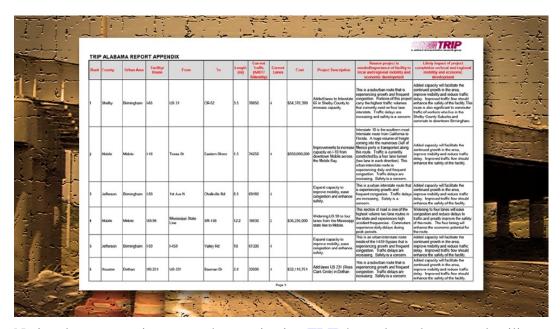


50 roadway projects critically needed in Alabama

By Erica Huddleston



National transportation research organization <u>TRIP</u> has released a report detailing work needed on Alabama roadways. There are 50 projects the organization says are critical for economic recovery and growth.

The projects identified were evaluated on:

- Short-term economic benefits, including job creation.
- Improvement in the condition of transportation facility, including safety improvements.
- Improved access and mobility.
- Long-term improvement in regional or state economic performance and competitiveness.

The number one project listed is adding lanes to Interstate 65 in Shelby County. TRIP says doing so would fuel economic growth by facilitating continued growth in the area and improving mobility.

Other projects include adding lanes to Interstate 59 from 1st Avenue to Chalkville Road and from I-459 to Valley Road and adding lanes to portions of I-65 in Birmingham. Researchers also say widening Highway 119 from Interstate 65 to Highway 280 in Birmingham would help relieve congestion on the highway, which is considered one of the highest volume two-lane routes in the state.

TRIP estimates the cost of improvements would cost \$4.6 billion. The Alabama Department of Transportation says driver safety is of high importance across the state. ALDOT prioritizes needs and makes improvements based on funding.

Jefferson County Commissioner Joe Knight agrees. Knight says, "We understand we have a duty to keep our roads maintained, get them in good shape, because that effects the quality of life...We have to have a plan in place to maintain our roads. We've done that. We've put a plan in place and we're going to continue to do that. But doing that depends on funding."

See the complete report <u>click here</u>.