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TRIP: Alabama's top 40 transportation chokepoints

The **I-10 Wallace Tunnels in Mobile** top the list of **Alabama's worst transportation chokepoints**, along with multiple sections of I-65, I-20 and I-85.

This is according to a new report released Oct. 28 by **TRIP, a Washington, D.C.-based national transportation research organization.**

TRIP's report, "**Alabama's Transportation Chokepoints: The Top 40 Chokepoints and Remedies for Relief,**" ranks the state's urban interchanges, highway segments, transit routes, and sections of rural highways that provide inadequate mobility.

These transportation chokepoints impede local, regional or interstate travel, diminish the quality of life of residents and visitors, reduce economic competitiveness, and stifle economic growth and recovery by hampering commuting, commerce and other travel.

In addition to identifying the chokepoints, the report also offers potential improvements for each segment that would ease the burden on travelers and allow for improved mobility.

According to the TRIP report, the **worst transportation chokepoint in Alabama** is the I-10 Wallace Tunnels under the Mobile River in Mobile County.

The state's most severe chokepoints also include the following: I-65 from I-20 to US 31 in Jefferson County, US

280 from Brook Highland Parkway to Riverview Road in Jefferson County, I-65 from SR 119 to I-459 in Jefferson and Shelby Counties, US 280 from Cahaba River Road/Dolly Ridge Road to Cherokee Drive in Jefferson County, I-65 from Airport Boulevard to Springhill Avenue in Mobile County, I-65 from County Road 52 to State Road 119 in Shelby County, I-20 from Airport Highway to US 31 in Jefferson County, Birmingham's regional transit system, and I-85 from I-65 to Taylor Road in Montgomery County.

The report's appendix contains a full list of the 40 worst chokepoints in the state as well as possible solutions to ease each chokepoint.

"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. Alabama can't get where it needs to go – in both a literal and an economic sense – without an efficient transportation system" said **Will Wilkins, executive director of TRIP.**

As part of reversing the current economic downturn and facilitating long-term economic growth, Alabama will need to address its numerous **surface transportation chokepoints**, **TRIP** points out.

Enhancing critical segments of Alabama's surface transportation system will boost the state's economy in the short-term by creating jobs in construction and related fields, according to **TRIP.**

In the long term, the organization says, these improvements will enhance economic competitiveness by improving access and mobility, which will stimulate sustained job growth and improve the quality of life in Alabama.

Additionally, **TRIP** says, making needed improvements to the state's transportation system can help boost Alabama's economy.

The state's unemployment rate increased from 3.5 percent in August 2007 to 9.2 percent in August 2010. A 2007 analysis by the Federal Highway Administration found that every \$1 billion invested in highway construction would support approximately 27,800 jobs, including about 9,500 in the construction sector, about 4,300 jobs in industries supporting the construction sector, and about 14,000 other jobs induced in non-construction related sectors of the economy.

The **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)** also estimates that each dollar spent on road, highway and bridge improvements results in an average benefit of \$5.20 in the form of reduced vehicle maintenance costs, reduced delays, reduced fuel consumption, improved safety, reduced road and bridge maintenance costs and reduced emissions as a result of improved traffic flow.

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