

NASHVILLE—Tennessee needs at least \$54.8 billion worth of public infrastructure improvements during the five-year period of July 2018 to June 2023—a \$4.8 billion (9.7%) increase from the year before—according to a new report by the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR). More than \$3.7 billion of this year’s increase is attributable to increases in the need for transportation and utilities infrastructure, the fourth year in a row the estimated cost of needs for this category has increased. This increase in needed infrastructure for transportation and utilities resulted primarily from road projects being developed as part of the Improve Act.

The \$575 million increase in needed improvements for education infrastructure is the second largest among the infrastructure categories in this year’s inventory. Most of this increase resulted from the \$395 million increase in needed improvements at institutions of higher education across the state, while the need for renovations to existing public K-12 schools increased \$242 million. Some of the need for additions and improvements to existing space at public K-12 schools are caused by the condition of existing schools. Although local school officials rated just under 11.5% of public K-12 schools (198) in Tennessee to be in fair or poor condition, 182 of those schools need improvements to existing space and account for 48.2% of the total estimated cost for improving existing space.

Estimated cost was also up in three categories—health, safety, and welfare (\$208 million); recreation and culture (\$206 million); and general government (\$195 million). Reported needs decreased in one category—economic development, which was down \$65 million compared to last year.

Information about funding for the infrastructure needs reported in this year’s inventory indicates that 67.0% of the funds required to meet those needs was not available at the time the inventory was conducted, relatively unchanged from last year’s 68.6%. Excluding improvements needed at existing schools and those drawn from capital budget requests submitted by state agencies, neither of which includes funding information, only \$13.6 billion in funding is available for the remaining \$41.1 billion in needs.

Total estimated costs for current infrastructure needs fall into six general categories:

- Transportation and Utilities: \$29.6 billion
- Education: \$14.2 billion
- Health, Safety, and Welfare: \$7.6 billion
- Recreation and Culture: \$2.1 billion
- General Government: \$894 million
- Economic Development: \$300 million

For each county, the report includes one-page summaries, which list the estimated cost for all types of needed infrastructure in each county by stage of development, highlight the top three types of infrastructure improvements needed in each county based on the total estimated cost, and provide comparisons of the infrastructure needed at public school systems to student enrollment.

The full report is available on TACIR's web site at

<https://www.tn.gov/tacir/infrastructure/infrastructure-reports-/infrastructure-needs-2018-2023.html>.

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TACIR Mission

TACIR's mission is to serve as a forum for the discussion and resolution of intergovernmental problems; provide high-quality research support to state and local government officials in order to improve the overall quality of government in Tennessee and to improve the effectiveness of the intergovernmental system to serve the citizens of Tennessee better.