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[http://www.crainsnewyork.com/article/20160517/REAL\\_ESTATE/160519890/desperate-for-infrastructure-work-biz-group-shows-nyc-the-money](http://www.crainsnewyork.com/article/20160517/REAL_ESTATE/160519890/desperate-for-infrastructure-work-biz-group-shows-nyc-the-money)

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## Desperate for infrastructure work, biz group shows NYC the money

New York Building Congress report pitches bridge tolls and other ways to pay for and speed up capital projects



Photo: DEP

Turning on the latest leg of the city's third water tunnel will be a historic occasion.

By [Joe Anuta](#)

New York City's infrastructure-planning process is ill-equipped to meet population growth, according to a new report that shows officials don't even have an accurate inventory of what the city owns, let alone a comprehensive plan for maintenance and upgrades.

The New York Building Congress [report](#) offers suggestions to streamline the infrastructure budgeting process, make it more transparent and create revenue streams protected from the ebb and flow of politics.

"The city's capital program has never been more important," said Richard Anderson, the president of the membership group. "Our economy is booming, the population is growing and people are visiting in greater numbers from all over the world, creating a strain on the city's infrastructure."

While the report did commend the Bloomberg and de Blasio administrations for their capital spending, it noted that the city could be doing much more. Setting up more dedicated funding streams, similar to how water bills [are supposed](#) to finance the construction and maintenance of water infrastructure, would ensure that unglamorous infrastructure projects don't take a back seat to pet policies or projects. The report listed a gas tax, tolls on bridges similar to those in the [Move New York Fair Plan](#), or a value capture from property taxes as examples.

Additionally, if the city could come up with a comprehensive list of what it owns and what it would cost to keep that infrastructure in good repair, planners and the public would have a better idea of the city's needs in a given year and what officials were and were not spending on. Also, clearer presentation of timelines and costs for projects would help city agencies gain perspective and potentially avoid fiscal disasters such as the CityTime or Croton filtration plant projects.

Anderson said his organization spoke with First Deputy Mayor Anthony Shorris about the findings and recommendations, though the report has some suggestions for the state as well. Namely, the legislature could help the city deliver projects more efficiently, and cut down on contractor disputes and change orders that inflate costs, by [relaxing the laws](#) governing how a municipality can bid out a project.

Building Congress members are in the construction and real estate business, and would benefit from more city spending on infrastructure, though better capital planning and maintenance is on the wish lists of a wide variety of good-government and watchdog groups as well.

### [Building a Better NYC Capital Budget](#)

