

DOTHAN EAGLE

Report: Circle project among state's most needed

BY LANCE GRIFFIN

lgriffin@dothaneagle.com

A national transportation research group ranks a Dothan project among the 10 most needed in Alabama.

According to a release from TRIP of Washington, D.C., the group ranks the proposed second phase of Ross Clark Circle improvements as number 6 in a list of the 50 most needed Alabama projects.

"This \$32 million project would add lanes to nearly three miles of (Ross Clark Circle) in Dothan. This route is experiencing growth, frequent congestion, travel delays and safety issues. Added capacity will facilitate continued growth in the area, improve mobility and reduce traffic delays while enhancing safety," the report states.

According to the report, the widening of I-65 in Shelby County is the most needed project. The county has experienced substantial growth over the past several years and I-65 serves as a major feeder into the county, as well as into Birmingham, located just north of Shelby County. The project would cost an estimated \$54 million.

Two other Wiregrass projects made the TRIP's top 50 list.

Number 27 is improved access management on U.S. 231 in Ozark. The report states controlled access to businesses would help facilitate the continued growth in the area as well as improve mobility and reduce traffic delay. Estimated cost of the project is \$8.45 million.

Number 33 is the widening of Alabama Highway 52 from Geneva to Malvern. The report suggests the county's lack of four-lane access kills economic development. The project would cost an estimated \$155 million.

Overall, the suggested projects for Alabama would total \$4.6 billion.

Other top 10 road projects for Alabama according to the TRIP Report include:

- » No. 2: Increasing capacity on I-10 from downtown Mobile across the Mobile Bay. Estimated cost is \$850 million.
- » No. 3: Widen 8.5 miles of I-59 in Birmingham near downtown. Estimated cost is unknown.
- » No. 4: Widen 12.2 miles of U.S. Highway 98 near Mobile to the Mississippi State line. Estimated cost is \$36.2 million.
- » No. 5: Expand capacity on I-59 in Jefferson County from the outer loop to Valley Road, about 10 miles. Estimated cost is unknown.
- » No. 7: Widen one mile of McFarland Boulevard just west of Tuscaloosa to four lanes. Estimated cost is \$7.3 million.
- » No. 8: Widen 4.1 miles of State Road 133 in Colbert County. Estimated cost is \$43.7 million.
- » No. 9: Widen ½ mile of State Road 14 near Millbrook, just north of Montgomery. According to the report, it has one of the highest traffic volumes of any two-lane road in the state. Estimated cost is \$3.6 million.
- » No. 10: Widen 4.5 miles of I-65 in Shelby County to increase capacity. Estimated cost is \$86.3 million.

According to its website, TRIP was founded in 1971. It is a non-profit organization that "researches, evaluates and distributes economic and technical data on surface transportation issues."

TRIP is sponsored by insurance companies, equipment manufacturers, distributors and suppliers; businesses involved in highway and transit engineering and construction, labor unions and other related organizations.

Follow Matt on Twitter [@ElofsonMatt](https://twitter.com/ElofsonMatt).

FRONT PAGE

The collage features several newspaper front pages from the Dothan Eagle. The top page is the main article, "Report: Circle project among state's most needed" by Lance Griffin, dated Friday, February 12, 2016. Below it are two other articles: "Alabama-Florida Peanut Trade Show" by Ebony Davis and "Alabama Ag commissioner: stem cells, drones part of future of agriculture" by Ebony Davis. To the right is a "FALLING SCHOOLS" article by Jim Cook about Grand Middle School. The collage also includes a "STATUS OF NORTHVIEW COACH IN QUESTION" article and a "MINIMUM WAGE" article.