



# TACIR

The Tennessee Advisory Commission  
on Intergovernmental Relations



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## ***MEMORANDUM***

**TO:** Commission Members

**FROM:** Cliff Lippard *Cliff*  
Executive Director

**DATE:** 29 August 2017

**SUBJECT:** Staff and Commission Updates

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### **Commission Update**

Mayor Tom Rowland, citing personal reasons, resigned from the Commission effective August 3, 2017. Mayor Rowland has served on the Commission since August 1995 and has served as vice chairman since August 2002. One of our most active members and a dedicated public servant, we will miss having Mayor Rowland on the Commission, but we wish him the best with his continued service to the people of Cleveland. Mayor Rowland could not be at the meeting today, but please join me in thanking him for his service.

Also, as has been widely reported, Senator Mark Norris, TACIR chairman, has been nominated by President Trump to serve as Federal District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee. It is not known how long the nomination process will take, and Senator Norris will continue to serve the people of Tennessee's 32<sup>nd</sup> Senate District, and as TACIR chairman, in the interim. Please join me in congratulating Chairman Norris on his nomination.

In other news, the Commission was recently recognized for outstanding public policy achievement by the Governmental Research Association (GRA) for the tangible improvements in government made possible in part by its 2015 report, *Municipal Boundaries in Tennessee: Annexation and Growth Planning Policies after Public Chapter 707*. The GRA is a national organization for professionals engaged in public policy research.

Also, the Department of Health has requested that the Commission designate someone to participate on the working group for their fluoridation initiative. While we might be able to assist the groups in tasks such as weighing the potential public health benefits versus the cost to local governments of maintaining infrastructure, etc., it is not clear we would be able to work with the group's timeline (they are supposed to complete their work by September 30, 2017). An option that might be better would be for the working group to recommend the legislature seek a TACIR study next session.

Finally, staff proposes an enhancement to the Public Infrastructure Needs Inventory database that would make it possible for our contract surveyors from the development districts to enter latitude and longitude coordinates for local projects. This would provide more precise location information, which would allow staff to track infrastructure needs at the parcel level and better analyze urban growth boundary issues. It would also improve the quality of data and the survey process by further eliminating duplicate projects in the inventory. The first step, if the Commission agrees we should pursue this enhancement, will be an analysis by a consultant already familiar with the application programming code and the SQL database to determine which modules require modifications for this enhancement. After the modules have been identified, TACIR staff would complete the programming over a few months within existing resources. Staff estimates the maximum cost for the work of the consultant at no more than \$500.

### **Staff Update**

Ethel Detch, senior research consultant, is retiring from her status as a contracted part-time employee with the Commission on August 31, 2017. Ethel has been a valuable member of the TACIR team since March of 2009, serving as lead researcher on several of our more complex studies and contributing to numerous others. Before joining the TACIR staff, Ethel retired from the State of Tennessee following a 30 year career that culminated with her serving as director of the Comptroller of the Treasury's Offices of Research and Education Accountability. Please join me in thanking Ethel for her service.