INFRASTRUCTURE COLORADO'S REPORT CARD FOR COLORADO'S INFRASTRUCTURE 2020

About ASCE-COLORADO

The Colorado Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) was formed in 1909 and today represents almost 3,500 civil engineer members across the great state of Colorado. Since its founding, the Section has been actively involved in the advancement of the science and profession of civil engineering in Colorado.

With our commitment to serve and protect the public in mind, the Report Card released by the ASCE Colorado Section is a public, voluntary service to citizens and policymakers to inform them of infrastructure needs in their communities.

Contact Us

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www.infrastructurereportcard.org/Colorado

How You Can Get Involved

1. Get the full story behind this Report Card at www.infrastructurereportcard.org/colorado/
2. Find out the condition of the infrastructure near you on the Save America’s Infrastructure app available on iTunes and Google Play.
3. Ask your elected official what they’re doing to make sure your infrastructure is reliable for the future. Use your zip code to find your list of elected officials at www.infrastructurereportcard.org/get-involved/tell-your-legislators/

Infrastructure Matters

Whether or not we realize it, Coloradans use infrastructure every day. When we’re driving over roads and bridges, taking a shower, or charging our cell phones, we’re relying on our built systems to support our daily lives. And it’s not just as individuals - Colorado’s infrastructure supports our local businesses and industries by enabling agricultural products and manufacturing goods to get to market.

The effects of weather, wear-and-tear, and increased use from a growing population all take their toll on our infrastructure. Regular maintenance can help extend the lifespan of an asset, but such maintenance requires robust and sustainable funding, something Colorado and the nation at-large are oftentimes lacking. Meanwhile, parts of Colorado’s infrastructure are going without routine inspections, meaning the condition of our infrastructure is unknown.

While you may not think about infrastructure every day, civil engineers do. As part of our pledge to hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public, the Colorado Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) provides a Report Card on Colorado’s Infrastructure. This Report Card presents information for every citizen and decision-maker so that they too can understand how Colorado’s infrastructure is faring and what can be done to improve the grades. If you drive, take the light rail, own a business, or take a shower — this Report Card is for you.

About the Grades

Infrastructure is graded based on eight criteria: capacity, condition, funding, future need, operation and maintenance, public safety, resilience, and innovation. ASCE grades on the following scale and defines these grades as:

- A: Exceptional, Fit for the Future
- B: Good, Adequate for Now
- C: Mediocre, Requires Attention
- D: Poor, At Risk
- F: Failing/Critical, Unfit for Purpose

Prioritizing infrastructure during state and local budget discussions and in elections can help connect disparate parts of the state, strengthen the economy, and alleviate challenges associated with a quickly-growing population. Adequate support must be provided to low-income communities to promote a high quality of life. Legislators should put together an inclusive infrastructure connectivity plan that identifies all regions of the state and prioritizes rural and low-income areas.

Robust transit and multi-modal planning and funding is needed to create viable transportation alternatives to help combat congestion and pollution, especially in metropolitan areas. Providing increased funding for the Regional Transportation District and other transit agencies so that they can provide adequate service to customers is a good first step.

Colorado’s voters have a decisive say on infrastructure funding as a result of TABOR and the Gallagher Amendment. Public education on infrastructure needs and related legislation should be undertaken consistently. Education efforts should seek to create mutual trust between the government and the public, based on the shared understanding that each new revenue stream will provide value for taxpayers.

The Colorado State Legislature should increase funding for the Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) competitive grant program. The BEST Program provides support to public schools looking to invest in their capital construction needs. Additional funding could come in part from re-allocating Amendment 64 special sales tax revenue that is currently going to the General and other funds, as well as increasing revenue from School Trust Lands.

SOLUTIONS TO RAISE THE GRADE

1. Prioritizing infrastructure during state and local budget discussions and in elections can help connect disparate parts of the state, strengthen the economy, and alleviate challenges associated with a quickly-growing population. Adequate support must be provided to low-income communities to promote a high quality of life. Legislators should put together an inclusive infrastructure connectivity plan that identifies all regions of the state and prioritizes rural and low-income areas.
2. Robust transit and multi-modal planning and funding is needed to create viable transportation alternatives to help combat congestion and pollution, especially in metropolitan areas. Providing increased funding for the Regional Transportation District and other transit agencies so that they can provide adequate service to customers is a good first step.
3. Colorado’s voters have a decisive say on infrastructure funding as a result of TABOR and the Gallagher Amendment. Public education on infrastructure needs and related legislation should be undertaken consistently. Education efforts should seek to create mutual trust between the government and the public, based on the shared understanding that each new revenue stream will provide value for taxpayers.
4. The Colorado State Legislature should increase funding for the Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) competitive grant program. The BEST Program provides support to public schools looking to invest in their capital construction needs. Additional funding could come in part from re-allocating Amendment 64 special sales tax revenue that is currently going to the General and other funds, as well as increasing revenue from School Trust Lands.

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COLORADO'S INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT CARD

The 2020 Report Card for Colorado's Infrastructure gave the state an overall GPA of C-. The good news is there are solutions to all of these challenges, and we can raise Colorado's infrastructure grades. By learning more today about the conditions of the infrastructure you use every day, you can help raise the grade.

AVIATION

There are 94 public use airports in Colorado listed in the National Plan of Integrated Airports System, nine of which classified for commercial service. Runway pavement condition is good in 2018, the area-weighted pavement condition index for major and intermediate airport primary runways meet the state's goal. The 2018 runway pavement condition index remained essentially unchanged from the 2014 inventory, which indicates Colorado's airport pavements have been adequately maintained the past four years. The largest airport in Colorado is Denver International Airport (DEN), which is the fifth busiest airport in the country and 15th in the world. In 2018, DEN served a record 32.28 million passengers, a 9.8% increase from 2017. Denver InternationalAirport must also plan to address the state's widening water supply-demand gap in the beginning stages.

WASTEWATER

There are 132 counties in Colorado that maintain wastewater treatment facilities, and 21% of the population is served by a wastewater system. The San Juan River is the only river that is not served by any wastewater system. The technology used to treat wastewater in Colorado is currently required to be in compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. In 2015, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) proposed a new wastewater rule that added effluent discharge limitations to the NPDES program.

TRANSPORTATION

In general, Colorado's transit networks have made consistent strides over the past few years, despite funding shortfalls. Parts of Colorado are home to award-winning rural and urban transit systems. Amtrak, the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, which is served by Colorado, while Class III (short-line) routes provide connections to local towns and cities, and Class IV (commuter and intercity) routes provide connections to neighboring towns.

SCHOOLS

Education is a significant part of the economy of the State of Colorado. The K-12 school system serves students that make up 16% to 18% of the state’s population. In 2019-20, the student body at Colorado public schools is 17% free or reduced-price. In 2019-20 school year, there are 179 school districts that maintain 1,091,012, 81% of students and schools are a part of the public school system. There are 48,866 students, and 514 public schools. Thirty percent of the student body is in K-8 and 77% of students are in 9-12 grades.

AIRPORTS

Colorado is home to 132 airports that serve a variety of transportation needs, including general aviation, air cargo, air express, and helicopter airports. In 2018, the state’s largest airport, Denver International Airport (DEN), served 32.28 million passengers, an increase of 9.8% from 2017. DEN is the fifth busiest airport in the United States and the 15th busiest airport in the world. DEN is the gateway to the Rocky Mountains and is the hub for U.S. air service to and from Latin America. DEN is the only major airport that is owned and operated by a public agency, the Denver International Airport Authority (DIAA).

DAMs

Colorado's dam database shows Colorado is home to 431 high hazard dams. A high hazard dam is defined as a dam that could cause the deaths of 100 or more people in a single failure. These dams also have multiple facilities, such as powerhouses, recreation areas, and easements. The Government of Colorado has identified 16 high hazard dams that require immediate action to address the risk to the public and the environment.

SCHOOLS

Colorado has 18,084 school buildings that house about 1.6 million students. In 2019-20, the student body at Colorado public schools is 17% free or reduced-price. In 2019-20 school year, there are 179 school districts that maintain 1,091,012, 81% of students and schools are a part of the public school system. There are 48,866 students, and 514 public schools. Thirty percent of the student body is in K-8 and 77% of students are in 9-12 grades.

WASTEWATER

Wastewater infrastructure is often an overlooked element of the infrastructure sector due to the lack of visibility and the public’s common practice of taking the benefits of this infrastructure for granted. In Colorado, there are an estimated 16,000 miles of sewers to serve approximately 62% of the population.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Colorado has a significant amount of hazardous waste sites in the state. Colorado's 422 Superfund sites and 113 Brownfields. Superfunds contain hazardous waste that was left behind by industry or commerce and pose a threat to human health and the environment. Brownfields are sites previously used for industrial or commercial purposes and continue to be defined by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) as brownfields and meet the criteria for designation as a brownfield.

ADDRESSES

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