Infrastructure is the backbone of our daily lives and communities. While we don’t always acknowledge it, the condition of our infrastructure has a very real impact on every person and business. We all depend on roads and bridges to get us where we are going, water infrastructure that delivers clean water to our taps, and a system of inland waterways, ports, rail and transit to move goods and people that fuels our economy.

Illinois has a unique competitive economic advantage being at the crossroads of the country’s rail, air, roadway and waterway systems. Historically, large investments were made in our infrastructure to capitalize on these advantages, which created and promoted growth and advantages for Illinois’ economy and citizens. In recent years however, there has been a trend of underinvestment that threatens our competitive advantage and the health, safety and welfare of our citizens.

The Report Card was created to help Illinois understand the state of our infrastructure. As civil engineers, our job is to plan, design, construct, and maintain our infrastructure networks and this document allows us the opportunity to share that information with the public. The Report Card provides a snapshot for residents and officials and citizens on the condition of our State’s infrastructure using sound engineering evaluation criteria and to provide recommendations on how to raise the grade. Since 1915, the Illinois Section has represented civil engineering experts in their respective fields from the Illinois Section of ASCE, with assistance from the Central Illinois Section, Quad Cities Section, and the St. Louis Section, prepared The Report Card for Illinois’ Infrastructure. The Report Card is created to educate and advise our elected officials and citizens on the condition of our State’s infrastructure using sound engineering evaluation criteria and to provide recommendations on how to raise the grade. Since 1915, the Illinois Section has represented Civil Engineers in America’s engineering hub and the organization recently celebrated its Centennial Anniversary. ASCE provides a platform for our members to mentor, learn and teach, which enables us to serve as stewards of infrastructure in our state, nation and throughout the world.

Infrastructure Matters

**About the Grades**

Civil engineering experts in their respective fields from the Illinois Section of ASCE, with assistance from the Central Illinois Section, Quad Cities Section, and the St. Louis Section, prepared The Report Card for Illinois’ Infrastructure. The Report Card is created to educate and advise our elected officials and citizens on the condition of our State’s infrastructure using sound engineering evaluation criteria and to provide recommendations on how to raise the grade.

**5 STEPS WE CAN TAKE**

1. **Prioritize Infrastructure.** Illinois must make infrastructure a priority again. After the last four years of pension crises, unpaid bills and budget stalemates, infrastructure has fallen off the radar of our policymakers - and our citizens are paying the price.

2. **Sustainable Funding.** Our leaders must consistently pass balanced budgets and develop new revenue sources that provide adequate long-term sustainable funding for infrastructure. Existing programs such as CREATE for passenger and freight rail, Public-Private Partnerships for roadways and bridges, and TIFIA for transit must be fully utilized and leveraged.

3. **Pass a Capital Plan.** The State needs to pass a Capital Plan to ensure we have a roadmap for the future. The previous Illinois Jobs Now program was passed in 2009 and has run its course. While a Capital Plan does not solve the need for sustainable long-term funding, it does provide desperately needed resources for the State’s infrastructure after several years of reduced funding.

4. **Capitalize on Advantages.** We must capitalize on our location at the crossroads of the nation. Our existing network of railways, roadways, inland waterways, and location on the Great Lakes gives our State a competitive economic advantage. However, without investment in these infrastructure systems, that advantage will be lost.

5. **Forward Thinking.** The backbone of our State’s infrastructure was built 50 to 100 years ago and upgrades are necessary for modernization, resiliency and to accommodate its changing uses. We need to consider emerging technologies and shifting social and economic trends as we design our future infrastructure with clear economic, social, and environmental benefits in mind.

**Contact Us**

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The 2018 Report Card for Illinois’ Infrastructure gives the state an overall GPA of C-. Illinois’ civil engineers studied 10 infrastructure categories. Of those 10, seven infrastructure categories are in mediocre condition and three categories are in poor condition.

Illinois is home to 26,775 bridges, the third largest bridge inventory in the nation. Of these bridges, 8.6% are classified as structurally deficient. There are an average of 1.824 state-regulated dams in Illinois that have multiple potential functions, carry differing levels of risk, and are owned and operated by both the public and private sectors. Over 50% of the dams in the state are over 50 years old, and within four years, nearly 80% of Illinois dams will be over 50 years old. Many infrastructure components are nearing their design life and are expected to require significant maintenance in the near future. Publicly-owned dams are generally in satisfactory condition, but nearly 75% of the State’s dams are privately-owned and have limited access to public funding mechanisms for major repairs. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources dam safety program continues to do as much as it can, but it is suffering from decreased funding and a reduction of staff.

Illinois has 19 public port districts and over 350 private terminals located along the Illinois, Kaskaskia, Ohio, Mississippi and Wabash Rivers, as well as Lake Michigan. These ports promote economic development, including industrial, commercial, and transportation activities, with a total revenue impact of $6.4 billion while supporting over 48,000 jobs. Illinois ports and their respective industrial parks are responsible for moving more than $81 billion of manufactured goods, $37 billion of agricultural products and $18 billion of chemical products. Unlike many other states, the ports within Illinois receive no funding from the State. Instead, they raise their own revenue for projects and compete for the limited federal grants or financing available to them.

Illinois is home to one of the most important rail hubs in the country and rail is integral to the State’s economy. The 7,000-mile long-train network is the second largest in the country, and Illinois is the only state in which all seven Class One freight railroads operate. 500 freight trains with 37,000 cars and 700 passenger and commuter trains carrying 329,000 passengers pass through Chicago every day. Nearly one quarter of the nation’s rail-shipped goods and services move through Chicago, and more carbs of freight are carried through Illinois than any other state in the nation. Significant investments have been completed or are underway to expand capacity and improve the condition of publicly and privately-owned rail infrastructure, including well over $3 billion by Class One railroads over the last eight years. However, over $17.5 billion of substantial investments to the railroad infrastructure in Illinois are needed to accommodate the expected 30% future growth in freight rail traffic over the next three decades.