



U.S. Department of Transportation

BEAUTIFYING TRANSPORTATION



Principles for Beautiful Transportation Infrastructure



We're engaging the **best and brightest** minds in architectural design and engineering to make **beautiful structures** that move you and bring about a **new Golden Age** of Transportation.

SEAN P. DUFFY

U.S. Transportation Secretary

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The Robert Street Bridge (Saint Paul, Minnesota) demonstrates how design can combine both functional and aesthetic elements. The Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, California (cover) exemplifies a timeless fusion of design, engineering, function, and iconic beauty that elevates infrastructure into a national landmark.



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The Principles for Beautiful Transportation Infrastructure will inform the design of federally supported transportation projects. Their purpose is to enhance the aesthetic quality of the Nation's transportation systems in a manner consistent with other objectives such as safety and functionality. The Principles provide an overarching framework to guide the design considerations across a wide range of infrastructure types, including bridges and overpasses, transit and mobility hubs, corridors and streetscapes, transportation-connected public spaces and plazas, gateways and entries, rural and small community transportation-related features, and intermodal or infrastructure connections.

The Principles are grounded in President Trump and Secretary Duffy's vision to make America more beautiful, as articulated in the President's Memorandum on Promoting Beautiful Federal Civic Architecture (January 20, 2025), Executive Order 14344 on Making Federal Architecture Beautiful Again (August 28, 2025), Executive Order 14338 on Improving Our Nation Through Better Design (August 21, 2025), and the Secretary's Directive to Promote Aesthetically Pleasing Projects that Inspire and Uplift American Citizens (September 12, 2025).



Top: Union Terminal (Cincinnati, Ohio) conveys a design with a discernible attention to detail with intricate mosaics and a striking half dome.

Middle: The Pigtail Bridge (Black Hills, South Dakota) demonstrates how infrastructure can be designed to reflect the local context, character, and landscape. **Bottom:** Merritt Parkway (Connecticut) illustrates how road design can harmonize transportation needs with its natural surroundings and uplift and inspire travelers.

These five Principles advance a commitment to infrastructure rooted in the idealism, enterprise, and vigor of the United States while harmonizing with the natural and urban landscapes.



Uplift and Inspire Travelers

Transportation infrastructure belongs to the people. Accordingly, transportation infrastructure should be designed to uplift and inspire the human spirit and lend prestige to the Nation. Designs should aim for widespread appeal, aligning with the preferences of those who are most likely to interact with it most often, which is to say the general public. Public input should inform design selections to ensure that designs are broadly palatable and in keeping with the views of the general public.



Harmonize with the Surrounding Landscapes

Transportation infrastructure should be designed to integrate seamlessly with its built and natural surroundings. By choosing design elements that reflect the local context, character, and landscape, transportation facilities can complement the urban or pastoral form. Similarly, the use of aesthetic approaches that preserve and reflect the specific natural resource conditions of the area can help create transportation infrastructure that feels intentional rather than imposed.



Complement Local Architectural Heritage

Transportation infrastructure should complement popular regional and cultural architectural influences, incorporating elements inspired by historical architectural exemplars. These architectural exemplars should be widely regarded as iconic and representative of the area. Transportation structures should foster a sense of place and of national and community pride, in a way that builds upon the past and keeps with regional aesthetic preferences.



Incorporate Art and Design Features

Transportation infrastructure should be comprehensively designed with aesthetic principles in mind. The aesthetics of the Nation's infrastructure contribute to how people interact and experience public spaces. Transportation infrastructure should thus incorporate refined finishes, lighting, art installations, ornamentation, and the like in a manner that conveys a discernible attention to detail and complies with Federal statutes, guidelines, and regulations. Projects should contemplate the inclusion of art installations from local artists.



Harness Form to Advance Function

Transportation infrastructure should reflect the context it serves to enhance the safety and flow of people and goods. Designs should therefore anticipate and adapt to human needs and instincts, so that their function emerges intuitively from their form. Designs should adhere to sound construction practice and utilize materials, methods, and equipment of proven dependability, as well as be economical to build, operate, and maintain.