

AGC-NYS' Elmendorf talks infrastructure

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New York's roads and bridges are in lousy shape.

The group [TRIP](#), a national transportation research nonprofit, estimated this month that deficient roads and bridges cost New York drivers \$28 billion a year in maintenance costs and wasted time.

But Mike Elmendorf, president and CEO of the Associated General Contractors of New York State (AGC-NYS), told *Capital Tonight* that passage of the bipartisan infrastructure bill puts the state in a very good position.

"There's a lot of stuff in the bill, but when we're talking about roads and bridges it's a 52% increase," Elmendorf said, or about \$900 million a year for five years.

On the state level, Gov. Kathy Hochul has also placed an emphasis on infrastructure, from affordable housing to clean energy and environmental infrastructure.

On the Department of Transportation front, she has proposed a five-year, \$32.8 billion Department of Transportation (DOT) capital plan, which includes a record level of funding for a variety of targeted initiatives, including the Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement fund; an emergency winter recovery fund; and a new state touring routes program.

However, the funding proposed for the core DOT capital plan is lower than expected.

"It's a little bit surprising," noted Elmendorf.

One reason for the lower-than-expected funding proposal is that the state is involved in funding so-called "mega projects" like I-81 in Syracuse, the Kensington Expressway in Buffalo and the Van Wyck Expressway in Queens.

But the state needs the money for simple upkeep like its cycle of paving, which Elmendorf notes is longer than the lifespan of the material used to pave roads.

"It's like, if you had a quart of milk in the fridge and you decided that you're only going to buy milk once every few months, it's not going to work out very well," Elmendorf explained. "We need to grow the DOT core program so that their assets move toward a state of good repair."

According to a needs-based assessment published by AGC-NYS and Rebuild New York Now, the state would need to invest an additional \$2 billion each year over the next five years.