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NEW REPORT ASSIGNS FAILING GRADE FOR TRANSPORTATION FUNDING AND TRAFFIC SAFETY IN LAS VEGAS; TRAFFIC CONGESTION RECEIVES GRADE OF 'D', ROADS RECEIVE 'C' GRADE

ADDITIONAL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING NEEDED TO RELIEVE CONGESTION, IMPROVE SAFETY AND MAKE NEEDED ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS THROUGHOUT NEVADA

EDS.: THE TRIP REPORT CONTAINS LISTS OF THE MOST CONGESTED SECTIONS OF ROADWAY IN LAS VEGAS AND NEEDED TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS IN THE AREA.

Las Vegas, March 15, 2007 – A high traffic fatality rate and inadequate levels of transportation funding earn the Las Vegas area a grade of 'F' in both traffic safety and transportation funding, while traffic congestion in the area rates a 'D' and pavement conditions receive a grade of 'C'. This is according to a new report released today by TRIP, a national nonprofit transportation research group based in Washington, D.C. The TRIP report also gives the Las Vegas area a grade of 'A' for bridge conditions.

The report, entitled "Making the Grade in Nevada: An Analysis of the Ability of Nevada's Transportation System to Meet the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility," finds that the state faces a \$3.8 billion shortfall in transportation funding through 2015, at a time when the buying power of the 17.65 cents-per-gallon motor fuel tax dedicated to state highway repairs has decreased by 43 percent since it was last raised in 1992. The report also gives a failing grade to traffic safety in the Las Vegas area, noting that the area's traffic fatality rate is 15.4 fatalities per 100,000 population. With traffic congestion levels that are the tenth highest in the nation, Las Vegas earns a grade of 'D' for congestion, as the average rush hour trip takes 39 percent longer to complete than during non-rush hour. The TRIP report contains a list of the most congested sections of roadway in the Las Vegas area.

"Without an increase in transportation investment, the Las Vegas area will not be able to move forward with numerous projects that would improve road and bridge conditions, enhance safety, relieve congestion and attract economic development," said Tim Cashman, Past Chairman of the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce.

According to the TRIP report, 33 percent of major roads and highways in Las Vegas have pavements in poor or mediocre condition. Pavement conditions in Nevada are likely to worsen because since 2004 the state has been unable to fund a pavement preservation program adequately to keep up with pavement deterioration rates. From 2004 to 2009, Nevada is expected to spend \$506 million dollars on pavement preservation, but needs to spend \$1.27 billion to keep pavements in their current condition – a \$768 million shortfall.

“The TRIP report highlights the benefits of an efficient, well-maintained and adequately funded transportation system,” said William Wilkins, Executive Director of TRIP. “Investments in the state’s transportation system improve traffic safety while enhancing economic vitality and the quality of life in Nevada.”

Only two of the region’s 720 bridges are rated as deficient, earning the area an ‘A’ for bridge conditions.

Additional findings of the TRIP report:

- A Blue Ribbon Task Force created by Nevada’s State Transportation Board of Directors found in December, 2006 that the state faces a \$3.8 billion shortfall in funding through 2015 for highway projects needed to accommodate significant traffic growth in the state.
- The Blue Ribbon Task Force report recommended that the state complete the following projects in the Las Vegas area by 2015: widening I-15 from Tropicana to the Spaghetti Bowl, widening I-515/US 95 from the Spaghetti Bowl to Foothill Drive, widening I-15 from the Spaghetti Bowl to Apex, The Boulder City Bypass, widening US 95 from Craig Road to Kyle Canyon, widening I-15 from St. Rose Parkway to Tropicana Avenue, improving Beltway interchanges at US 95, I-15 and Summerlin Parkway.
- The buying power of Nevada’s 17.65 cents-per-gallon motor fuel tax dedicated to state highway repairs has decreased by 43 percent since it was last increased in 1992. This has reduced Nevada’s state motor-fuel tax dedicated to highway repairs to the equivalent of 10.1 cents-per-gallon in 1992 dollars.
- A recent report by the Reason Foundation found that by 2030 the average rush hour trip in Las Vegas will take 79 percent longer to complete – worse than present-day Los Angeles – unless significant highway improvements are completed.
- In 2005, the Las Vegas area had a traffic fatality rate of 15.4 fatalities per 100,000 population, lower than the statewide average of 17.4 fatalities per 100,000 population but higher than the national average of 14.7 fatalities per 100,000 population. In 2005 there were 263 traffic fatalities in the Las Vegas area.
- From 1990 to 2005, vehicle travel in Nevada increased at a rate approximately nine times greater than new highway lane capacity was added. Vehicle travel in Nevada increased by 103 percent from 1990 to 2005, and is expected to increase another 125 percent by 2030.