

HUNTSVILLE METRO AREA REPORT CARD

TRIP has assigned the following grades to the Huntsville metro area highway system.

	GRADE	COMMENT
Roads	C	<i>In 2006 (the latest year for which data is available), 17 percent of major roads in the Huntsville metro area were rated in poor condition and an additional seven percent were in mediocre condition. Substandard road conditions cost the average Huntsville motorist \$312 in extra vehicle operating costs each year. This report contains a list of the most deteriorated sections of roadway in the Huntsville area.</i>
Bridges	C+	<i>One percent of the region's 169 bridges are rated as structurally deficient and 21 percent are rated functionally obsolete. This report contains a list of the most deficient bridges in the Huntsville area.</i>
Congestion	C+	<i>By 2030, the amount of Huntsville traffic delays caused by congestion is expected to double. TRIP has provided a list of the most congested sections of roadway in the Huntsville region.</i>
Safety	F	<i>In 2006, the Huntsville area had a traffic fatality rate of 18 fatalities per 100,000 population. From 2002 to 2006, an average of 54 traffic fatalities occurred each year in the Huntsville area. Roadway safety features such as widened lanes, added or improved medians, improved intersection design, paved shoulders and added rumble strips, where appropriate, can reduce traffic fatalities and serious accidents.</i>
Funding	F	<i>Needed regional projects, such as a new corridor from Memphis to Atlanta, can not move forward without additional transportation funding. According to the Alabama Department of Transportation, the state faces a \$6.9 billion shortfall from 2008 to 2017 in highway transportation funding for needed highway projects. TRIP has provided a list of needed but unfunded highway projects in the Huntsville area.</i>

ROAD CONDITIONS

Pavement conditions on Huntsville’s major roads are below desirable standards, with nearly a quarter of major roads in the Huntsville metro area in poor or mediocre condition.

- Seventeen percent of Huntsville’s major roads are rated in poor condition, and an additional seven percent are in mediocre condition. This includes Interstates, highways, connecting urban arterials, and key urban streets that are maintained by state, county or municipal governments.
- Roads rated in poor condition often have significant rutting, potholes or other visible signs of deterioration. Roads in poor condition typically need to be resurfaced or reconstructed. Roads rated in mediocre condition show signs of significant wear and may also have some visible pavement distress. Most pavements in mediocre condition can be repaired by resurfacing, but some may need more extensive reconstruction to return them to good condition.
- Driving on roads in need of repair costs each Huntsville motorist \$312 annually in extra vehicle operating costs, including accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.
- Forty-two percent of Huntsville’s major roads are in good condition. A desirable goal for state and local organizations responsible for road maintenance is to keep 75 percent of major roads in good condition.
- The following is a list of sections of deteriorated roadway in the Huntsville area in immediate need of repair or replacement, for which repairs are not scheduled through the end of 2008.

	Route Name	From	To	Length in Miles	Average Daily Traffic
1	US-431	M.P. 334.85	M.P. 336.32	1.5	73,280
2	US-231	M.P. 313.83	M.P. 317.02	3.2	83,040
3	US-72	M.P. 90	M.P. 92	2	40,340
4	SR-53	M.P. 317	M.P. 318	1	20,740

Source: Alabama Department of Transportation

BRIDGE CONDITIONS

Nearly a quarter of bridges in the Huntsville area are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. This includes all state, local and municipal bridges 20 feet and longer.

- One percent of bridges in the Huntsville area are rated as structurally deficient, showing significant deterioration to decks and other major components.

- Twenty-one percent of bridges in the Huntsville area are functionally obsolete. These bridges no longer meet modern design standards for safety features such as lane widths or alignment with connecting roads or are no longer adequate for the volume of traffic being carried.
- Bridge deficiencies have an impact on mobility and safety. Restrictions on vehicle weight may cause many vehicles – especially emergency vehicles, commercial trucks, school buses and farm equipment – to use alternate routes to avoid these bridges. Narrow bridge lanes, inadequate clearances and poorly aligned bridge approaches reduce traffic safety. Redirected trips lengthen travel time, waste fuel and reduce the efficiency of the local economy.

CONGESTION

Growing travel demand in the Huntsville metro area has led to rising levels of traffic congestion.

- The average rush hour trip in Huntsville takes approximately five percent longer to complete than during non-rush hour times.
- A recent report by the Reason Foundation found that by 2030 the average rush hour trip in Huntsville will take 10 percent longer to complete than during non-rush hour –double the current rate - unless significant highway improvements are completed.
- A region’s major highways and streets are rated based on their level of service (LOS) using the letter grades A, B, C, D, E or F. Roads rated D, E, or F are considered moderately to severely congested. The following is a definition of each Level of Service designation:

A	Free flow of traffic with operation of individual vehicles largely unaffected by presence of other vehicles
B	Stable flow of traffic with slight decline in freedom to maneuver
C	Stable flow of traffic, but vehicle operation is significantly affected by presence of other vehicles in traffic stream
D	Crowded roadway with some decline in speeds. Large number of vehicles restrict mobility and stable traffic flow
E	Unstable, slow traffic flow with virtually no gaps in traffic stream, subject to traffic flow breakdowns
F	Stop-and-go traffic with low speeds and little or poor maneuverability

- The following is a list of major roadways in the Huntsville metro area that have the greatest level of traffic congestion, based on Level of Service (LOS) rating:

	Route	From	To	Length (Mi.)	LOS	Average Daily Traffic	Lanes
1	US-231	Drake Avenue	US-72	2.5	E	103,490	4
2	US-231	Vermont Road	Drake Avenue	2.1	E	93,350	4
3	I-565	Slaughter Road	SR-255 / Rideout Road	2.2	E	75,980	6
4	I-565	SR-53	US-231	2.0	E	75,450	8
5	US-231	Weatherly Road	Vermont Road	2.1	E	64,490	4

Source: Alabama Department of Transportation

SAFETY

Improving safety features on Huntsville’s roads and highways would likely result in a decrease in traffic fatalities in the area. Roadway design is an important factor in approximately one-third of fatal and serious traffic accidents.

- In 2006, the Huntsville area had a traffic fatality rate of 18 fatalities per 100,000 population. From 2002 to 2006 there were an average of 54 traffic fatalities in the Huntsville area each year.
- Highway improvements such as removing or shielding obstacles, adding or improving medians, widening lanes, widening and paving shoulders, upgrading roads from two lanes to four lanes and installing better road markings and traffic signals, where appropriate, can reduce traffic fatalities and accidents.
- The Federal Highway Administration has found that every \$100 million spent on needed highway safety improvements will result in 145 fewer traffic fatalities over a 10-year period.

FUNDING

Alabama faces a transportation funding shortfall of approximately \$6.9 billion from 2008 to 2017. As a result, needed highway projects will not be able to move forward without additional funding.

- The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) projects a funding shortfall of \$6.9 billion from 2008 to 2017.
- ALDOT estimates that from 2008 to 2017, approximately \$16.2 billion is needed to allow the state to significantly improve road and bridge conditions, make reasonable roadway safety improvements and address needed traffic congestion relief.
- According to ALDOT estimates, anticipated funding levels from 2008 to 2017 will be only \$9.3 billion. As a result, needed highway improvement and maintenance projects will not be able to move forward without additional transportation funding.

- The following is a list of significant, needed highway projects in the Huntsville area that are not funded through 2011.

Route	Length (Mi.)	Improvement or new facility?	Reason for Project	Project description
Memphis to Atlanta	8.3	New	Congestion Relief & Economic Development	Memphis to Atlanta corridor from SR-53 (US-231) to SR-1 (US-431), South of Huntsville
SR-255X	1.4	New	Congestion Relief & Economic Development	Southern bypass from Memorial Parkway at Hobbs Island Road to approx 200' N of Green Cove Rd..
SR-53	1.5	Improvement	Capacity	Memorial Parkway N of Whitesburg Dr. to S of Golf Rd. Includes: Grade, drain, base, pave and bridges for the service road and slip ramps
Weatherly Rd.	1.0	New	Congestion Relief & Economic Development	Weatherly Rd. Ext.from Memorial Pkwy to the Southern Bypass
CR-7	3.2	Improvement	Capacity	Widening Zierdt R d. to 5 lane from S of Martin Rd. to I-565
US-72	3.9	Improvement	Capacity	Upgrade lanes on SR-2 from Moore's Mill Rd. to East of Dug Hill Rd.
SR-53	1.9	Improvement	Capacity	SR-53, additional lanes from S of Jeff Rd. to N of Harvest Rd.
SR-1	0.6	Improvement	Capacity	Memorial Parkway from Sparkman Dr. to Mastin Lake Rd. including an overpass at Mastin Lake Rd.
US-72	3.9	Improvement	Capacity	Upgrade lanes on SR-2 from Moore's Mill Rd. to East of Dug Hill Rd.
US-72	8.5	Improvement	Capacity	SR-2 (US-72) from W of Ryland to W City Limits of Gurley

Source: Alabama Department of Transportation.

Sources of information for this report include the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the U.S. Census Bureau, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Reason Foundation and the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT).