



New York State Association of Town Superintendents of Highways

Joint Legislative Budget Hearing -Transportation
February 15, 2022

Good afternoon, Senator Krueger, Assemblymember Weinstein and other members of the Legislature. I am Richard Benjamin, President of the New York State Association of Town Superintendents of Highways (NYSAOTSOH) and Highway Superintendent for the town of Thompson in Sullivan County. I truly appreciate the opportunity to discuss local infrastructure needs as it relates to Governor Hochul's 2022-23 Executive Budget.

These comment are submitted to be part of joint testimony with the New York State County Highway Superintendents Association (NYSCHSA). The pandemic hasn't just impacted our health, it has changed where people live and how and where they travel. According to the MTA, during the week of 2/7/22 Long Island Rail Road passenger volumes were down about 50% of their pre-pandemic levels, Metro North Rail Roads was down 55%, subway ridership was down 45%. But, Bridge and Tunnel volumes were within 2% of pre-pandemic levels. Traffic volumes are at or exceeding pre-pandemic levels throughout the State.

Nearly eight out of ten New Yorkers residing outside of New York City live in a town and these municipalities are responsible for maintaining nearly 60 percent of New York's roads. On behalf of our membership's 933 Town Highway Superintendents I want thank you and your colleagues in the Legislature for your past support of the State's local highway and bridge system.

Local NYSDOT Funding	Executive Proposal 2022-2023
CHIPS	538.1M
Local PAVE-NY	150M
Local POP	100M
EWR	100M
State Touring Routes	100M
Marchiselli	39.7M
Local BRIDGE-NY	200M
Total	1,227.8M

We want to begin by thanking the Governor for proposing a fully funded \$32.5 billion five-year capital program. Which maintains current funding levels for all of the local highway

and bridge programs including CHIPS, Marchiselli, Local Pave NY, and Emergency Winter Recovery. In addition, the Executive budget increases funding for the Bridge NY program by \$100 million annually and creates the new Operation Pave our Potholes (POP) program at \$100 million annually. This brings the local transportation funding to an annual record of \$1,227 million. According to a report recently issued by New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli on January 28th titled *Locally Owned Roads By the Numbers*, local governments, excluding New York City, spent \$2.0 billion on road maintenance and improvement in the 2020 fiscal year. The report highlighted a 2013 study of local highway and bridge needs published by our Association, based in part on a 2007 “Transportation Needs Assessment” by NYSDOT, which found that municipalities would need about \$32 billion over 15 years to restore locally owned roads through repaving and improvements. The report estimated that there was a spending gap of \$1.3 billion a year for locally owned roads and bridges. In 2017, we updated that need to \$1.7 billion a year, even while this gap may have increased, as local spending has dropped over the decade relative to inflation.

CONCLUSION

Local NYSDOT Funding	Request 2022-2027 (Per Year)
CHIPS	788.1M
Local PAVE-NY	150M
Local POP	100M
EWR	150M
State Touring Routes	100M
Marchiselli	39.7M
Local BRIDGE-NY	200M
Total	1,527.8M

NYSCHSA & NYSAOTSOH 2022-23 BUDGET REQUESTS:

- ✓ Support increasing the CHIPS program to \$788.1 million annually.
- ✓ Support increasing Extreme Winter Recovery funding to \$150 million annually.
- ✓ Support maintaining the local BRIDGE-NY program at \$200 million annually.
- ✓ Support maintaining the local PAVE-NY program at \$150 million annually.
- ✓ Support maintaining the State Touring Route funding program at \$100 million annually.
- ✓ Request that the \$100 million POP program be distributed using the EWR formula.

As fellow public officials, we understand the difficulty in trying to meet all of our constituent's needs with limited resources. We must work together so that all State and local critical infrastructure needs are being addressed in the next NYSDOT Five-Year Capital Program.

We believe it is time to reconstitute the Dedicated Highway and Bridge Trust Fund (DHBTF). The fund presents a unique opportunity in these otherwise very challenging times. The DHBTF bonding credit has not been used since 2012. At the time, there was just under \$7 billion of outstanding debt on that credit. Today, as bonds have matured and been retired, there is less than \$1 billion of DHBTF bonds. Since it has not been issued on since 2012, we believe the DHBTF remains an untapped asset with its own available bonding credit.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to direct the necessary resources to meet our shared community's vast economic and transportation needs.

Thank you for your time and consideration.