



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**Executive Office for
Administration and Finance**

The BRIGHT Act

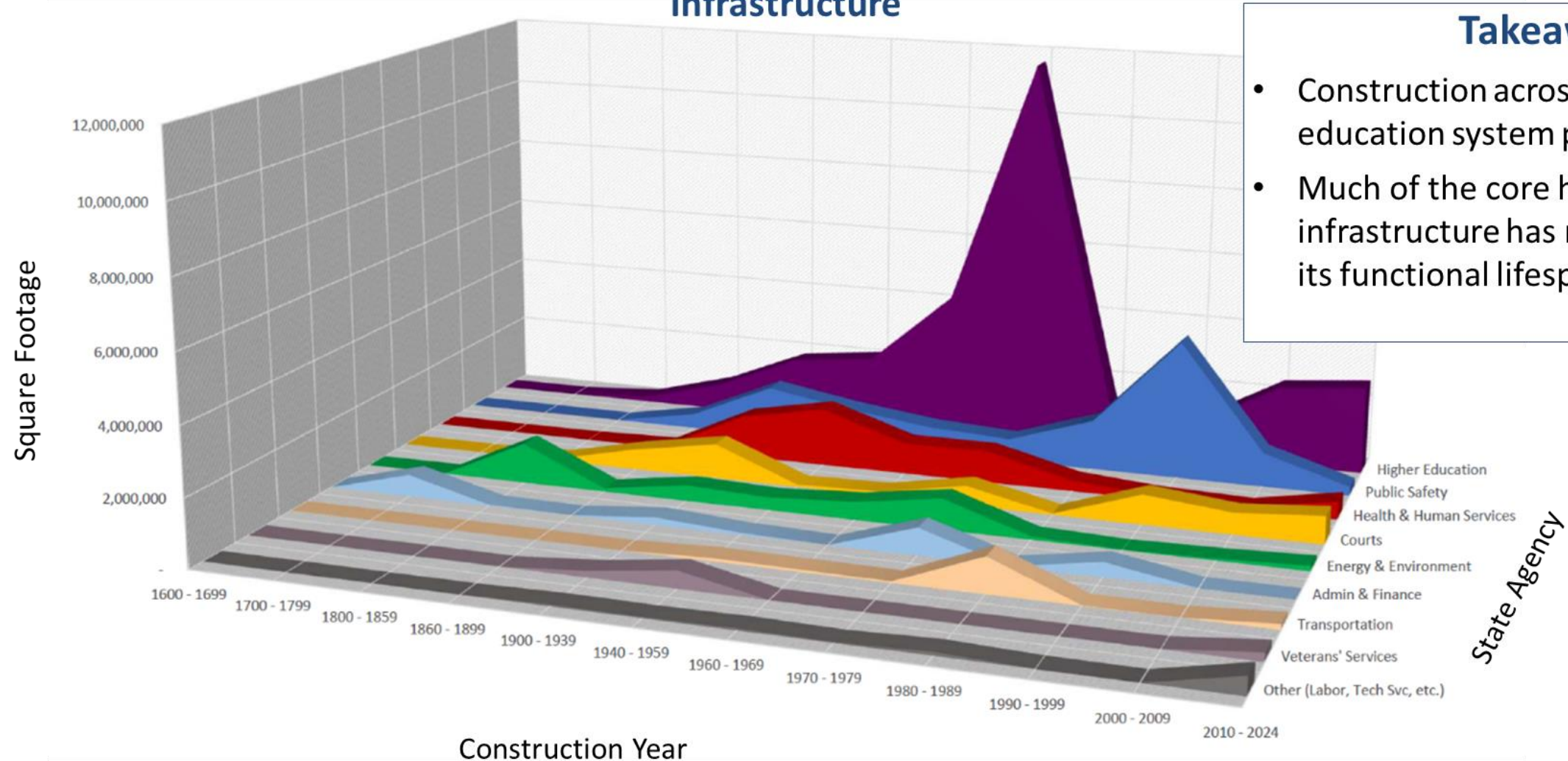
*An Act to Build Resilient Infrastructure to
Generate Higher Education Transformation*





Aging Infrastructure Resulting in Deferred Maintenance

Square Footage Construction By Year In State-Owned Public Infrastructure



Takeaways

- Construction across our higher education system peaked in the 1970s
- Much of the core higher ed infrastructure has reached the end of its functional lifespan



Transforming Public Higher Education Campuses – The BRIGHT Act

House 1 Proposal



The BRIGHT Act: An Act to Build Resilient Infrastructure to Generate Higher Education Transformation



- Securitize \$125M in Fair Share annually
- Will unlock ~\$2.5B in Special Obligation bonds over 10 years
- Mirrors successful CTF strategy
- No impact on General Obligation credits or debt capacity



- Up to \$2.5B for UMass, community colleges & state universities to:
- Address deferred maintenance
- Modernize and decarbonize facilities
- Construct major capital projects
- Breathing new life into proven programs



- Up to \$500M for:
- Converting surplus property to housing
- Modernization projects, like labs
- CTE collaboration
- Student mental health, wellness, safety
- Master plans
- Technology
- Workforce Skills Capital Grants



- Policy proposals to:
- Expand ability of MSCBA to borrow for wider range of projects
- Allow DCAMM to dispose of surplus HE property
- Exempt smaller projects from certified study requirement



An Informed Approach: Higher Education Capital Working Group

The **Higher Education Capital Working Group** (established in FY25 GAA, Section 196) was charged with sizing the problem & recommending solutions.

Working Group included members from:

- Relevant state agencies (A&F, EOE, DCAMM, OCIR)
- Legislators from the Joint Committees for Higher Education and Bonding
- Designees of the public higher education sectors in Massachusetts
- And other stakeholders

Completed report before the March 1, 2025, deadline to align with budget and legislative calendar. Full report [here](#).

Higher Education Capital Working Group



FINAL REPORT

January 21, 2025



The BRIGHT Act – Financing Higher Ed Capital

- **\$2.5 billion for the University of Massachusetts system, state universities and community colleges** to address deferred maintenance, decarbonize and modernize facilities, construct major capital projects, and manage land and buildings to meet institutional goals.
- **\$500 M for targeted funding for other initiatives**, including:
 - **\$100 M** in planning costs for disposition/acquisition of land & buildings to support **housing development**
 - **\$170 M for smaller modernization projects**, such as:
 - Renovating and modernizing labs
 - Expanding collaborations between community colleges and secondary schools
 - Upgrading facilities related to student health, mental health, wellness, and safety
 - **\$30 M for development of campus master plans** to align investments with long-term goals and ensure optimal use of new resources
 - **\$20 M for technology projects**, including online and hybrid workspaces & shared enterprise systems
 - **\$100 M** for the **Workforce Skills Capital** grant program to support its continued success



The BRIGHT Act – Policy Proposals

- **Massachusetts State College Building Authority:**

- Expands MSCBA's authority to issue bonds for projects at community colleges
- Allows MSCBA to undertake non-revenue-generating projects (e.g., academic and administrative buildings, campus infrastructure, energy efficiency, and decarbonization)
- Requires A&F approval for MSCBA projects and Commonwealth-guaranteed contracts
- Allows DCAMM to delegate structural or mechanical projects up to \$10M to the MSCBA

- **Surplus Property Disposition:**

- Authorizes DCAMM to dispose of surplus property from higher education institutions at the request of the Chancellor or President for redevelopment
- Establishes a special revenue fund for proceeds from higher education property dispositions
- Net disposition proceeds can support capital investments in the campuses, subject to A&F approval

- **Study Exemption:**

- Exempts building projects under \$500,000 from the statutory certified study requirement
- Removes outdated language related to designer requirements



The BRIGHT Act -- Next Steps and Implementation

- Proposal relies on passage of **2 complementary pieces of legislation:**
 - House 1 proposal to leverage \$125 M in Fair Share for special obligation bonds, and
 - The BRIGHT Act, which includes authorizations and policy proposals that translate new funding into action
- Once both pieces passed, **campuses will feel initial impact quickly**
 - Smaller accelerated infrastructure or lab modernization projects can be done in 2 years
 - Larger major capital projects may take 4-5 years
- In parallel, DCAMM will **continue engaging working group members on implementation** details and other report recommendations, such as:
 - Reviewing anticipated formula
 - Refining criteria for existing programs
 - Developing details of proposed new capital programs

For more information go to: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/higher-education-bond-bill>