A wide variety of reports have come out in recent works that provide a glimpse of the state of the nation’s infrastructure. And while state governments are doing what they can—often working within severe fiscal limitations—there is also plenty of evidence of just how daunting the task will be to shore up that infrastructure and get it ready for the future. Here are some recent updates on infrastructure conditions, state and local funding strategies being deployed and other infrastructure-related news.

**State Infrastructure Updates**

- **Georgia:** A recent report by the national nonprofit transportation research group TRIP finds that despite the passage of the 2015 Transportation Funding Act in Georgia, the state will not be able to keep pace with growing infrastructure and capacity needs due to population growth and worsening congestion. “Achieving the state’s goals for a modern, well-maintained and safe transportation system will require staying the course with Georgia’s current transportation program and achieving additional increases in transportation investment,” the report said.

- **Illinois:** Gov. Bruce Rauner has announced a six-year plan to invest $11.05 billion in roads and bridges that includes a shift in focus to a “more realistic approach” that emphasizes smaller repair projects to achieve long-term savings, Equipment World’s Better Roads reported. The asset management approach relies on data to reduce the rate of road and bridge deterioration to prevent the need for future costlier rehabs. The Illinois Department of Transportation says its previously stated goals of keeping roads at 90 percent acceptable and bridges at 93 percent acceptable can’t be reached with current funding levels.

- **Kansas:** The state’s chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers gave Kansas a passing C grade for its highways in the state’s first infrastructure report card since 2013, KMUW radio reports. That represented an improvement over the C- in the previous report card. But ASCE also warned that cuts to funding for the Kansas Department of Transportation are still causing roads to suffer. A task force created by the state legislature this year is charged with examining the impact of the cuts, among other issues.

- **Kentucky:** The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet has announced “Bridging Kentucky,” a six-year, $700 million program to replace or rehabilitate 1,000 bridges. The commonwealth is working with design and consulting firm Stantec to identify and prioritize which bridges to address first. A mix of project delivery methods will be employed as part of the program, including design-bid-build and design-build.

- **Michigan:** Gov. Rick Snyder has signed legislation to create a 27-member statewide Infrastructure Council charged with crafting a decades-long plan to improve Michigan’s transportation, drinking water, wastewater, storm water, communication networks and private utilities, the AASHTO Journal and Associated Press reported.

- **Mississippi:** Governing’s Dan Vock pondered the question “How Long Can a State Go Without Repairing Roads and Bridges?” in the June issue of the magazine. After the Mississippi legislature again failed to pass a road improvement package this year, Gov. Phil Bryant announced that 83 locally owned bridges would immediately be shut down. Mississippi last raised its gas tax in 1987.

- **Nevada:** Could a federal infrastructure bill steal some ideas from southern Nevada? The Las Vegas
Review-Journal reported in May [12] that U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster, who has been working on federal infrastructure legislation, was taking a close look at a fuel indexing tax adopted by the Clark County Commission in 2013. The local tax has raised about $700,000 to pay for 225 road projects countywide since its enactment and county voters in 2016 agreed to extend the tax for another decade, during which it’s expected to raise another $3 billion for road improvements. Politico [13] reported today [13] that Shuster plans to release a discussion draft of an infrastructure plan next week. The plan is said to include proposals on how to pay for it.

Ohio: The aforementioned TRIP focuses on Ohio in another recent report [14]. It notes that while the state has been able to boost highway investments through use of Ohio Turnpike bond proceeds, state highway funding is slated to decrease significantly in 2019. That means the state will face a short-term shortfall in funding for highway capacity expansion projects and a long-term shortfall in funding to maintain the condition of its roads, highways, bridges and public transit systems.

Wisconsin: Gov. Scott Walker announced last month an additional $38.6 million to fund 70 local bridge projects statewide over the next five years, bringing total funding for the Local Bridge Improvement Program to $115 million, the AASHTO Journal reported [15]. But the news comes after new weight restrictions were placed on nearly 200 bridges in the state this spring, according to the La Crosse Tribune [16]. Highway engineers point to the strain on bridges from newer short-haul trucks using tightly-spaced axles to carry more weight in a smaller frame.

Other Infrastructure News

A new Federal Highway Administration report [17] looks at how infrastructure issues are impacting the national highway freight network. Land Line magazine [18] reported on the findings.

An annual analysis of the U.S. logistics industry says a “rethinking” of transportation infrastructure may be required as e-commerce activity continues to reshape supply chains, the AASHTO Journal reported [19].

State transportation officials and others are increasingly concerned about the impact tariffs on steel and aluminum could have on the cost of infrastructure projects, the AASHTO Journal reported last month (see here [20] and here [21]).

The National League of Cities' 2018 State of the Cities report [22] lists infrastructure as one of the biggest agenda priorities for the nation’s mayors.

As part of its “Top States for Business” report, CNBC recently issued its lists of the 10 states with the best infrastructure [23] and 10 states with the worst infrastructure [24]. Number one on the best list: Texas. Number one on the worst list: Rhode Island.

U.S. News & World Report also issued a “Top States for Infrastructure” [25] list recently and put Iowa at the top.

The Infra Blog has an interview [26] with the current President of the American Society of Civil Engineers, Kristina Swallow.

Further Reading


“Slowly and Stealthily, Trump’s DOT Starves Transit Expansion Projects of Federal Funds,” [32]
“Whatever Happened to Trump’s Infrastructure Boom? While billions have been raised to build or fix the nation’s roads, bridges, and airports, little of the money is finding its way to public projects,” [33] Bloomberg Businessweek, July 17, 2018.


“What Else Could We Do With $1.9 Trillion? If we spent that money on infrastructure rather than tax cuts for the rich, we would get better economic performance and more good jobs,” [36] The American Prospect, June 28, 2018.


