



NEWS RELEASE

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Alabama's public transportation system needs a tune-up, report concludes

Forrister: State investment in public transit would create jobs, boost economy, help more residents stay connected

Alabama's transportation system forces residents to rely too much on automobiles and undermines the state's economic growth, according to "[Connecting Our Citizens for Prosperity](#)," a new report released this month by Alabama State University's Center for Leadership and Public Policy. Jon Broadway, Ph.D., and ACPP policy analyst Stephen Stetson are the report's authors.

Alabama is one of only five states providing no state money for public transportation. That lack of investment effectively isolates many residents who are unable to drive or lack access to private vehicles, the study finds. It also means Alabama is forgoing the new jobs that building and maintaining public transit options would bring, ACPP executive director Kimble Forrister said.

"Our state's current transportation system simply can't be sustained," Forrister said. "Alabama's failure to invest in public transportation means too many of our neighbors can't get where they need to go when they need to get there. That doesn't just hurt them; it hurts our entire state's economy."

Key findings from the report include:

- The federal government has not raised the gasoline tax since 1993, and Alabama has not raised its portion of the gasoline tax since 1992. Inflation and higher building costs have fueled a funding crisis for the construction and maintenance of transportation infrastructure.
- Tens of thousands of Alabamians lack access to vehicles, forcing them to depend on friends and family for transportation, or on sparse and underfunded local bus systems.
- Transportation disparities have the most significant effects on senior citizens, rural residents, people with disabilities, and Alabamians who make too little to afford a car or truck.
- Data regarding Alabama's unmet transportation needs can be extremely difficult to find.

"Investing in public transportation would improve lives and boost our economy by making it easier for more Alabamians to work, shop and go to the doctor," Forrister said. "This report should spark a conversation that our state needs to have. Alabama can move forward by building a stronger transportation system, and this report offers reasonable solutions for how to do it."

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Arise Citizens' Policy Project is a nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of 150 congregations and organizations that promote public policies to improve the lives of low-income Alabamians.