

For immediate release

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Report available at: www.tripnet.org

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DEFICIENT ROADWAYS COST RIVERSIDE – SAN BERNARDINO AREA DRIVERS NEARLY \$2,100 ANNUALLY, \$40 BILLION STATEWIDE. WITHOUT A RELIABLE, SIGNIFICANT BOOST IN FUNDING, TRANSPORTATION WOES WILL WORSEN

EDS.: THE REPORT INCLUDES A LIST OF NEEDED PROJECTS THAT REMAIN UNFUNDED, INCLUDING PROJECTS TO REPAIR ROADS AND BRIDGES, ADD CAPACITY TO CONGESTED ROADWAYS AND IMPROVE SAFETY

Riverside – San Bernardino, California – Roads, bridges and transit systems that are deficient, congested or lack desirable safety features cost the average Riverside - San Bernardino motorist a total of \$2,076 each year, a total of \$40 billion statewide, due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic crashes and congestion-related delays. An increased investment in transportation improvements at the state and federal level could relieve traffic congestion, improve road, bridge and transit conditions, boost safety and support long-term economic growth in California, according to a new report released today by TRIP, a Washington, DC based national transportation organization.

Despite the short-term boost provided by the federal stimulus program, California faces an annual surface transportation funding shortfall of \$10.9 billion. While the state will have \$1.5 billion available this year to make needed roadway improvements and rehabilitate bridges and major roadways, this figure is far outstripped by the estimated \$5.5 billion in annual transportation funding needs. Current transit needs are \$8.6 billion annually, while transit funding is \$1.7 billion a year.

“We are short upwards of \$10 billion annually to meet our transportation needs,” said Transportation California Executive Director Mark Watts. “This report shows that our failure to close this transportation investment deficit is costing us nearly four times that much.”

The TRIP report, “Future Mobility in California: The Condition, Use and Funding of California’s Roads, Bridges and Transit System,” finds that Riverside – San Bernardino roads are among the roughest in the nation, with 88 percent of major roads in the metro area in poor or mediocre condition. Among the most deteriorated roads in the Riverside - San Bernardino area are Route 74 from Seventh Street to Route 215 in Perris and Euclid Avenue from Walnut Avenue in Ontario to Route 210 in Upland.

More than a quarter of Riverside - San Bernardino area bridges and overpasses are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. Bridges in the Riverside - San Bernardino area

with the lowest sufficiency rating include Mt. Vernon Avenue over the BNSF Rail Yard in San Bernardino and Jackson Street over Indio Boulevard in Indio.

Riverside - San Bernardino drivers also continue to endure significant congestion, with 66 percent of major roadways experiencing significant rush hour delays, costing the average Riverside - San Bernardino motorist 44 hours per year stuck in traffic. And traffic crashes claimed the lives of 546 people on Riverside - San Bernardino roads in 2008. Where appropriate, highway improvements can reduce traffic fatalities and crashes while improving traffic flow to help relieve congestion.

Public transit is an important component of the region's transportation system, carrying 118 million passenger miles of travel in 2007.

With an unemployment rate of 12.5 percent - the fourth highest in the nation - and with the state's population continuing to grow, California must improve its system of roads, highways, bridges and public transit to foster economic growth, create jobs, avoid business relocations, and ensure the safe, reliable mobility needed to improve the quality of life for all Californians.

The federal surface transportation program, which expires tomorrow, remains a critical source of funding for road and bridge repairs and transit improvements in California. With the current program set to expire, Congress will need to authorize a new federal surface transportation program or extend the current program to allow federal transportation dollars to continue to flow to the state.

"It is critical that the state adequately fund its transportation system and that Congress produces a timely and adequately funded federal surface transportation program. Thousands of jobs and the state's economy are riding on it," said Will Wilkins, executive director of TRIP.

California's estimated \$3.6 billion in stimulus funding is allowing the state to make some needed rehabilitation and improvement to its road, bridge and public transit systems, but this one-time funding boost will not enable the state to proceed with numerous projects needed to modernize its surface transportation system. Even with the aid of stimulus funding, California still faces a sizeable, on-going transportation funding shortfall.

Making needed repairs to the state's transportation system can help boost California's economy. A 2007 analysis by the Federal Highway Administration found that every \$1 billion invested in highway construction would support approximately 27,800 jobs, including approximately 9,500 in the construction sector, approximately 4,300 jobs in industries supporting the construction sector, and approximately 14,000 other jobs induced in non-construction related sectors of the economy.