pipelines, the municipal water supply infrastructure failures/breaches also faces unique dam safety challenges in regards to dam ages, becomes even more critical in managing water resources as Utah’s population is projected to double, Utah’s water needs are significant and growing.

HAZARDOUS WASTE C+

HAZARDOUS WASTE management in Utah is monitored and permitted based on the materials and waste generators—large and small waste generating industries or households. There are 15 permitted hazardous waste facilities in Utah, and 13 superfund National Priorities List sites with known releases of hazardous substances or pollutants. The Utah Generation and Management Report for 2011 states that waste generation in Utah is cyclical, often related to local and national economic cycles. 56% of Utah’s waste is sent to landfill/impound facilities; 43% to incinerators and 2% to other facilities. In 2011-12, Utah solid and hazardous waste reported a decrease of about 18% of waste generated. Demand for management facilities is trending downward due to completion of historic waste sites, improvement in manufacturing, product substitution and an increase in recycling of waste products.

LEVEES D-

FEMA estimates that 72 miles of Utah’s existing levees will require assessment in the immediate future. While there is an increased focus on levee evaluation nationally after recent costly failures and emergency expenditures, the condition of the majority of the levees across Utah is largely unknown. Risks associated with unassessed levees could lead to significant increases in flood protection requirements and insurance costs to home and property owners. The Army Corps of Engineers is currently tracking roughly 21 miles of levees within the state as part of the National Levee Database. 10 of these, 10.5 miles are considered unacceptable and only 1.5 are considered minimally acceptable. If the remaining conditions are improved, there is little to no risk of flooding. As recently as 2011, the impact of serious flooding from inadequate levees was seen in Weber County, which highlights the potential risks of inadequate or poorly maintained levees that protect homes and businesses.

ROADS B+

Utah has a history of strong investment in roads, meeting or exceeding even more critical in managing water resources. Utah also faces unique dam safety challenges in regards to dam ages, regional seismic risks near population centers, and a continuing trend of urban growth in the flood paths of potential dam failures/breaches.

DRINKING WATER & SUPPLY C

Historically, Utah’s water distribution and water supply have been adequate as a result of careful infrastructure investments, but large mountain impediments and equally large delivery pipelines, the municipal water supply infrastructure is at risk from seismic threats and changing precipitation patterns. As reduced snowpack supply meets a growing population, aggressive water conservation alone may not be adequate, and new, significant infrastructure solutions must be considered. A detailed analysis of Utah’s municipal water needs by Utah’s major water supply agencies estimated costs through 2060 for repair and replacement of water infrastructure will be $77.9 billion plus $14.8 billion for new facilities. As Utah’s population is projected to double, Utah’s water needs are significant and growing.

UTAH’s INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT CARD

BRIDGES B+

Canals D+

DAMS B-

WASTEWATER & STORMWATER C+

HAZARDOUS WASTE C+

LEVEES D-

ROADS B+

SOLID WASTE B-

TRANSIT B+

Each category was evaluated on the basis of capacity, condition, funding, future need, operation and maintenance, public safety, innovation and resilience.
RAISE THE GRADES
5 KEY SOLUTIONS

1. DEVELOP AND FUND PLANS TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE UTAH’S INFRASTRUCTURE: Infrastructure investment must be increased to meet Utah’s growing needs, but it also should be prioritized and executed according to well-conceived plans that focus on the health and goals of the system and economy.

2. PLAN TO COORDINATE AND SAVE: Continuing to proceed piecemeal in the development of infrastructure strategies and plans for our complex, urbanizing populace is not practical nor a responsible means for dealing with the future. State leaders should organize a comprehensive and coordinated infrastructure planning effort that could bring needed efficiencies, significant savings, investment, and, most importantly, added safety.

3. PLAN TO REBUILD TO REBOUND: If something must be replaced, let’s rebuild it to rebound when challenged. Our leaders should task experts to use current risk models and prepare forward-looking economic analyses that assesses the cost of inaction in the face of population growth and potential natural hazards, like an earthquake, and consider using a responsible portion of what will certainly be spent tomorrow strengthening our infrastructure today.

4. INCREASE LEADERSHIP IN INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL: Utah’s infrastructure is a responsibility of state and local leaders, and leadership is needed to maintain and renew the infrastructure the generations before us have built.

5. PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE: Today’s infrastructure must meet the community’s ongoing needs, and at the same time, protect and improve environmental quality. Sustainability, resiliency, and ongoing maintenance must be an integral part of improving Utah’s infrastructure.

Utah’s public infrastructure systems are at a crossroads of historic growth. Significant changes are needed as population density increases and the state’s infrastructure faces new demands. Utah is seeing a rapid shift towards urbanization but also a transition in infrastructure use from an agrarian to urban corridor.

Both old and new infrastructure will require Utah’s attention. In this assessment, available funding and needs information was compiled, and it is estimated that Utah’s infrastructure needs over the next 20 years exceed $60 billion to both maintain and provide infrastructure for growing areas. As federal funding sources recede, the State of Utah will need to strive to be self-sufficient in the planning and funding of infrastructure.

The 2015 Report Card for Utah’s Infrastructure is an independent review of the current state of infrastructure needs, capability and funding in the State of Utah by the Utah Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers. It is a tool that shows every citizen the extent, condition, and importance of the state’s infrastructure assets that support modern life.