the financing gap. It is for this reason that public support for private sector infrastructure investment is essential.

The good news is that while the federal government struggles to find funds to address its spending needs there is abundant private capital for infrastructure investment. An estimated $400 billion in global funds are available for equity investment in infrastructure, and the funds available to support the debt component amount to several trillion dollars if we include global central bank reserves, global pension funds, and sovereign wealth funds.[ii] Rather than focus on these large pools of global capital as a threat, we should view them as an opportunity. So, while we have enormous infrastructure financing needs, there are also enormous pools of capital available for investment. The trick is to bring the two together in a commercial, sustainable, and politically acceptable way.

The U.S. municipal bond markets have functioned well for many years, channeling private capital into financing certain elements of U.S. infrastructure. But current budgetary constraints and other market conditions mean that municipal finance is no longer adequate to meet the challenge of financing the scale of investment needed. And our current financing structures are unable to take advantage of the large pools of capital that are available for infrastructure financing.

We recommend two initiatives to help finance U.S. infrastructure needs beyond direct government grants. First, we suggest the enactment of legislation and the development of regulations to facilitate the origination and issuance of public sector covered bonds in the United States, which will provide a market-based, efficient, and secure mechanism to attract capital for infrastructure investment. Second, along the lines of a proposal by Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) last year,[iii] we recommend that the federal government consider the creation of a new, government-owned and -capitalized infrastructure financing entity-a National Infrastructure Finance Enterprise-that would pool, package, and sell existing and future public infrastructure securities in the capital markets. The proposed entity would also seek to develop an in-house capability to originate infrastructure loans and would be able to fund itself through the international capital markets.[iv] We believe that the entity should be capitalized at a far higher level than proposed in the DeLauro bill. Further, its scope should extend beyond that of the National Infrastructure Bank as currently proposed by Senators Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and Chuck Hagel (R-NE).[v]

Smart Cities – with increasing amounts of data on city operations available, some experts assert that if this data can be captured and analyzed effectively, it could lead towards new city policies and a more efficient use of local resources. However, not all cities possess the capability to invest in new technologies designed to illicit this data. Potential affirmatives could call for the Federal Government to create a new subsidy towards local governments to implement data analysis policies and improve public management and services at the local level.

Livable Communities – transportation, energy, housing, and development policies are frequently not coordinated. Advocates have called on the federal government to bring consistency towards all of these policy fields by creating conditions on the Community Development Block Grant and other funding sources that would coordinate transportation, energy, and housing developments. This coordination could result in desirable communities that use energy more efficiently.

> Robert Puentes. Senior Fellow and Director, Metropolitan Infrastructure Initiative Brookings Institution. "Creating Livable Communities: Housing and Transit Policy in the 21st Century." Congressional Testimony Presented before Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs United States Senate March 26, 2009. Accessed online: http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/rc/testimonies/2009/0326_housing_puentes/0326_housing_puentes.pdf
>
> Part of the problem is that there is too little integrated decision making that crosses disciplines and joins-up solutions. Too often, policies and rules are narrowly defined, poorly coordinated, and work at cross-purposes. On the federal level, programs dealing with housing, transportation, and energy issues, for example, remain largely divorced from each other, precluding the smartest sort of integrated problem-solving.2
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> The federal government also pays too little attention to systematic measurement, benchmarking, evaluation, and learning what works and what doesn't at every level of government. The nation's taxpayers need instead a federal government that will maximize its own performance and that of other levels of government in a transparent and accountable fashion.
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> The combination of economic distress, a new administration, and a new Congress demands—and makes possible—significant federal reforms. Mr. Chairman, I believe we need to think about reform ideas to confront the immediate economic crisis as well as to provide a solid foundation for national prosperity in the long term.
>
> ***Reward and direct greater coordination between housing and transportation***
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> One idea is for the federal government to direct the coordination of long-range housing and transportation plans. As a condition to receive Community Development Block Grants (CDGB) and other housing formula grants, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires states, cities, and counties to prepare a five-year Consolidated Plan, as well as an annual Action Plan specifying the expenditure of funds in support of their long range plans. At the same time, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) requires states and metropolitan areas to develop a 20- year long range transportation plan and a four-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
>
> Better coordination between these activities could result in more effective use of housing and transportation funds, and improved planning to address regional housing and transportation needs. The primary obstacle to better coordination is the fact that the TIP is a metropolitan area-wide document, while the Consolidated Plan is undertaken by individual jurisdictions within metropolitan areas.
>
> At a minimum, Consolidated Plans should be required to report on the relationship of HUD investments to transit and TIPs should be required to report on how proposed transportation investments support the need for affordable communities; these plans can also include an analysis of the benefits of alternative growth patterns.
>
> The federal government could also condition large pots of federal funds, especially transportation, on achieving new performance goals that would require localities to coordinate, innovate, and make land use changes. For instance: meeting a specific jobs/housing balance by increasing accessibility indices; eliminating or converting 50 percent of vehicle trips less than 3 miles to other modes; providing a "fair share" of affordable housing; requiring 30 percent of housing at transit sites to be affordable.

Port Security – American Ports have been caught in a double bind between handling the increased level of international trade and being able to provide additional levels of security. Several reports also call into question whether or not an appropriate level of security is provided at American ports. Potential affirmatives could call for additional resources to be provided for ports to be able to address security issues and handle the increased level of international trade.

> Paul Scott Abbott. "Security or Infrastructure?" American Journal of Transportation. February, 2007 Accessed Online: http://www.secureportamericas.com/pdf/AJOT_2007_new.pdf
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> Security or Infrastructure? That's the tough decision US port leaders continue to face.
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> "Security costs have complicated port development," Steve Cernak, the Port of Galveston's port director, said last week at the SecurePort 2007 Western Hemisphere Port Security Conference and Trade Exhibition in Houston.
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> "Ports often have to either divert funds away from important projects to pay for mandated security enhancements, or reduce the scope of their security enhancements," Cernak continued.
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> Kurt J. Nagle, president and chief executive officer of the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA), echoed such concern at the SecurePort event held Jan 29-31.
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> "Prior to 9/11, the industry consistently rated the funding of needed infrastructure development as its No. 1 challenge," Nagle told the gathering of 250 leaders from port management and security sectors.
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> "This dramatically increase level of resources being devoted to security enhancements has exacerbated the challenge of funding development of non-security infrastructure to handle the growing levels of international trade."

Inland Waterways/Locks – Similar to the investment needed for ports, inland waterways are also struggling for resources. Potential affirmatives could call for the army corps of engineers to increase the amount of work they spend on inland waterways. Other affirmatives could call for greater management or funding for inland waterways.

> American Society of Civil Engineers. "2009 Report Card of America's Infrastructure." Accessed Online: http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/sites/default/files/RC2009_full_report.pdf
>
> Because of their ability to move large amounts of cargo, the nation's inland waterways are a strategic economic and military resource. A recent analysis by the U.S. Army War College concluded that "the strategic contributions of these inland waterways are not well understood. The lack of adequate understanding impacts decisions contributing to efficient management, adequate funding, and effective integration with other modes of transportation at the national level. Recommendations demonstrate that leveraging the strategic value of U.S. inland waterways will contribute to building an effective and reliable national transportation network for the 21st century
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> …..
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> This system provides an average transportation savings of $10.67 per ton over the cost of shipping by alternative modes. This translates into more than $7 billion annually in transportation savings to the U.S. economy. Future investment must focus on life-cycle maintenance, system interdependencies, redundancy, security, and recovery from natural and man-made hazards.

Highways – Many of the highways in the United States are in need of substantial repair. Additionally, new highways may be needed as communities develop unexpected ways. Potential affirmatives could call for the federal government to increase the amount of funding it provides to the federal highway system. Other suggestions might include support for public-private partnerships, which could leverage funding from the private sector.

> Frances Kernodle Associates. Accessed Online:
> http://www.fkassociates.com/US%20Infrastructure%20Development.html
>
> The United States is facing a critical need for upgraded transportation facilities due to its aging transportation infrastructure. At the same time, U.S. transportation authorities, at all levels of government, are struggling with increasing demands to mitigate traffic congestion in parts of the country in which traffic conditions create delays, frustrate motorists and hamper economic development. Obviously, there is a shortage of funding to provide for all of the transportation needs of the nation. Therefore, U.S. federal, state, regional and local government organizations are examining a variety of alternative approaches to provide for various transportation demands and to fund these demands.

Other Potential Affirmatives – Park Beautification, Maintenance to Schools, Other Public Works Constructions, agricultural access to water, and border security. While many other affirmative areas may exist, there are several other areas worth considering. Other affirmatives will call for the Federal Government to increase the amount that it spends on National Parks, local school districts, and local public works projects. Furthermore, agriculture access to water figures to be an important development for Midwestern and Western States. Further still, some affirmatives will want to increase physical infrastructure developments on the national border.

Affirmative Advantages

There are several potential affirmative advantages for this topic. Advantages might include, but are not limited to:

Economic revival: Affirmatives could argue that an increase development of infrastructure could create new employment opportunities. Infrastructure development might create the need for people to create and maintain new systems or for people to improve the existing systems. Along similar lines, affirmatives could argue that the development of public infrastructure could reduce transportation and/or energy costs to individuals and business, making it more likely that businesses can employ more individuals. Further still, affirmatives could argue that the development of infrastructure systems creates opportunities for new business around the access points of new transportation systems, simulating job growth. This job growth could lead to improved outcomes for the United States economy; including but not limited to an increase in consumer spending, increased demand for housing, and improved GDP growth.

Security improvements – several infrastructure developments are designed to enhance national security. By investing in these systems, the United States could substantially reduce security threats to the United States. Additionally, the use of energy is increasingly tied to international security – specifically by the dependence on foreign oil. By increasing energy efficiency, it's possible that the United States could reduce energy related security threats.

Hegemony/Leadership – Some authors argue that the United State's global leadership is entering a period of decline. By revitalizing the United State's infrastructure system, its possible that the United States could reverse this trend.

Environmental Protection/Global Warming – Several infrastructure developments are designed to increase energy efficiency. Affirmatives could argue that by increasing energy efficiency, the United States could reduce our green house gas emissions. Other affirmatives may call for an enhancement to National Parks or otherwise create green space, these plans would directly result enhanced environmental protection.

Public Health/Quality of Life – Many infrastructure developments could the quality of life United State citizens. To the extent that these improvements are desirable, affirmatives may claim a qualitative advantage

Negative Positions

There are several potential negative positions for this topic. They include, but are not limited to:

Spending/Federal Budget Deficit – Many negatives will argue that future infrastructure developments create additional spending in both the short-term and in the long-term. Given the long-term outlook for the federal deficit, negatives may argue that this will have a negative implication on federal debt and could potentially result in undesirable economic consequences.

Election Politics – President Obama has featured infrastructure development in his 2011 State of Union address and infrastructure development figures to be a substantial part of his 2012 re-election campaign. Negatives will argue that action on infrastructure development will lead towards undesirable political consequences by influencing the 2012 presidential election.

State/Local Government Counterplans – In many areas of infrastructure development, the federal government partners with state and local authorities. Negatives could argue that state governments could engage in the same infrastructure development on their own, without the need for a federal partner.

Federalism – Related to the state and local government counterplan, many negatives will argue that an increased federal role in infrastructure development will result in a substantial expansion of federal power. Negatives could argue that this limits the ability of state and federal governments and has unwanted consequences.

Development Critiques – Because the topic asks affirmatives to increase development, many negatives may criticize that development as a part of a philosophy that desires to continually improve upon nature. These authors argue that a restless desire to enhance nature prevents us from seeing the environmental consequences of our actions.

Environmental Critiques – Similar to development critiques, because the topic asks debaters to increase human control of natural systems, negatives may argue that infrastructure development reifies the philosophy that ignores the environment.

Definitions

Infrastructure Defined by Investing:

> Investor Words. Accessed Online: http://www.investorwords.com/2464/infrastructure.html
>
> The basic physical systems of a country's or community's population, including roads, utilities, water, sewage, etc. These systems are considered essential for enabling productivity in the economy. Developing infrastructure often requires large initial investment, but the economies of scale tend to be significant.

Infrastructure Defined by Common Usage:

> The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition copyright ©2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Updated in 2009. Accessed Online: http://www.thefreedictionary.com/infrastructure
>
> **1.** An underlying base or foundation especially for an organization or system.
> **2.** The basic facilities, services, and installations needed for the functioning of a community or society, such as transportation and communications systems, water and power lines, and public institutions including schools, post offices, and prisons.

> **in fra·struc tur·al** *adj.*
> ***Usage Note:*** The term *infrastructure* has been used since 1927 to refer collectively to the roads, bridges, rail lines, and similar public works that are required for an industrial economy, or a portion of it, to function. The term also has had specific application to the permanent military installations necessary for the defense of a country. Perhaps because of the word's technical sound, people now use *infrastructure* to refer to any substructure or underlying system. Big corporations are said to have their own financial infrastructure of smaller businesses, for example, and political organizations to have their infrastructure of groups, committees, and admirers. The latter sense may have originated during the Vietnam War in the use of the word by military intelligence officers, whose task it was to delineate the structure of the enemy's shadowy organizations. Today we may hear that conservatism has an infrastructure of think tanks and research foundations or that terrorist organizations have an infrastructure of people sympathetic to their cause. The Usage Panel finds this extended use referring to people to be problematic, however. Seventy percent of the Panelists find it unacceptable in the sentence *FBI agents fanned out to monitor a small infrastructure of persons involved with established terrorist organizations.*

Infrastructure Defined by Congress

> John Moteff, Claudia Copeland, and John Fischer. Resources, Science, and Industry Division. Congressional Research Service. "**Critical Infrastructures: What Makes an Infrastructure Critical?** January 29, 2003. Accessed online: http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/RL31556.pdf
>
> The Council established by P.L. 98-501 provided yet another definition of infrastructure and included nine categories of systems in its analyses: highways, streets, roads, and bridges; airports and airways; public transit; intermodal transportation (the interface between modes); water supply; wastewater treatment; water resources; solid waste; and hazardous waste services. These categories, the Council said, have strong links to economic development and generally have a tradition of public sector involvement. Facilities have high fixed costs and long economic lives. Taken as a whole, according to the Council, the services that they provide "form the underpinnings of the nation's defense, a strong economy, and our health and safety."35

Infrastructure distinct from Critical Infrastructure

John Moteff, Claudia Copeland, and John Fischer. Resources, Science, and Industry Division. Congressional Research Service. "**Critical Infrastructures: What Makes an Infrastructure Critical?** January 29, 2003. Accessed online: http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/RL31556.pdf

Over the last few years, a number of documents concerned with critical infrastructure protection have offered general definitions for critical infrastructures and have provided short lists of which infrastructures should be included. None of these lists or definitions would be considered definitive. The criteria for determining what might be a critical infrastructure, and which infrastructures thus qualify, have expanded over time. Critical infrastructures were originally considered to be those whose prolonged disruptions could cause significant military and economic dislocation. Critical infrastructures now include national monuments (e.g. Washington Monument), where an attack might cause a large loss of life or adversely affect the nation's morale. They also include the chemical industry. While there may be some debate about why the chemical industry was not on earlier lists that considered only military and economic security, it seems to be included now primarily because individual chemical plants could be sources of materials that could be used for a weapon of mass destruction, or whose operations could be disrupted in a way that would significantly threaten the safety of surrounding communities.

A fluid definition of what constitutes a critical infrastructure could complicate policymaking and actions. At the very least, a growing list of infrastructures in need of protection will require the federal government to prioritize its efforts. Essentially the federal government will have to try to minimize the impact on the nation' s critical infrastructure of any future terrorist attack, taking into account what those impacts might be and the likelihood of their occurring.

Critical Infrastructure is more expansive than Infrastructure

Wikipedia. "Critical Infrastructure." Accessed Online: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_infrastructure#United_States

Its Patriot Act of 2001 defined critical infrastructure as those "systems and assets, whether physical or virtual, so vital to the United States that the incapacity or destruction of such systems and assets would have a debilitating impact on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination of those matters."

These have identified a number of critical infrastructures and responsible agencies:

1. Agriculture and food – Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services
2. Water – Environmental Protection Agency
3. Public Health – Department of Health and Human Services
4. Emergency Services – Department of Homeland Security
5. Government – Department of Homeland Security
6. Defense Industrial Base – Department of Defense
7. Information and Telecommunications – Department of Commerce
8. Energy – Department of Energy
9. Transportation and Shipping – Department of Transportation
10. Banking and Finance – Department of the Treasury
11. Chemical Industry and Hazardous Materials – Department of Homeland Security
12. Post – Department of Homeland Security
13. National Monuments and icons - Department of the Interior
14. Critical Manufacturing - Department of Homeland Security (14th sector announced 03-Mar-2008; recorded 30-Apr-2008

Development defined

Google.com Definition Search "Development"

1. The process of developing or being developed
   a. - she traces the *development* of the novel
   b. - the *development* of less invasive treatment
2. A specified state of growth or advancement
   a. - the wings attain their full *development* several hours after birth
3. A new and refined product or idea
   a. - the latest *developments* in information technology
4. An event constituting a new stage in a changing situation
   a. - I don't think there have been any new *developments* since yesterday
5. The process of converting land to a new purpose by constructing buildings or making use of its resources
   a. - land suitable for *development*
6. An area of land with new buildings on it
   a. - a major housing *development* in Chicago
7. The process of bringing one's pieces into play in the opening phase of a game
8. The process of starting to experience or suffer from an ailment or feeling
   a. - the *development* of brittle bones
9. The process of treating photographic film with chemicals to make a visible image

Domestic Defined

http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/domestic

do·mes·tic

–adjective

1. of or pertaining to the home, the household, household affairs, or the family: domestic pleasures.

2. devoted to home life or household affairs.

3. tame; domesticated.

4. of or pertaining to one's own or a particular country as apart from other countries: domestic trade.

5. indigenous to or produced or made within one's own country; not foreign; native: domestic goods.

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Potential Resolutions

Recommended Resolution:

1. **Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase development of domestic infrastructure.**

This resolution would allow for the largest amount of potential affirmative cases, increasing the variety of affirmative plans. This resolution specifically excludes federal development that would occur in other countries, but still allow for state and federal partnerships. Preserving state-federal partnership style affirmatives was seen as important affirmative ground, because many affirmatives would expand or restructure the funding that it allocates to state governments, in so far as that change would result in an increase of infrastructure development. This would prevent the affirmative from being limited to areas where the federal government has complete control.

Other working resolutions:

2. **Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase development of its infrastructure.**

Defining the "its" term proves grammatically difficult. It is unclear whether the "its" would refer to the United States, meaning any infrastructure development in the United States would be topical, or whether the "its" refers to the Federal Government, meaning that the affirmative could only focus on areas where the federal government has complete control. The "its" may open the ground for development by the USFG in foreign countries.

3. **Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase funding for (its) domestic infrastructure**.

By changing the focus to funding of infrastructure development, instead of increasing development itself, the affirmative is limited to situations where the funding is increased. This would exclude potential reallocation plans eliminates reallocation plans. However, this may eliminate effects topicality problems.

4. **Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase development of transportation infrastructure.**

Since many of systems considered are transportation systems, we felt it was important to consider an exclusive transportation subset.

5. **Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase development of domestic infrastructure in one or more of the following areas (systems): Transportation, Water, Energy, Telecommunications, (Public Buildings).**

A list may be the best way to limit the question of what is infrastructure. What areas are on the list are up for discussion. These four or five areas represent a solid starting point.