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Gov. Ivey announces funding for U.S. 72 traffic flow project in Athens

Today (Wednesday, Jan. 19) Gov. Kay Ivey and the Alabama Department of Transportation announced more than \$40 million in funding for road and bridge projects, including a project to address traffic flow on U.S. 72 in Athens.

The funding is made available through the Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program-II (ATRIP-II), a program created by the Rebuild Alabama Act. The Rebuild Alabama Act requires ATRIP-II to be an annual program setting aside a minimum of \$30 million off the top of ALDOT's share of new gas tax revenue for projects of local interest on the state highway system.

The U.S. 72 project in Athens will address the Clinton Street intersection. City Engineer Michael Griffin said this project resulted from an access management discussion City of Athens Public Works and ALDOT had last year regarding moving traffic along U.S. 72.

- The ATRIP portion is \$1,491,147.45.
- City portion is \$372,786.86.
- Total project cost is \$1,863,934.31.

This project will allow the addition of turn lanes on Clinton Street, an extended turn lane onto Clinton Street for traffic traveling west on U.S. 72, and the relocation of the traffic signal further west from Catfish Cabin's entrance and exit.

This project will have to undergo the design, bid and scheduling process. According to Ivey's press release, it is anticipated that a number of projects will be under contract during the 2022 fiscal year, however all projects are required to move forward within two years of the awarding of funds. There were 32 projects selected for a total of \$40.31 million in state transportation funding.

There are other areas the city has addressed with ALDOT about U.S. 72, such as Cambridge Lane and Jefferson Street. CSX is involved in the process with ALDOT on the proposed improvements at Jefferson Street because of the railroad overpass.

"We are excited about Gov. Ivey's announcement that the state is investing over \$1million in improvements on U.S. 72, and we look forward to working with ALDOT on other projects to help with traffic flow," Athens Mayor Ronnie Marks said.