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States Add 300 Projects to Trump's Infrastructure Wish List.

DALLAS – More than 300 road, rail, bridge, and port projects have been submitted to the Trump administration by 43 states as prime candidates for funding in the new president's proposed \$1 trillion infrastructure program.

The large list was compiled by the National Governors Association, which asked governors in December to provide information to the Trump team on projects suitable for inclusion in the plan that relies on private investments to help rebuild the nation's infrastructure.

"They seek examples of priority infrastructure projects that might be incorporated into a future infrastructure investment program," the NGA said in the letter dated Dec. 16, more than a month before Trump was sworn in. "Specifically, the transition team is looking for three to five project suggestions from each state that they would vet for inclusion in a new program."

The submissions to the initial information-gathering request are non-binding, the letter noted.

"The initial spend on these projects for 2017 is expected to be \$150 billion, and the transition team hopes that this type of project will be continued over the next two years," NGA said.

The compilation of project information is still going on, said Elena Waskey, a spokeswoman for the NGA.

A preliminary list of 50 high-priority "Emergency & National Security Projects" across the nation includes a high-speed rail line between Dallas and Houston, Maryland's Purple Line light rail system, airport upgrades, and interstate highway expansions.

Total cost of the 50 projects on the list is \$137.5 billion, with 50% of the funding coming from private investors, according to documents obtained by McClatchy's Kansas City Star and The News Tribune.

The origin of the project list is unclear. The 50-project list is almost identical to a spreadsheet circulated in December by the NGA among state officials, with only two projects not found in both.

The McClatchy report said the list was provided to the NGA by the Trump transition team. However, Brigham McCown, chairman of the Alliance for Innovation and Infrastructure and a former member of the Trump transition, has denied that the team developed the project list.

Several of the projects have been completed and others don't meet Trump's criteria for significant private investments, McCown said.

The 50-project list is "not an official White House document," Trump spokeswoman Lindsay Walters said Wednesday.

The first project on the list is the \$12 billion Gateway Program to rebuild the rail infrastructure between New York City and Trenton, N.J.

Other projects on the priority list include a \$2 billion expansion of Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and a \$1 billion redevelopment of Chicago's Union Station.

Texas Central Rail said it is pleased that its 240-mile bullet train system between Houston and Dallas was included in the high-priority list.

"Texans are looking for safe, reliable, and productive transportation options," the company said. "The high-speed train answers that call for the region, state and country."

Trump should reject the Texas Central project, said Kyle Workman of Texans Against High-Speed Rail.

"We are confident that President Trump will identify projects of worth and benefit to America and this will not be one of them," he said.

The list also includes a 68-mile light rail line proposed by Dallas Area Rapid Transit from the far northern suburbs of Dallas to the west side of Fort Worth, with a stop at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport.

DART has no plans to seek private investment in the \$2.8 billion project, said spokesman Morgan Lyons.

"We are always supportive of ways to inject additional federal dollars into long-term transportation infrastructure, but have not been contacted to help develop this list," Lyons said.

The Bond Buyer

By Jim Watts

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