

2010 ANNUAL REPORT



IN THIS REPORT:

- STUDY ON SOCIOECONOMIC INDIRECT AND CUMULATIVE IMPACT COMPONENTS FOR THE NORTHERN BELTLINE
- OFFICIAL GOVERNMENTAL RESOLUTIONS OF SUPPORT
- FUNDING FOR THE NORTHERN BELTLINE (I-422)
- MAP & KEY FACTS

And more....

BIRMINGHAM is one of the few cities of its size in the U.S. — in fact, the only major city in the southeast — that does not have a complete, connected interstate route to serve its metropolitan area. Although finishing the northern portion of the beltline has been planned for over 40 years — and Birmingham added it to its long-range transportation plan 30 years ago — we still have only half a route (I-459, the Southern Beltline).

For the Birmingham metropolitan area to be seriously considered a significant, competitive region, it must offer the features and services that attract businesses and people to this area.

Like the economic and jobs growth spurred by I-459 in the southern and eastern parts of the Birmingham metropolitan area, I-422 (Northern Beltline) will do the same for the western and northern areas of Birmingham and Jefferson County.

The Northern Beltline will become one of the greatest economic development engines in the greater Birmingham area, providing areas of Birmingham and Jefferson County economic opportunities they have long been denied. Just as I-459 spurred growth and created numerous jobs for citizens in the southern part of the county, the Northern Beltline will do the same for western & northern Jefferson County.

In addition to the economic benefits, the Northern Beltline will grant significantly greater access to the City of Birmingham from every direction, improve traffic flows, cut congestion, and reduce the road dangers in the area. Area residents will waste less time and fuel idling in traffic jams, thereby reducing harmful emissions from vehicles caught in the congestion caused by limitations of a single northbound/southbound route through our region.



Let me take this opportunity to thank those of you who have helped the efforts of the Coalition for Regional Transportation (CRT) throughout 2010. Through our unified voice and cooperative efforts, we have achieved more progress on the Northern Beltline project this year than during all the previous decades of discussion reaching back to the 1960s.

Although the CRT became an organization in October 2008 when granted official nonprofit status, work in 2009 was delayed by the economic setbacks experienced by the entire country, as well as the merger of the former Birmingham Chamber of Commerce with the Metropolitan Development Board creating the Birmingham Business Alliance. However, we kicked off January 2010 with a reenergized Board of Directors, a growing list of stakeholders, and an official executive director.

In January, we had a single governmental resolution of support for the Northern Beltline. As of today, we have 32 official resolutions of support; we continue working to add even more to this list. These tangible signs of support are evidence of the broad and diverse coalition the Northern Beltline has garnered throughout our region.

Other accomplishments of the CRT are highlighted throughout this report. I hope you will take the time to read everything included here and appreciate the amount of work contributed by many people to make our mission statement become a reality.

Although we have accomplished much this year, we must persist in our determined advocacy and dedicated attention to progress on the project. Your continued support is critical to ensure that the Northern Beltline is completed in a timely manner, which will produce thousands of jobs and economic opportunities that our region needs. The CRT is looking forward to a very successful 2011!

Sincerely,

Paul Vercher
Chairman



In February 2010, the CRT officially commissioned an economic impact study to obtain an accurate, credible assessment of the economic benefits of constructing the 52.5 miles (including 15 interchanges) of the Northern Beltline. The study was expanded in May 2010 to include assessment of the economic impacts of the subsequent post-build around a completed Northern Beltline.

On June 28, the Birmingham Business Alliance hosted a breakfast at the Harbert Center to release the study findings.

Senator Richard Shelby and Congressman Spencer Bachus participated, both speaking with passionate support of the project at the rollout event.

Samuel Addy, Ph. D, Associate Research Economist and Director of the Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) at the University of Alabama, presented the study results.

The event drew nearly 400 attendees.

CONSTRUCTION PERIOD ONLY

- \$7 BILLION ECONOMIC IMPACT
- NEARLY 70,000 JOBS
- \$155 MILLION IN NEW TAX REVENUE
(sales, income taxes only)

To download full report go to:

birminghambusinessalliance.com/uploads/PDFs/NorthernBeltlineFullReport.pdf

“We couldn’t have had a more positive meeting Monday morning with a capacity crowd,” Congressman Bachus said of the event at The Harbert Center downtown. “There were industrial leaders that employ hundreds of people and CEO’s and community leaders and mayors.”

POST-BUILD ANNUAL EFFECTS

- \$2+ BILLION ECONOMIC IMPACT
- NEARLY 21,000 JOBS
- \$54 MILLION IN NEW TAX REVENUE
(sales, income, property taxes only)

GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS

The CRT thanks the Mayors, City Councils, County Commissions, and others for their leadership in a project destined to bring significant and unprecedented rewards to the citizens they serve.



Their official Resolutions of Support will be delivered to the Governor, the Director of the Alabama Department of Transportation, the Division Administrator for the Alabama Division of the Federal Highway Administration, the Chairman of the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization, all members of the Alabama Congressional Delegation, all members of the Jefferson County Legislative Delegation, and all members of the Jefferson County Commission.



CITY OF ADAMSVILLE

CITY OF ARGO

CITY OF BESSEMER

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM

CITY OF BROOKSIDE

CITY OF CENTER POINT

CITY OF FAIRFIELD

CITY OF FULTONDALE

CITY OF GARDENDALE

CITY OF GRAYSVILLE

CITY OF HOMEWOOD

CITY OF HOOVER

CITY OF HUEYTOWN

CITY OF IRONDALE

TOWN OF KIMBERLY

CITY OF LOCUST FORK

TOWN OF MAYTOWN

CITY OF MIDFIELD

CITY OF MORRIS

CITY OF MOUNTAIN BROOK

CITY OF ONEONTA

CITY OF PLEASANT GROVE

CITY OF SPRINGVILLE

CITY OF SYLVAN SPRINGS

CITY OF TARRANT

CITY OF TRUSSVILLE

CITY OF VESTAVIA HILLS

CITY OF WARRIOR

JEFFERSON COUNTY

ST. CLAIR COUNTY

BLOUNT COUNTY

BIRMINGHAM WATER

WORKS BOARD

Whereas, available federal funding for construction of the Northern Beltline has been and will continue to be...

Whereas, the completion of the Northern Beltline will increase cross-region accessibility, will reduce travel times and the cost of travel for the public, will improve the state and local economic base...

Whereas, the Northern Beltline will improve this region's air quality and the health and safety of area residents...

BILLIONS IN FUNDING FOR I-422 AVAILABLE NOW!

Funding for the Northern Beltline is available! No new taxes or debt are required to fund the Northern Beltline.

The CRT worked diligently in 2010 to make elected officials and the general public aware of this very critical funding fact. At the beginning of 2010, the CRT discovered that very few elected officials, business leaders, and citizens understood that \$3 billion dollars is currently available for transportation improvement via the Northern Beltline project that will also provide a boom of economic opportunity.

Opponents of the beltline attempt to position the creation of I-422 as an "either-or" project, alleging that these funds would be "better used" on transportation projects other than the beltline. Their argument is fallacious and hollow.

The Northern Beltline is designated as a roadway within the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). The ARC, created in 1965, covers all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states.

Designation as part of the ADHS gives the Northern Beltline unique status because it comes with eligibility for funding from a separate source outside of Federal Highway Administration appropriations, which are quickly drying up.

Federal dollars are currently allocated for the Northern Beltline within the ARC monies dedicated to the ADHS. For four decades, the ADHS money has gone predominately to other states. Most of those projects are now complete and Alabama is finally allocated a significant share. Alabama's tax dollars are at long last being made available for an Alabama project.



The ARC funds are "use it or lose it" dollars. These dollars are single-purpose, non-transferable dollars. The money can be used only on ADHS designated roads. If we do not use these billions for I-422, the only remaining ADHS road in Alabama, they will go to another state. The funds can not be transferred to any other use (i.e., mass transit, other highway projects, parks, greenways, etc.).

Although representatives from other ARC states have attempted to limit the funds for the Northern Beltline, they have been unsuccessful. The ARC funding for I-422 remains intact. Senator Richard Shelby and Congressman Spencer Bachus have assured the CRT and beltline supporters that they will fight to protect Alabama's allotment of these funds.

"I grew up in a dynamic city that was making progress and I have seen this city divide itself. People wait for that and steal what's ours."

**Congressman
Spencer Bachus**

The map illustrates the proposed Birmingham Northern Beltline (SR-959) through Jefferson County, Alabama. The route is divided into five segments, each starting from a different US Highway and extending northward. Segment 1 starts at US-46 near the North of CH-46. Segment 2 starts at US-46 near the South of CH-77. Segment 3 starts at US-77 near the West of CH-427. Segment 4 starts at US-77 near the West of CH-427. Segment 5 starts at US-77 near the West of CH-427. The map shows major roads, including US-46, US-77, US-159, US-158, US-157, US-156, US-155, US-154, US-153, US-152, US-151, US-150, US-149, US-148, US-147, US-146, US-145, US-144, US-143, US-142, US-141, US-140, US-139, US-138, US-137, US-136, US-135, US-134, US-133, US-132, US-131, US-130, US-129, US-128, US-127, US-126, US-125, US-124, US-123, US-122, US-121, US-120, US-119, US-118, US-117, US-116, US-115, US-114, US-113, US-112, US-111, US-110, US-109, US-108, US-107, US-106, US-105, US-104, US-103, US-102, US-101, US-100, US-99, US-98, US-97, US-96, US-95, US-94, US-93, US-92, US-91, US-90, US-89, US-88, US-87, US-86, US-85, US-84, US-83, US-82, US-81, US-80, US-79, US-78, US-77, US-76, US-75, US-74, US-73, US-72, US-71, US-70, US-69, US-68, US-67, US-66, US-65, US-64, US-63, US-62, US-61, US-60, US-59, US-58, US-57, US-56, US-55, US-54, US-53, US-52, US-51, US-50, US-49, US-48, US-47, US-46, US-45, US-44, US-43, US-42, US-41, US-40, US-39, US-38, US-37, US-36, US-35, US-34, US-33, US-32, US-31, US-30, US-29, US-28, US-27, US-26, US-25, US-24, US-23, US-22, US-21, US-20, US-19, US-18, US-17, US-16, US-15, US-14, US-13, US-12, US-11, US-10, US-9, US-8, US-7, US-6, US-5, US-4, US-3, US-2, US-1. The map also shows various landmarks, including the Warrior River, the Birmingham River, and the Birmingham River. The map is titled "BIRMINGHAM NORTHERN BELTLINE (SR-959)" and "SPONSOR: JEFFERSON COUNTY, ALABAMA".

Segment 1
1494-9020330
From I-40 to
North of CH-46

Segment 2
1494-9020330
From I-40 to
South of CH-77

Segment 3
1494-9020330
From South of US-77 to
North of CH-77
(New Found Road)

Segment 4
1494-9020330
From South of CH-77
to West of CH-427
(New Castle Road)

Segment 5
1494-9020330
From West of CH-427
(New Castle Road) to I-59

BIRMINGHAM NORTHERN BELTLINE (SR-959)
SPONSOR: JEFFERSON COUNTY, ALABAMA

(SEE MAP ON PAGE 6)

I-459 to County Road 46
9.02 miles

County Road 46 to U.S. Hwy 78
9.58 miles

U.S. Hwy 78 to County Road 77
8.25 miles

County Road 77 to County Road 121
10.2 miles

County Road 121 to I-59
13 miles

Construction of the beltline will begin on the eastern end of the alignment. A brief review of Birmingham's history as the primary industrial center of the Southern U.S. best explains the reasons for the

The CRT is following ALDOT's progress on all segments of the beltline closely and working to ensure construction commences on the most expeditious schedule possible.

52.5 MILES of New Surface Road!

I-422 (Northern Beltline) begins at I-20/59 in southwest Jefferson County and extends through northeast Jefferson County connecting to I-59.

15 INTERCHANGES to improve traffic flows!

The Northern Beltline will completely **REPAY THE STATE MATCH IN 9 YEARS** after completion.

Of the **\$7 BILLION ECONOMIC IMPACT DURING CONSTRUCTION** period, \$6.6 billion will be in the Birmingham-Hoover metro area.

Of the **\$2 BILLION ECONOMIC IMPACT EACH YEAR DURING THE POST-BUILD**, \$1.96 billion will be in the Birmingham-Hoover metro area.

Of the **70,000 NEW JOBS CREATED DURING THE CONSTRUCTION** period, 65,277 will be in the Birmingham-Hoover metro area.



MINORITY AND LOW INCOME POPULATIONS IN THE AREA WILL BENEFIT FROM THE BELTLINE because of the significant number of jobs created and improved access to essential services.

The Beltline will **IMPROVE TRAVEL SAFETY, TRAVEL TIME, AIR QUALITY AND TRAFFIC FLOW.**

GOVERNOR BENTLEY PUBLICLY SUPPORTS THE NORTHERN BELTLINE

The CRT outreach throughout 2010 focused on the general public, the business community, elected officials, and candidates for offices on the November 2 ballot. Information about the Northern Beltline, including the history, current status, and economic impacts of the project was shared with current officials and contenders in local elections as well as the Democrat and Republican candidates for Governor of Alabama.



At the 2010 Birmingham Business Alliance Annual Meeting held December 14, then Governor-Elect Dr. Robert Bentley promised the 800 business and community leaders in attendance to take decisive action on issues important to the Birmingham metropolitan area.

Bentley proclaimed "the role of government is to create a fertile field for jobs to grow, not to create the actual jobs." He expressed support for the Northern Beltline and promised to make its construction a priority.

**"I COMMIT TO YOU TO MAKE BIRMINGHAM
A BETTER PLACE," SAID BENTLEY. "I LOVE
BIRMINGHAM. IT IS THE HEART OF ALABAMA."**

In alliance with efforts by Alabama Senators Shelby and Sessions, Dr. Bentley affirmed his commitment to work quickly and diligently to make our road access a reality.

In November, the Birmingham Business Alliance's Public Policy and Executive Committees voted unanimously to make completion of the Northern Beltline its top federal priority and a top issue for its state agenda in 2011.

FIRST TEST OF THE CRT

Thank you to all who responded to the CRT's call-to-action for response to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) exclusion of the western portion of the Northern Beltline in its 2035 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)!



As a result of your actions, we passed the first test of the CRT's unified voice and coordinated effort by achieving a public correction to the Birmingham News article (*Birmingham Area Plan Would Drop Road Projects for Lack of Funds*, April 22, 2010) stating the western section of the beltline was no longer in the MPO Plan.

Nearly 400 comments submitted to the MPO in favor of completing the entire Northern Beltline spurred a public assertion by the MPO that the western section will continue to be included in the 2035 RTP (*Western Leg of Beltline is in Plan After All*, Birmingham News, May 10, 2010).

In addition, the MPO agreed to our requested actions to resolve the issue. MPO promised to refine the numbers on cost-to-complete and available funding and committed to amend the RTP.

On May 27, the MPO Subcommittee approved a resolution adopting the 2035 RTP with inclusion of a commitment to correcting the cost and funding amounts.

The CRT is coordinating efforts with MPO and ALDOT to ensure that amendment is adopted promptly.



The Coalition for Regional Transportation operates primarily to improve business conditions and the regional economy by promoting the development of the transportation system in and around Birmingham, Alabama.

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