

AP

INFORMED

A White Paper from the Alabama Policy Institute

Building Business in Alabama: How Business-Friendly Are Alabama's 50 Largest Cities?

John Hill, Ph.D.

Senior Policy Analyst – Alabama Policy Institute

March 2013



ALABAMA POLICY
INSTITUTE

Alabama Policy Institute

402 Office Park Drive, Suite 300, Birmingham, AL 35223

205.870.9900 | www.alabamapolicy.org

The Alabama Policy Institute (API) is an independent, nonprofit research and education organization that is issue-centered and solution-oriented. We provide in-depth research and analysis of Alabama's public policy issues to impact policy decisions and deepen Alabama citizens' understanding of, and appreciation for, sound economic, social, and governing principles.

Since 1989, API has been on the front lines of critical public debates, helping Alabama citizens, lawmakers, and business leaders better understand and apply principles that maximize individual freedom, limit government interference, and encourage personal responsibility. API is the largest free-market, solution-based policy research center in Alabama.



For additional copies, please contact:

Alabama Policy Institute
402 Office Park Drive, Suite 300
Birmingham, AL 35223
205.870.9900
info@alabamapolicy.org

www.alabamapolicy.org



Building Business in Alabama:
*How Business-Friendly Are
Alabama's 50 Largest Cities?*

By John Hill, Ph.D., *Senior Policy Analyst (Alabama Policy Institute)*

Printed March 2013 by
The Alabama Policy Institute
Birmingham, Alabama

Permission to reprint in whole or in part is hereby granted, provided
the Alabama Policy Institute is properly cited.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Alabama's Most Business-Friendly Cities	1
Alabama's Least Business-Friendly Cities	1
Economic Vitality	2
Business Tax Burden	2
Community Allure	3
Transportation Infrastructure	3
Conclusion	4
The Business-Friendly Formula	5
Appendix A: Overall Business-Friendly Ranking	7
Appendix B: Economic Vitality Ranking	9
Appendix C: Business Tax Burden Ranking	11
Appendix D: Community Allure Ranking	13
Appendix E: Transportation Infrastructure Ranking	15

INTRODUCTION

In order to excel in an increasingly competitive global marketplace, Alabama must be as attractive as possible to businesses looking to establish or grow operations in the state. While Alabama's business-friendly image is usually assessed at the state level, Alabama must also consider how its individual cities compare against each other with respect to economic, social, and educational factors attractive to businesses.

The Alabama Policy Institute (API) has collected data on Alabama's 50 most populous cities and ranked them based on criteria that both ensure business success and protect the entrepreneurial spirit.¹ The four categories in which data are ranked are Economic Vitality, Business Tax Burden, Community Allure, and Transportation Infrastructure.

This report looks at a number of factors: What cities have the best tax policy? Which have low costs of living and crime rates? What cities have experienced the most year-over-year population and job growth? What type of economic vitality do cities have, including the average incomes for local residents? API answers these questions in this report.

ALABAMA'S MOST BUSINESS-FRIENDLY CITIES

So what city takes the prize? After careful analysis, the results are in: Fairhope is Alabama's Most Business-Friendly City. Located in Baldwin County, this city finished first in Economic Vitality, eighth in the Business Tax Burden category, 27th in Community Allure and fifth in the less-weighted category of Transportation Infrastructure, for a composite score of 73.85 out of 100

possible points, edging out Millbrook (70.95) and Athens (70.55).

Millbrook, located in Elmore County, finished second because of its superior rankings in Business Tax Burden (5th) and Transportation Infrastructure (6th), and above-average rankings in both Economic Vitality (12th) and Community Allure (12th).

Athens finished in a close third place (70.55). It placed 3rd in Economic Vitality for its recent growth in both population and jobs, and 9th in Business Tax Burden for its competitive millage and local business sales tax rates. The city's Community Allure ranking (15th) was impressive, but dampened as a result of an above-average cost of living and a lower-than-average high school graduation rate. Athens' ranking in Transportation (35th) was also disappointing because of its distance to a variety of transport hubs.

ALABAMA'S LEAST BUSINESS-FRIENDLY CITIES

With every best there is a worst, and the dubious honor of being Alabama's least Business-Friendly City belongs to Selma, with a total score of 27.32. Simply put, Selma possesses unfavorable rankings in all four business-friendly categories. Its next-to-last-place showing in Economic Vitality is the result of a shrinking job pool and one of the lowest per capita incomes in Alabama. Selma's Business Tax Burden rankings are also below average, as is its Transportation score (both 41st place).

A final reason for Selma's low ranking is its Community Allure score of only 28.41 out of 100 possible points (49th). With a violent crime rate five-and-a-half times higher than the state average, Selma has the worst crime rate in Alabama. Educational outcomes are also depressed, with significantly smaller proportions of students scoring well on standardized tests. The city's workforce is also less prepared than much of the rest of the state, with significantly fewer adults age 25 or older possessing a high school diploma or better.

1 In developing those rankings, the Alabama Policy Institute (API) looked to the Beacon Center of Tennessee's annual report, "How Business-Friendly are Tennessee's Cities?" See JUSTIN OWEN & RYAN TURBEVILLE, BEACON CENTER OF TENNESSEE, NO. 11-05, HOW BUSINESS-FRIENDLY ARE TENNESSEE'S CITIES? (Nov. 14, 2011), available at www.beacontn.org/wp-content/uploads/How-Business-Friendly-are-Tennessees-Cities-in-2011.pdf.

To its credit, the cost of living in Selma is substantially below the state average, but this was not enough to keep the city from being the worst for business in Alabama.

Following Selma as the worst cities for business in Alabama are Prichard (32.28) and Anniston (34.71). Both cities scored near the bottom on Economic Vitality (47th and 45th, respectively), and both also ranked poorly on their Total Business Tax Burden scores (47th and 38th). The Community Allure of both cities was also disappointing (48th and 50th) due to their above-average crime rates and low SAT 10 reading and math scores.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

The economic vitality of a city is important to businesses because factors such as job growth, population growth, and median per capita income reflect its ability to survive during an economic downturn. "Population growth indicates that an area has a solid consumer base that can attract and support commerce."² Job creation or lack thereof has a clear impact on a city's business climate, and income levels reveal a city's ability to invest in its own business marketplace.

The five best-performing cities in the category of Economic Vitality are Fairhope (83.82 out of possible 100 points), Trussville (75.93), Athens (72.80), Vestavia Hills (72.38), and Opelika (70.10). Within each subcategory, Center Point had the most recent job growth (1.85%), Athens had the largest short-term, residential population growth from 2010 to 2011 (3.16%), Foley had the most long-term growth from 2000 to 2010 (9.26% per year), and Mountain Brook had the highest per capita income (\$77,063).

Eufaula was the poorest-scoring city in Economic Vitality, earning only 9.26 points. It was followed by Selma (9.57), Talladega (11.24), Prichard (16.92) and Fort Payne (20.46). Each of these cities has suffered serious declines in job growth, most have seen their populations shrink, and all of them have per capita incomes well below the state average.

2 BEACON CENTER OF TENNESSEE, *supra* note 1, at 4.

BUSINESS TAX BURDEN

The Business Tax Burden category employs two key tax components for each city: property tax rates and general sales tax. Property tax rates are expressed in millage (mills), which are equal to one-tenth of one cent. The average property tax rate in Alabama is 50.8 mills, with municipal rates ranging from 30 mills in Millbrook to 99 mills in Mountain Brook.³ General sales taxes in Alabama range from 0.5% to 5%, with 4% being the most common rate.

The five best-ranking cities in Alabama in terms of their Business Tax Burden are Foley (91.04), Cullman (86.59), Northport (84.87), Jasper (82.75), and Millbrook (79.65). Each of these cities has a millage rate of 40 or less, plus a general sales tax of 3.5% or less.

On the other hand, Mobile (14.37), Birmingham (14.96), Bessemer (15.64), Prichard (17.18), and Mountain Brook (20.76) are the five worst cities in Alabama when it comes to the tax burdens placed on their businesses. Each of these cities has a property tax rate of at least 60 mills and a sales tax of at least 3%.

3 In Alabama, businesses are assessed at a rate of 20% of the business' appraised value, so the formula for calculating property tax is as follows: Tax Amount = Appraised Value × Business Rate (20%) × Millage Rate. Source: ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE, *Property Tax Incentives*, <http://revenue.alabama.gov/Taxincentives/proptaxincentives.html> (last visited May 7, 2012).

COMMUNITY ALLURE

The factors that make up the Community Allure category count for a smaller percentage of the rankings than Business Tax Burden and Economic Vitality. Nevertheless, indicators such as the cost of living index, education performance, and crime rates all play a key role in any city's business climate.

With its reasonable cost of living, safe neighborhoods, and decent education system, Prattville takes the top spot in the Community Allure category (70.46). In second place is Hartselle (67.88), with a slightly lower violent crime rate but marginally lower education scores than Prattville. Alabaster (66.98), Pelham (66.34) and Hueytown (66.00) round out the top five in Community Allure.

Despite having a low cost of living, Anniston's very high crime rate and poor scores in education put it in last place for Community Allure (28.15). Selma (28.41), Prichard (33.47), Birmingham (37.60), and Bessemer (38.29) finish out the bottom five in this category.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

While the components of the Transportation Infrastructure category comprise the smallest percent of the ranking system, they are important because businesses of all sizes need quick, convenient access for their customers, employees, and suppliers. Moreover, those businesses need access to a variety of transportation hubs to ensure that their products are able to make it to broader markets quickly and affordably.

Because it possesses a major airport, rail service, interstate access, and Alabama's only container-ready commercial port, Mobile takes first place in Transportation Infrastructure with a perfect score (100.00). Prichard and Saraland, both communities adjacent to Mobile, placed second (96.74) and third (94.88) because of their proximity to the coast and Mobile's airport. Montgomery and Prattville placed fourth (94.40) and fifth (89.79), respectively, in this category.

The five cities with the lowest scores for Transportation Infrastructure tended to be located considerable distances from both commercial airports and major ports. Florence scored lowest in the state (40.70), followed by Muscle Shoals (40.95), Scottsboro (43.60), Albertville (43.98), and Alexander City (52.19).

CONCLUSION

Alabama's most business-friendly cities possess responsible, limited governance, reasonable tax rates, quality school systems, low crime, access to transportation infrastructure, and a thriving economy despite significant economic challenges over the last several years. Most of the state's top 10 business-friendly cities look like Fairhope and Millbrook, which possess small but growing populations, access to transportation, and room to grow geographically.

This does not mean, though, that larger cities cannot compete against smaller, nimbler ones. Montgomery (8th place) has populations well above 200,000, yet it already possesses vital transportation hubs, low business property taxes, and an average cost of living.

Local policymakers seeking to make their cities more business-friendly should follow the path of these cities by maintaining low tax rates on businesses and families, focusing on education and public safety, and making sound investments designed to attract prospective businesses. By making simple adjustments, many cities across Alabama could be on their way to becoming Alabama's Most Business-Friendly City, and in the process, help establish Alabama as a destination for growing companies.

A word of encouragement to the cities whose scores are not where they want them to be: every city surveyed, from the worst to the best, has considerable room for improvement. Even Fairhope, the best city in Alabama for business, scored only 73.85 out of a possible 100 points. While a perfect score is highly unlikely, an improvement of only 10 points could move a lagging city to the center of the pack, or a middling city to the top 10.

Cities at or near the top should not rest on their laurels. On average, less than one point separated the rankings from each other, and less than three points separated first and second place. If several cities made even small changes to improve their business climate, next year's rankings could be dramatically different.

THE BUSINESS-FRIENDLY FORMULA

Economic Vitality (35% of overall score):

- Recent job growth (50% of Economic Vitality category)⁴
- Residential population growth from 2010 to 2011 (12.5%)⁵
- Population growth from 2000 to 2010, divided by 10 (12.5%)⁶
- Median per capita income (25%)⁷

Business Tax Burden (30% of overall score):

- Business property taxes (70% of Business Tax Burden category)⁸
- Local sales tax (30%)⁹

Community Allure (20% of overall score):

- Cost of living index (35% of Community Allure category)¹⁰
- Per capita violent crime rate (35%)¹¹
- Percent of adults age 25 or older with at least a high school diploma (15%)¹²
- Average SAT 10 scores for 8th grade math and reading (15%)¹³

Transportation Infrastructure (15% of overall score):

- Distance to primary commercial service airport (25% of Transportation Infrastructure category)¹⁴
- Distance to commercial rail service (25%)¹⁵
- Distance to port capable of handling container shipping (25%)¹⁶
- Distance to Interstate Highway System (25%)¹⁷

4 U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, AMERICAN FACT FINDER, Table S2301: Employment Status (American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for 2007-2011 and 2006-2010), www.factfinder2.census.gov (last visited March 5, 2013).

5 U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, STATE & COUNTY QUICK FACTS, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/index.html> (last visited March 5, 2013).

6 *Id.*

7 *Id.*

8 PROPERTY TAX DIVISION, ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE, www.revenue.alabama.gov/advalorem/MILLS11.pdf (last visited March 5, 2013).

9 ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE, ALABAMA CITIES THAT LEVY SALES, USE, LODGINGS, AND RENTAL TAXES, <http://revenue.alabama.gov/salestax/sales/index.cfm?Action=City> (last visited March 5, 2013).

10 SPERLING'S BEST PLACES, www.bestplaces.net (last visited February 14, 2013).

11 ALABAMA CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION SYSTEM, CRIME IN ALABAMA 2011 (2012), available at www.acjic.alabama.gov/cia/2010_cia.pdf.

12 U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, STATE & COUNTY QUICK FACTS, *supra* note 5.

13 ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, www.alsde.edu/html/reports_menu.asp# (last visited March 5, 2013).

14 TRAVELMATH.COM, NEAREST AIRPORT, www.travelmath.com/nearest-airport/ (last visited June 2, 2012).

15 Distance to rail service and Interstate Highway System calculated using GOOGLE MAPS, maps.google.com (last visited June 4, 2012).

16 Distance between cities and commercial ports—Mobile, AL, Panama City, FL, and Pensacola, FL—calculated using DISTANCEBETWEENCITIES.NET, www.distancebetweencities.net/ (last visited June 2, 2012).

17 GOOGLE MAPS, *supra* note 15.

APPENDIX A: OVERALL BUSINESS-FRIENDLY RANKING

	Economic Vitality	Business Tax Burden	Community Allure	Transportation Infrastructure	Overall Score
1 Fairhope	83.82	77.98	53.70	69.18	73.85
2 Millbrook	61.65	79.65	60.31	89.41	70.95
3 Athens	72.80	75.22	58.84	71.53	70.55
4 Daphne	65.74	75.21	61.78	76.24	69.37
5 Jasper	58.19	82.75	58.18	70.24	67.36
6 Prattville	40.65	78.95	70.46	89.79	65.47
7 Northport	58.52	84.87	40.60	69.63	64.51
8 Montgomery	47.48	73.70	53.31	94.40	63.55
9 Center Point	59.54	64.67	53.52	83.11	63.41
10 Trussville	75.93	35.11	64.40	82.87	62.42
11 Enterprise	60.93	63.41	57.10	69.82	62.24
12 Dothan	49.25	69.83	53.66	82.42	61.28
13 Helena	58.24	47.06	65.80	80.85	59.79
14 Madison	68.59	42.96	55.16	76.34	59.38
15 Hartselle	43.64	63.84	67.88	73.53	59.03
16 Foley	33.85	91.04	53.37	60.92	58.97
17 Muscle Shoals	58.09	68.29	59.93	40.95	58.95
18 Cullman	27.29	86.59	61.49	67.07	57.88
19 Gardendale	52.38	44.89	65.16	83.25	57.32
20 Troy	42.97	79.34	43.83	59.68	56.56
21 Tuscaloosa	53.83	61.90	43.09	70.19	56.56
22 Opelika	70.10	37.22	43.96	79.97	56.49
23 Hueytown	65.10	26.33	66.00	83.20	56.37
24 Pelham	51.27	42.09	66.34	81.15	56.01
25 Auburn	64.46	37.22	53.87	76.66	56.00

	Economic Vitality	Business Tax Burden	Community Allure	Transportation Infrastructure	Overall Score
26 Alabaster	55.55	37.22	66.98	79.82	55.98
27 Alexander City	50.18	72.47	41.16	52.19	55.37
28 Homewood	69.09	23.75	52.10	84.80	54.45
29 Albertville	59.74	51.89	55.43	43.98	54.16
30 Vestavia Hills	72.38	20.84	58.01	72.31	54.03
31 Scottsboro	47.69	62.23	51.93	43.60	52.29
32 Saraland	41.48	36.64	62.72	94.88	52.29
33 Hoover	57.61	25.01	57.45	83.94	51.75
34 Florence	56.15	53.12	49.49	40.70	51.60
35 Mountain Brook	64.87	20.76	54.09	78.74	51.56
36 Huntsville	58.20	35.90	41.42	77.02	50.98
37 Decatur	34.86	54.13	52.10	74.45	50.03
38 Phenix City	47.87	31.04	45.57	89.04	48.54
39 Ozark	38.79	45.09	46.29	74.23	47.50
40 Mobile	45.38	14.37	60.22	100.00	47.24
41 Gadsden	41.80	47.06	46.47	59.12	46.91
42 Fort Payne	20.46	66.93	55.20	56.96	46.82
43 Oxford	36.86	42.98	56.13	61.41	46.23
44 Eufaula	9.26	71.29	54.49	59.73	44.49
45 Bessemer	48.37	15.64	38.29	80.45	41.35
46 Talladega	11.24	58.10	41.38	63.63	39.19
47 Birmingham	39.76	14.96	37.60	86.63	38.92
48 Anniston	26.81	35.12	28.15	61.09	34.71
49 Prichard	16.92	17.18	33.47	96.74	32.28
50 Selma	9.57	30.71	28.41	60.52	27.32

APPENDIX B: ECONOMIC VITALITY RANKING

	Recent Job Growth: 2010-2011	Residential Population Growth: 2010-2011	Residential Population Growth: 2000-2010	Median Per Capita Income	Total Economic Vitality Score
1 Fairhope	87.42	95.46	61.77	81.83	83.82
2 Trussville	78.77	28.70	95.66	84.00	75.93
3 Athens	82.93	99.08	48.75	51.44	72.80
4 Vestavia Hills	66.59	28.64	84.84	99.58	72.38
5 Opelika	86.85	94.09	43.81	37.77	70.10
6 Homewood	92.46	28.33	24.09	65.23	69.09
7 Madison	47.48	84.40	91.31	91.53	68.59
8 Daphne	52.30	95.80	73.46	73.75	65.74
9 Hueytown	95.88	28.48	30.54	39.14	65.10
10 Mountain Brook	67.00	28.80	22.14	100.00	64.87
11 Auburn	69.20	92.88	64.10	40.95	64.46
12 Millbrook	58.51	67.65	86.77	52.38	61.65
13 Enterprise	65.68	66.92	66.17	45.83	60.93
14 Albertville	75.58	70.28	61.57	21.87	59.74
15 Center Point	97.86	30.30	2.99	25.83	59.54
16 Northport	63.70	74.25	56.95	41.09	58.52
17 Helena	39.51	71.80	98.26	68.90	58.24
18 Huntsville	53.06	80.59	45.87	63.46	58.20
19 Jasper	78.63	17.80	26.44	53.38	58.19
20 Muscle Shoals	73.85	33.55	39.55	48.12	58.09
21 Hoover	41.16	42.52	73.46	90.12	57.61
22 Florence	78.99	29.15	36.43	33.85	56.15
23 Alabaster	42.31	77.60	79.13	59.21	55.55
24 Tuscaloosa	62.49	71.04	49.96	29.82	53.83
25 Gardendale	50.32	28.83	55.99	66.45	52.38

	Recent Job Growth: 2010-2011	Residential Population Growth: 2010-2011	Residential Population Growth: 2000-2010	Median Per Capita Income	Total Economic Vitality Score
26 Pelham	24.81	77.93	92.77	70.08	51.27
27 Alexander City	73.69	26.54	22.20	28.98	50.18
28 Dothan	51.08	54.32	45.16	45.09	49.25
29 Bessemer	75.78	28.51	14.43	20.45	48.37
30 Phenix City	45.10	98.59	49.96	27.01	47.87
31 Scottsboro	63.15	32.03	23.48	36.72	47.69
32 Montgomery	49.35	68.35	26.37	43.84	47.48
33 Mobile	60.15	23.31	20.85	39.12	45.38
34 Hartselle	44.22	42.50	54.40	37.67	43.64
35 Troy	48.41	24.98	72.45	26.37	42.97
36 Gadsden	61.99	22.86	16.59	23.48	41.80
37 Saraland	47.18	28.92	37.56	38.32	41.48
38 Prattville	16.18	71.06	85.55	51.93	40.65
39 Birmingham	56.31	28.95	9.82	27.02	39.76
40 Ozark	50.90	15.69	21.51	34.77	38.79
41 Oxford	30.49	11.60	91.24	35.03	36.86
42 Decatur	32.23	39.69	28.11	41.07	34.86
43 Foley	0.07	96.13	99.97	37.20	33.85
44 Cullman	18.40	31.57	31.73	40.69	27.29
45 Anniston	30.52	10.85	17.30	32.13	26.81
46 Fort Payne	0.67	64.75	36.22	30.03	20.46
47 Prichard	22.28	23.42	4.81	9.01	16.92
48 Talladega	5.05	9.95	28.52	15.65	11.24
49 Selma	1.62	4.78	25.07	20.11	9.57
50 Eufaula	2.33	2.56	16.48	22.87	9.26

APPENDIX C: BUSINESS TAX BURDEN RANKING

	Business Property Taxes	Local Business / Gross Receipts Sales Tax	Total Business Tax Burden Score
1 Foley	89.67	94.21	91.04
2 Cullman	80.87	99.93	86.59
3 Northport	80.87	94.21	84.87
4 Jasper	77.84	94.21	82.75
5 Millbrook	93.00	48.50	79.65
6 Troy	83.72	69.12	79.34
7 Prattville	92.00	48.50	78.95
8 Fairhope	71.02	94.21	77.98
9 Athens	77.84	69.12	75.22
10 Daphne	71.02	84.99	75.21
11 Montgomery	84.49	48.50	73.70
12 Alexander City	82.74	48.50	72.47
13 Eufaula	72.22	69.12	71.29
14 Dothan	87.63	28.28	69.83
15 Muscle Shoals	76.77	48.50	68.29
16 Fort Payne	65.98	69.12	66.93
17 Center Point	52.01	94.21	64.67
18 Hartselle	79.08	28.28	63.84
19 Enterprise	69.79	48.50	63.41
20 Scottsboro	59.28	69.12	62.23
21 Tuscaloosa	48.05	94.21	61.90
22 Talladega	80.87	4.97	58.10
23 Decatur	65.20	28.28	54.13
24 Florence	55.11	48.50	53.12
25 Albertville	62.01	28.28	51.89

	Business Property Taxes	Local Business / Gross Receipts Sales Tax	Total Business Tax Burden Score
26 Helena	55.11	28.28	47.06
27 Gadsden	55.11	28.28	47.06
28 Ozark	52.29	28.28	45.09
29 Gardendale	52.01	28.28	44.89
30 Oxford	59.28	4.97	42.98
31 Madison	31.75	69.12	42.96
32 Pelham	30.50	69.12	42.09
33 Opelika	41.05	28.28	37.22
34 Auburn	41.05	28.28	37.22
35 Alabaster	41.05	28.28	37.22
36 Saraland	46.63	13.32	36.64
37 Huntsville	30.50	48.50	35.90
38 Anniston	48.05	4.97	35.12
39 Trussville	38.04	28.28	35.11
40 Phenix City	28.06	37.98	31.04
41 Selma	31.75	28.28	30.71
42 Hueytown	25.49	28.28	26.33
43 Hoover	6.11	69.12	25.01
44 Homewood	4.31	69.12	23.75
45 Vestavia Hills	0.15	69.12	20.84
46 Mountain Brook	0.03	69.12	20.76
47 Prichard	22.41	4.97	17.18
48 Bessemer	10.22	28.28	15.64
49 Birmingham	9.25	28.28	14.96
50 Mobile	18.40	4.97	14.37

APPENDIX D: COMMUNITY ALLURE RANKING

	Cost of Living	Per Capita Violent Crime	High School Graduation Rate	SAT Averaged Reading & Math Scores	Total Community Allure Score
1 Prattville	55.61	73.74	77.06	90.89	70.46
2 Hartselle	52.28	75.65	74.53	79.51	67.88
3 Alabaster	55.61	72.77	80.58	66.41	66.98
4 Pelham	49.67	78.13	85.97	58.12	66.34
5 Hueytown	79.44	69.07	56.85	36.64	66.00
6 Helena	48.18	79.79	87.70	52.36	65.80
7 Gardendale	51.53	74.64	74.96	65.07	65.16
8 Trussville	30.11	82.51	90.24	76.27	64.40
9 Saraland	74.04	65.91	39.21	52.36	62.72
10 Daphne	38.67	74.39	87.15	60.94	61.78
11 Cullman	51.16	72.91	25.26	95.18	61.49
12 Millbrook	50.04	68.11	79.83	46.56	60.31
13 Mobile	76.40	61.84	52.57	26.34	60.22
14 Muscle Shoals	53.39	53.48	60.54	89.64	59.93
15 Athens	43.38	74.09	46.64	71.54	58.84
16 Jasper	75.24	41.84	48.25	66.41	58.18
17 Vestavia Hills	4.67	79.07	94.89	96.47	58.01
18 Hoover	7.83	79.20	89.03	90.89	57.45
19 Enterprise	55.98	56.14	48.79	70.29	57.10
20 Oxford	64.93	52.41	28.84	71.54	56.13
21 Albertville	76.11	68.93	2.32	28.77	55.43
22 Fort Payne	66.31	72.82	1.14	42.24	55.20
23 Madison	7.43	70.05	92.57	94.40	55.16
24 Eufaula	66.31	69.98	27.47	17.77	54.49
25 Mountain Brook	0.00	70.53	97.07	98.98	54.09

	Cost of Living	Per Capita Violent Crime	High School Graduation Rate	SAT Averaged Reading & Math Scores	Total Community Allure Score
26 Auburn	16.86	67.59	89.28	72.76	53.87
27 Fairhope	11.83	66.70	91.36	83.40	53.70
28 Dothan	65.28	49.40	45.03	45.11	53.66
29 Center Point	85.43	38.04	65.64	3.06	53.52
30 Foley	56.71	57.08	65.14	25.16	53.37
31 Montgomery	60.70	67.21	47.71	9.26	53.31
32 Decatur	53.76	62.56	27.93	48.01	52.10
33 Homewood	4.07	70.75	85.97	86.77	52.10
34 Scottsboro	45.59	67.27	17.79	65.07	51.93
35 Florence	55.24	42.58	40.78	60.94	49.49
36 Gadsden	83.43	33.09	16.09	21.81	46.47
37 Ozark	68.99	36.77	27.93	33.93	46.29
38 Phenix City	66.31	43.93	28.84	17.77	45.57
39 Opelika	45.96	58.15	26.14	24.02	43.96
40 Troy	59.62	34.12	32.64	40.82	43.83
41 Tuscaloosa	41.91	54.96	49.33	11.91	43.09
42 Huntsville	36.19	31.18	65.14	53.81	41.42
43 Talladega	75.53	36.91	4.26	9.26	41.38
44 Alexander City	66.98	25.49	9.19	49.46	41.16
45 Northport	29.14	42.98	56.32	46.06	40.60
46 Bessemer	93.35	2.84	19.61	11.20	38.29
47 Birmingham	84.34	5.22	35.12	6.59	37.60
48 Prichard	86.06	0.31	4.77	16.83	33.47
49 Selma	76.11	0.00	5.63	6.13	28.41
50 Anniston	70.61	1.61	17.44	1.67	28.15

APPENDIX E: TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE RANKING

	Distance to Commercial Service Airport	Distance to Rail Service	Distance to Containerized Shipping Port	Distance to Interstate Highway System	Transportation Infrastructure Score
1 Mobile	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
2 Prichard	87.18	100.00	99.79	72.00	96.74
3 Saraland	80.07	100.00	99.45	72.00	94.88
4 Montgomery	100.00	100.00	77.59	72.00	94.40
5 Prattville	83.75	100.00	75.42	72.00	89.79
6 Millbrook	81.94	100.00	75.70	72.00	89.41
7 Phenix City	94.51	100.00	71.92	61.74	89.04
8 Birmingham	100.00	100.00	46.50	72.00	86.63
9 Homewood	91.80	99.22	48.18	72.00	84.80
10 Hoover	85.50	100.00	50.25	72.00	83.94
11 Gardendale	90.33	100.00	42.68	72.00	83.25
12 Hueytown	76.15	100.00	57.42	71.23	83.20
13 Center Point	100.00	100.00	40.96	63.46	83.11
14 Trussville	88.79	100.00	42.68	72.00	82.87
15 Dothan	100.00	100.00	92.91	8.77	82.42
16 Pelham	69.92	100.00	54.69	72.00	81.15
17 Helena	69.92	100.00	53.49	72.00	80.85
18 Bessemer	76.15	100.00	45.66	72.00	80.45
19 Opelika	52.40	100.00	67.47	72.00	79.97
20 Alabaster	63.41	100.00	55.87	72.00	79.82
21 Mountain Brook	95.75	73.24	46.92	71.04	78.74
22 Huntsville	100.00	100.00	8.08	72.00	77.02
23 Auburn	41.90	100.00	64.75	72.00	76.66
24 Madison	94.51	100.00	10.85	72.00	76.34
25 Daphne	65.60	40.16	99.22	72.00	76.24

	Distance to Commercial Service Airport	Distance to Rail Service	Distance to Containerized Shipping Port	Distance to Interstate Highway System	Transportation Infrastructure Score
26 Decatur	83.75	100.00	14.05	72.00	74.45
27 Ozark	78.13	100.00	89.74	1.03	74.23
28 Hartselle	76.15	100.00	17.99	72.00	73.53
29 Vestavia Hills	90.33	49.50	49.42	72.00	72.31
30 Athens	76.15	100.00	9.97	72.00	71.53
31 Jasper	36.16	100.00	44.81	72.00	70.24
32 Tuscaloosa	14.62	100.00	66.12	72.00	70.19
33 Enterprise	59.00	100.00	88.75	3.52	69.82
34 Northport	14.62	100.00	65.44	70.45	69.63
35 Fairhope	61.21	38.98	98.84	49.67	69.18
36 Cullman	41.90	100.00	26.36	72.00	67.07
37 Talladega	30.97	100.00	48.60	46.96	63.63
38 Oxford	14.62	100.00	31.02	72.00	61.41
39 Anniston	14.62	100.00	29.74	72.00	61.09
40 Foley	45.99	38.97	98.15	32.58	60.92
41 Selma	32.63	100.00	78.63	2.83	60.52
42 Eufaula	23.75	100.00	84.00	3.18	59.73
43 Troy	25.05	100.00	83.57	2.11	59.68
44 Gadsden	14.62	100.00	21.86	72.00	59.12
45 Fort Payne	16.68	100.00	11.16	72.00	56.96
46 Alexander City	15.94	100.00	61.54	3.30	52.19
47 Albertville	26.42	100.00	16.51	5.00	43.98
48 Scottsboro	25.05	100.00	4.72	16.64	43.60
49 Muscle Shoals	15.94	100.00	18.36	1.49	40.95
50 Florence	15.25	100.00	16.88	2.69	40.70



**ALABAMA POLICY
INSTITUTE**

402 Office Park Drive, Suite 300
Birmingham, AL 35223
205.870.9900
info@alabamapolicy.org
www.alabamapolicy.org

