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**GEORGIA’S 2015 TRANSPORTATION FUNDING INCREASE ALLOWED FOR IMPROVED ROAD & BRIDGE CONDITIONS AND ENHANCED MOBILITY. ADDITIONAL FUNDS STILL NEEDED TO ADDRESS REGION’S TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND TRAFFIC SAFETY CHALLENGES AND ACCOMMODATE GROWING TRAVEL**

**Columbus, GA**– The 2015 passage of Georgia’s [Transportation Funding Act \(TFA\)](#) allowed the state to address many of its transportation challenges by investing in road, highway and bridge repairs, roadway safety improvements, and congestion relief. Despite this progress, the state will still need additional increases in reliable transportation funding to maintain its aging transportation system, improve traffic safety and serve the future needs of Georgia’s growing economy, according to a new report released today by [TRIP](#), a Washington, DC based national transportation organization.

The TRIP report, [“Modernizing Georgia’s Transportation System: Progress & Challenges in Providing Safe, Efficient and Well-Maintained Roads, Highways & Bridges,”](#) examines the impact of additional funds provided by passage of the TFA – a total of \$5.4 billion from 2016 to 2021- and includes lists of projects throughout the state that will be completed or underway by 2021 partially as a result of increased transportation funding. The report also lists needed projects throughout the state that still lack sufficient funding to proceed prior to 2022. The chart below details projects in the Columbus area that will be completed or underway by 2021 as a result of increased funding, and needed transportation projects in Columbus that still lack sufficient funding to proceed.

Project Description	County/Counties	Improvement	Year	Cost	Benefit of Project
<b>Columbus Projects Underway by 2021 As a Result of Increased Transportation Funding</b>					
SR 219 -SCHLEY CREEK NW OF COLUMBUS	Muscogee	Bridges	2020	\$2.2M	Replace Outdated Bridge
SR 520/US 280 EB & WB - BAGLEY CREEK 2 MI SE OF CUSSETA	Chattahoochee	Bridges	2020	\$2.3M	Replace Outdated Bridge
SR 85/US 27 ALT SB & NB - CR 1660/MILLER RD IN COLUMBUS	Muscogee	Bridges	2021	\$4.8M	Replace Outdated Bridge
SR 22/US 80 - KENDALL CREEK IN COLUMBUS	Muscogee	Bridges	2020	\$1.7M	Replace Outdated Bridge
SR 22/US 80 - FLATROCK CREEK IN COLUMBUS	Muscogee	Bridges	2021	\$3.0M	Replace Outdated Bridge
<b>Columbus Projects That Lack Funding to Proceed Prior to 2022</b>					
SR 520/US 280 @ CHATTAHOOCHEE RVR IN COLUMBUS	Muscogee	Bridge		\$10.8M	N/A

“Thanks to the support of elected leaders who understand the critical role that our state’s infrastructure plays in our economy and quality of life, we are making historic levels of investment and are able to better plan for future growth,” said Georgia Department of Transportation Commissioner Russell McMurry. “That said, additional funding is without question still necessary in order to fully meet our needs, and we are hopeful we will be able to attract federal support while identifying additional state and local resources.”

With Georgia's population anticipated to increase by 2.5 million people by 2040 and vehicle travel in the state growing at the second highest rate nationally since 2013, the TRIP report found that traffic congestion in the Columbus area is worsening, causing 16 annual hours of delay for the average motorist and costing the average driver \$348 annually in lost time and wasted fuel.

"We are fortunate that here in the metro Columbus area we have projects moving forward both as the result of the TSLOST that passed in 2012 and the Transportation Funding Act of 2015," said Brian Anderson, president and CEO of the Greater Columbus Georgia Chamber of Commerce. "We are hopeful that these investments will help to reduce congestion, improve safety and ensure that our region is one where people want to live and businesses want to locate."

Traffic crashes in Georgia claimed the lives of 6,876 people between 2013 and 2017. The rate of traffic fatalities in Georgia of 1.27 per 100 million miles of travel is above the national average of 1.18. After decreasing slightly between 2013 and 2014 (from 1,179 to 1,164) the number of Georgia traffic fatalities increased by 25 percent between 2014 and 2017 (from 1,164 to 1,549). In the Columbus urban area, there were an average of 50 traffic fatalities each year from 2014 to 2016.

"Ensuring the safety of drivers throughout our state should be at the forefront of our transportation planning process. That includes access to public transportation, which is one of the greatest tools we have to address both congestion and safety by taking cars off the roads. The legislation passed by the General Assembly earlier this year was a tremendous step forward in addressing this need, which will only become more critical as our population continues to grow," said Seth Millican, executive director of the Georgia Transportation Alliance.

According to the TRIP report, five percent of Georgia's bridges are structurally deficient. Additional funding provided by the TFA has allowed GDOT to increase by three-and-a-half times the annual number of bridges it is able to repair, reconstruct or replace. An average of 67 bridges were repaired, replaced or reconstructed each year from 2011 to 2015, while an average of 232 bridges will be repaired, replaced or reconstructed each year between 2016 and 2020.

While additional transportation funding provided by the TFA will allow GDOT to reduce the share of state-maintained roads in poor or bad condition, it is not adequate to prevent the share of state roads and highways in excellent or good condition from declining. The share of state-maintained roads in bad or poor condition is projected to fall from 13 percent in 2016 to zero by 2019, but the share of state-maintained roads in excellent or good condition is projected to decline dramatically, falling from 49 percent in 2016 to 15 percent in 2024.

The efficiency and condition of Georgia's transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state's economy. Annually, \$790 billion in goods are shipped to and from sites in Georgia, relying heavily on the state's network of roads and bridges. Increasingly, companies are looking at the quality

of a region's transportation system when deciding where to re-locate or expand. Regions with congested or poorly maintained roads may see businesses relocate to areas with a smoother, more efficient and more modern transportation system.

"While the recent influx of funding has allowed Georgia to make strides in improving its transportation system, more work still needs to be done to accommodate and capitalize on the tremendous growth projected for the state," said Will Wilkins, TRIP's executive director. "Georgia will need to continue to make transportation investment a top priority."