

U.S. Department of Transportation
**BEAUTIFYING TRANSPORTATION
INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL**

Minutes for Meeting held February 2, 2026

The Beautifying Transportation Infrastructure Council (BTIC or the Council) met on Monday, February 2, 2026, at the *U.S. Department of Transportation* (U.S. DOT or the Department) *Headquarters* and on *Government Zoom*. Justin Shubow, BTIC Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. Eastern Time. In accordance with the provisions of Public Law 92-463, the meeting was open to the public.

The following individuals participated in the meeting:

Council Members

Justin Shubow, Chair
Bradley Cambridge
Maryam Ghyabi-White
Bryan Jones
Gary Meisner
Jason Pike
Peter Quintanilla
Kim Vierheilig

Governmental Representatives

Sean P. Duffy, Secretary of Transportation
Julianne S. Schwarzer, Designated Federal Officer
Theodore Silverman, Special Assistant to Chief of Staff
Loren A. Smith, Jr., Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy
Stephen Walling, White House Liaison

Call to Order

Sean Duffy, Secretary of Transportation, provided initial remarks emphasizing the Administration's goal to build infrastructure that is large-scale, beautiful, and reflects the greatness of the country.

Justin Shubow, Chair, provided a brief overview of expectations and guidelines for the Council. He noted that the Council serves an advisory role providing recommendations based on best practices and the members' expertise. A central focus of the Council's work is translating broad principles into practical, implementable guidance.

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Meeting Overview

Theodore Silverman, Special Assistant to The Chief of Staff of the Secretary of Transportation, provided remarks noting that the purpose of the meeting is foundational: to align intent, scope, and direction. The discussion should focus on principles, perspectives, and illustrative examples to inform future work.

Council members introduced themselves and shared their individual experience with design and infrastructure project delivery.

Council Plans

The Chair noted two related U.S. DOT initiatives focused on beautifying transportation infrastructure, a guidebook and a design project competition. Several Council members expressed their support for these activities.

Preliminary principles for beautifying transportation infrastructure include:

- Harmony with surrounding landscapes,
- Respect for local and regional character,
- Use of durable, context-appropriate materials,
- Integration of art and design,
- Minimization of visual clutter, and
- Design that reinforces function.

The guidebook will:

- Consolidate high-level design principles,
- Provide illustrative examples demonstrating how the noted principles can be applied in practice,
- Serve as a reference, not a mandate, for planners and stakeholders,
- Be principles-based rather than prescriptive,
- Designed to be adaptable across transportation modes and contexts, and
- Informed, as appropriate, by Council input in an advisory capacity.

The project design competition will:

- Encourage innovative thinking around the aesthetics of transportation infrastructure,
- Elevate public dialogue about how infrastructure can be both functional and beautiful, and
- Surface illustrative ideas and design approaches that may inform best practices over time.

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Council Comments and Discussion

Justin Shubow, Chair, offered a few prompts to guide the discussion:

1. How can aesthetic principles be applied across different transportation modes?
2. What does successful implementation of aesthetic principles look like in practice?
3. What are examples of everyday, non-iconic transportation infrastructure that exemplify these principles?

Jason Pike observed that, for some time, infrastructure design was focused on function without factoring in aesthetics and believes that infrastructure can be more beautiful and palatable.

Kim Vierheilig noted that infrastructure should prioritize customer experience and emotional resonance alongside aesthetics and advocated for "marrying" innovation and rapid technological advancements with the Council's goals for visual beauty.

Maryam Ghyabi-White appreciated the principles described and shared examples of how Florida is beautifying bridge projects using advanced aesthetic lighting that enhances the beauty of both the bridges and the water underneath them.

Gary Meisner noted the importance of developing guidelines for integrating natural landscapes with the built. He believes the design competition will help challenge people to marry new technologies with infrastructure.

Bradley Cambridge explained that transportation infrastructure is often a gateway to a community, whether it is a small road into a rural downtown or a large metropolitan airport. Such transportation may form the first impression that travelers have of a community or locale.

Bryan Jones underscored the importance of acknowledging that pressure by state and local communities to maximize limited funding shortchanges aesthetics.

Peter Quintanilla articulated that guidelines should inform how design can be based on mode of travel given that transportation infrastructure serves as a gateway to places. As an example, he cited the installation of LED lights by Allegheny County Department of Public Works in Pittsburgh, PA. These project images created by local artists onto bridges and are updated throughout the year incorporating community interests.

The members considered how transportation projects can be designed beyond getting people from points A to B. Infrastructure can be a learning experience, and it can be inspirational in how

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aesthetics help tell that story. The Nation’s current infrastructure reflects its 250-year inspiring existence as a country and that future infrastructure will tell the story of the next 250 years. They discussed the following:

- Ensuring that rural vistas are incorporated into infrastructure, for example the Texas Department of Transportation works to ensure that highways have beautiful vistas using native wildflowers that complement the landscape along the highways, and how such practices may create additional maintenance costs,
- Context-sensitive solutions based on public engagement can inform project stakeholders about the aesthetic preferences of the people who would use the transportation infrastructure and how the proposed design competition presents an opportunity to teach participants the core concepts of the Beautifying Transportation Infrastructure initiative while also encouraging new ideas,
- Art can be a big part of safety considerations, whether promoting safety culture or other core safety concepts, citing as an example the LED light installation on I-95 designed to promote Daytona Beach activities without introducing distraction or sacrificing safety in other ways,
- Incorporating aesthetic considerations should be in the initial design stages of a project and not as an “add-on” at advanced stages,
- Framing art based on the local culture and history can bring a community closer to consensus on how they wish to be represented, and how iconic projects built in the past can help designers and project leaders better understand how to incorporate aesthetic characteristics, examples shared were:
 - Aesthetic designs celebrating the local history and culture added to a bridge over a viaduct in Los Angeles,
 - Final designs for Santa Barbara airport terminal renovations that pay homage to the original terminal while meeting safety and security standards,
 - And Texas Department of Transportation master plans for several corridors that showcase what aesthetics could look like in both downtown Austin and rural landscapes, and
- Master plans can provide guidance and help prioritize aesthetic qualities that celebrate place and culture and how Main Streets, historic preservation offices and other organizations do and can set standards and guidance for best practices and how the Federal government can look to these best practices to support the Beautifying Transportation Infrastructure initiative.

Summary and Next Steps

The members discussed ways to deliver practical resources for stakeholders to use in beautifying

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transportation infrastructure and expressed interest in ensuring the guidebook and any other resources incorporating Council input are actionable and useful. Council members discussed drafting recommendations and then identifying a few demonstration projects to pilot these ideas. Leading by example can help develop best practices to follow. Any new processes should complement existing processes determined to be essential and effective.

The Chair concluded the discussion by suggesting that Council members identify examples of transportation projects to highlight at future meetings. Additional next steps include organizing subcommittees that will continue discussions between regular Council meetings and report back to all members. The Chair thanked members for their time, expressing enthusiasm for the next steps to come.

Public Input

No materials were received for Council consideration in advance of the meeting.

Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:57 AM after providing closing remarks.

//Signed//
Justin Shubow, Chair

//Signed//
Julianne S. Schwarzer, Designated Federal Officer