

October 29, 2010

TRIP Report Examines Alabama's Traffic Challenges, Needs

A new report from the nonprofit transportation research organization TRIP highlights Alabama's worst transportation chokepoints and their impacts on the state's motorists.

"Alabama's quality of life and economic productivity are being reduced by chokepoints in the state's surface transportation system," according to the report. "These chokepoints include major roads, highways, and public transit routes that impede travel, commuting, or commerce, or that place limits on economic development opportunities because of out-dated design or lack of adequate capacity."

The report lists Alabama's top 40 chokepoints. The worst of these is the Interstate 10 Wallace Tunnels under the Mobile River in Mobile County. Other severe chokepoints throughout the state include Interstate 65 from Interstate 20 to U.S. 31 in Jefferson County, U.S. 280 from Brook Highland Parkway to Riverview Road in Jefferson County, Interstate 20 from Airport Highway to U.S. 31 in Jefferson County, Birmingham's regional transit system, and Interstate 85 from I-65 to Taylor Road in Montgomery County.

Alabama will need to address these surface transportation chokepoints and others to help improve mobility and boost the state's economy, the report contends. Improvement of these troubled segments can help create and support jobs throughout Alabama, where the unemployment rate climbed from 3.5% in August 2007 to 9.2% this past August.

"In addition to causing a headache for motorists, Alabama's transportation chokepoints stifle economic development and growth at a time when it is desperately needed," Will Wilkins, executive director of TRIP, said in a statement. "Alabama can't get where it needs to go -- in both a literal and economic sense -- without an efficient transportation system."

Money spent on surface transportation improvements will also increase safety for Alabamans, the report points out.

"One of the most important aspects of improving highways and bridges is safety," said Clay Ingram, AAA Alabama spokesperson. "Increasing mobility and reducing congestion is also important, but saving lives is the best investment we can make for the motorists of Alabama."

The 26-page report, "Alabama's Transportation Chokepoints: The Top 40 Chokepoints and Remedies for Relief," is available at bit.ly/Alabama_TRIP-Report.