

# TACIR

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## TENNESSEE'S PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS INCREASED TO \$61.9 BILLION

### Knox County's Share Is \$4.6 billion

NASHVILLE, TN, - Tennessee needs at least **\$61.9 billion** of public infrastructure improvements during the five-year period of July 2020 through June 2025, according to a new report released by the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR). Public infrastructure improvements for **Knox County** total **\$4.6 billion**, an increase of **\$588.6 million (14.5%)** since last year's report.

The current report, which is based on information provided by state and local officials, shows an increase of **\$3.4 billion** in the entire state's infrastructure needs (5.7%) from the January 2021 report.

Statewide, the top three areas of need are

- Transportation at \$34.7 billion,
- Post-secondary education at \$6.6 billion, and
- School Renovations at \$5.3 billion.

Officials report that Knox County's top three areas of need are

- Post-secondary education at \$2.2 billion,
- Transportation at \$1.6 billion, and
- Water and wastewater at \$440.2 million.

The county's total estimated cost for new or improved infrastructure is \$9,759 per capita, compared with \$8,994 statewide per capita. Knox County's estimated post-secondary education needs per capita amount to \$4,722, lower than the \$4,955 per capita reported statewide. Knox County reported transportation infrastructure needs of \$3,413 per capita, higher than the statewide average of \$957 per capita. As for water and wastewater infrastructure needs, Knox County reported \$926 per capita, which is higher than the statewide average of \$767 per capita.

Less than a third of the money needed to meet Tennessee's public infrastructure needs has been identified. Statewide, officials are confident that \$15.1 billion (32.6%) will be available for the \$46.3 billion in needs for which funding information is collected in this year's report. About **\$1.2 billion (53.8%)** of the **\$2.2 billion** total funding needed to meet **Knox County's** infrastructure needs has been identified. Funding information for needed improvements at existing schools and for needs reported in state agencies' capital budget requests is not collected in the inventory.

Among Tennessee's 95 counties, Knox County ranked

- 3rd in total population (475,609),
- 4th in population change between 2000 and 2020 (92,801),
- 19th in population growth rate since 2000 (24.2%),
- 3rd in population density at 935 people per square mile,
- 3rd in total estimated infrastructure needs (\$4.6 billion),
- 22nd in total estimated infrastructure needs per capita (\$9,759), and
- 85th in total public-school needs per student (\$672).

This report is the only source of statewide information on the condition of public-school buildings and the cost to put them all in good or better condition. According to local school officials, **84.0%** of local public schools statewide are now in good or excellent condition. However, they estimate the cost to put the remaining 16.0% in good or better condition and keep the others in good or excellent condition is **\$5.0 billion**, which is a **\$55 million** increase from the cost reported in the previous inventory.

Officials in Knox County rated 2.3% of their school buildings as less than good overall. Local officials estimate the cost to upgrade or maintain existing schools to good or better condition is \$29.6 million for the Knox County school system. The cost to bring all Tennessee public school buildings up to at least good condition is \$5,429 per student statewide, compared with **\$556** per student in **Knox County**.

This year's report, like last year's, includes a statewide overview chapter that provides information by type of infrastructure, the condition and needs of our public-school facilities, the availability of funding to meet reported needs, and a comparison of county-area needs. Following that section, one-page summaries for each county-area list the estimated cost for all types of infrastructure by stage of development. The summaries also highlight the top three types of infrastructure improvements needed in each county based on total estimated cost and compare the infrastructure needed at public school systems to student enrollment. Further detailed county-area information about each type of infrastructure in the inventory, along with relevant legislation, inventory forms, and a glossary of terms, can be found in the appendixes to the report.

The full report can be found on TACIR's web site at <https://www.tn.gov/tacir/infrastructure/infrastructure-reports/building-tennessee-s-tomorrow-2020-2025.html>

### ***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 better serve the citizens of Tennessee.