



HOW INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTS SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Elected representatives spend a great amount of time talking about infrastructure and the need for it. In fact, infrastructure is such a hot topic that President Biden and Congress passed a large-scale, trillion-dollar infrastructure package on a bipartisan basis in 2021. Some may ask though: what is infrastructure, exactly? More importantly, how can infrastructure improve my community and directly improve my quality of life?

Infrastructure Improvement Can:

Improve Community Safety

- Infrastructure improvement projects can improve the safety of our communities in a variety of ways. Building and maintaining infrastructure is not an easy task, but it means that we can rely on the safety of our water, bridges, tunnels, and other vital systems and services. Here are some examples:
 - **Traveling safety:** Improvements to the quality and design of roads, bridges, transit systems, and airport runways can reduce the potential for travel incidents, reduce fatalities on road and railways, and ensure our daily travel is as safe and reliable as possible.
 - **Public safety:** Infrastructure projects—such as removing abandoned or unsafe buildings, renovating and upgrading outdated school buildings, and planning for and building safe spaces for the community to gather, such as community centers, schools, and parks—can improve our quality of life.
 - **Public Health:** Infrastructure projects can improve overall health outcomes of people in communities through providing clean drinking water infrastructure, such as replacing lead piping systems in community buildings, site and building cleanup, such as eliminating asbestos in schools and cleaning up and repurposing contaminated land, funding clean energy projects, and reducing carbon pollution through transportation projects that mitigate congestion.
 - **Safeguarding against extreme weather events:** Building and rebuilding our infrastructure systems in a smart and strong manner can safeguard communities against extreme weather events, such as tornadoes, hurricanes, and flooding, that are exacerbated by climate change. This may include: improving storm controls such as dikes and levees, storm drainage systems in communities, and rebuilding transportation systems to withstand such events.

Modernize Your Community

- Our communities deserve 21st-century infrastructure. “Modernizing” our infrastructure can come in a variety of forms. This may look like:

- Projects that improve our connectivity with each other and the places that are important to us, such as roadway projects that reduce commute times or transit projects that provide safe and convenient routes throughout the community regardless of socioeconomic status.
- Projects that improve our access to goods and services, such as port, airport, or waterway projects that provide quicker and more reliable transportation of consumer goods, as well as roadway and transit projects that can help us better access critical services, such as healthcare and childcare.
- Upgrading and building broadband infrastructure for more reliable internet service.
- Updating our neighborhoods to include adequate bike and pedestrian pathways that reflect the many ways we choose to travel.
- Renovating or constructing our buildings to be more environmentally sustainable and energy efficient.

Invest in the People of Your Community

- As demonstrated, infrastructure investment is solely about investment in people and their safety, health, and well-being. Important to one's well-being is sufficient employment and opportunity, something of which the infrastructure improvement industry delivers on in a meaningful way for communities across the country every single day.
 - Nearly 5% of the U.S. workforce is employed by the construction industry. That's around 7.5 million Americans.
 - Construction firms are overwhelmingly small businesses. In a community of 50,000 people, there's a good chance over 2,000 of those community members are employed by the construction industry.
 - Jobs in construction are notoriously some of the highest-paying careers in a community, paying well above the average in nearly all categories of employment.
 - Construction doesn't just bring direct jobs. There are all sorts of employment opportunities indirectly influenced by construction, such as suppliers, manufacturers, and other businesses that are allowed to flourish due to adequate community planning and building.
 - This industry not only simply employs people but invests in educational opportunities and outcomes in communities in a variety of ways. The investment the construction industry makes in career and technical education and outreach to people of all socioeconomic backgrounds uplifts and builds stronger, more financially stable communities.