



Louisiana Road And Bridge Conditions Threatened By \$12.5 Billion Transportation Funding Backlog

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Boost In Transportation Funding Needed To Support State's Economic Recovery, Improve Road And Bridge Conditions And Boost Traffic Safety

Louisiana faces a \$12.5 billion transportation-funding shortfall at a time when nearly half of the state's major roads are deteriorated, more than a quarter of bridges need improvement, traffic congestion continues to choke major urban roads, and the state's traffic fatality rate is among the highest in the nation. Unless Louisiana is able to close the funding gap, the state will be unable to complete numerous projects that would improve road and bridge conditions and safety, or widen key roadways to support long-term economic growth in the state. Driving on roads that are deteriorated, congested or lack some desirable safety features costs Louisiana motorists a total of \$3.1 billion annually – \$1,052 per driver in the Baton Rouge area and \$1,254 per New Orleans motorist. This is according to a new report released today by TRIP, a Washington, DC based national transportation research organization.

According to the TRIP report, "*Future Mobility in Louisiana: Meeting the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility*," Louisiana's backlog of needed road, highway and bridge repairs has decreased from \$14 billion in 2006 to \$12.5 billion at the end of 2009, largely as a result of the boost in transportation funding from the use of state surplus revenue from 2007 to 2009 and the use of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding. Making further progress in addressing the state's need for improved roads, highways, bridges and public transit will require that the recent increase in transportation investment is sustained in the future.

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (La DOTD) has identified numerous needed transportation projects throughout the state that currently lack adequate funding to proceed. In the Baton Rouge area, these projects include the rehabilitation of the Port Allen Canal Bridge, adding lanes to nearly eight miles of I-10 in East Baton Rouge and Ascension Parishes, and the implementation of a passenger rail corridor between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. A full list of needed road, bridge and transit projects throughout the state is included in the report.

"There is no doubt that additional recurring revenue is essential to improve Louisiana's inadequate transportation infrastructure and alleviate congestion," said Jennifer Marusak, Communications Director for Driving Louisiana Forward. "With no new revenue on the horizon, we must continue to explore innovative financing mechanisms and dedicating one-time monies. More importantly, we must continue to join with the Louisiana Legislature in fighting any attempts to further raid the Transportation Trust Fund and insure TTF dollars are being spent on building and maintaining our transportation system."

The TRIP report finds that a total of 44 percent of Louisiana's major state and locally maintained roads are in poor or mediocre condition. In the Baton Rouge area, a total of 60 percent of major roads are in poor or mediocre condition, while a total of 68 percent of major roads in the New Orleans area are in poor or mediocre condition. In addition to deteriorated road conditions, 13 percent of Louisiana bridges are structurally deficient and an additional 16 percent are functionally obsolete. Traffic congestion is a growing burden in Louisiana. According to the TRIP report, 43 percent of the state's major urban roads are congested during peak travel times.

Louisiana's roads are among the deadliest in the nation, with traffic crashes claiming the lives of 4,782 people between 2004 and 2008. The state has a traffic fatality rate of 2.02 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel, the second highest in the nation. Louisiana's rural, non-Interstate roads are particularly deadly, with a traffic fatality rate that is more than double that on all other roads in the state.

The federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided approximately \$496 million in stimulus funding for highway, bridge and transit improvements in Louisiana. This funding has created jobs and served as an important down payment on needed road, highway and bridge improvements but is not sufficient to allow the state to proceed with numerous projects needed to modernize its surface transportation system. The current long-term federal surface transportation legislation, which expires on December 31, 2010, remains a critical source of funding for road and bridge repairs and transit improvements in Louisiana. With the current federal transportation program set to expire, Congress has an opportunity to approve a new federal surface transportation program that could include a significant boost in funding for highway and transit improvements in Louisiana.

"Unless Louisiana is able to close its \$12.5 billion transportation funding gap, many additional needed projects will remain stranded on the drawing board because of insufficient funding," said Will Wilkins, executive director of TRIP. "It is critical that Louisiana's transportation system is adequately funded at the state and federal level. Thousands of jobs and the state's economy are riding on it."

FUTURE MOBILITY IN LOUISIANA:

Meeting the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility
April 2010

Executive Summary

Louisiana's extensive system of roads, highways, bridges and public transit provides the state's residents, visitors and businesses with a high level of mobility. As the backbone that supports the Pelican State's economy, Louisiana's surface transportation system

provides for travel to work and school, visits with family and friends, and trips to tourist and recreation attractions while simultaneously providing businesses with reliable access for customers, suppliers and employees. With an unemployment rate that has increased significantly over the past two years to 7.3 percent, and with the state's population on the rise, Louisiana must improve its system of roads, highways, bridges and public transit to foster economic growth, keep business in the state, and ensure the safe, reliable mobility needed to improve the quality of life for all residents.

As the state looks to rebound from the current economic downturn, Louisiana will need to enhance its surface transportation system by improving the physical condition of its surface transportation network and enhancing the system's ability to provide efficient and reliable mobility for residents, visitors and businesses. Making needed improvements to Louisiana's roads, highways, bridges and transit could provide a significant boost to the state's economy by creating jobs and stimulating long-term economic growth as a result of enhanced mobility and access.

Louisiana's system of roads, highways, bridges and public transit have benefited recently from the addition of state surplus revenue and federal stimulus funding, which has allowed the state to reduce its overall funding backlog. But making continued progress in improving the condition and efficiency of the state's surface transportation system will require a significant and sustained boost in funding at the federal, state and local levels.

The use of surplus state revenue over the last three years and the addition of federal transportation stimulus funding have allowed Louisiana to reduce its overall backlog of needed road, highway and bridge projects to \$12.5 billion. Making further progress in addressing the state's need for improved roads, highways, bridges and public transit will require that the recent increase in transportation investment is sustained in the future.

- A total of \$1.2 billion in surplus state revenue was invested in Louisiana's roads, highways and bridges over the three-year period 2007-2009.
- The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), approved in early 2009, provided approximately \$430 million in stimulus funding for highway and bridge improvements and \$66 million for public transit improvements in Louisiana.
- Louisiana's backlog of needed road, highway and bridge repairs has decreased from \$14 billion in 2006 to \$12.5 billion at the end of 2009, largely as a result of the boost in transportation funding from the use of state surplus revenue from 2007 to 2009 and the use of ARRA funding.
- The additional state surplus funding and federal ARRA funding has served as a critical down payment on needed road, highway, bridge and transit improvements in Louisiana. However, meeting the state's need to modernize and maintain its system of roads, highways, bridges and transit will require a sustained, long-term boost in transportation funding at the federal, state and local levels. But, if Louisiana's increased road, highway and bridge funding levels are not sustained, the condition of the state's surface transportation system will worsen.

Without a sustained boost in federal, state and local surface transportation funding, Louisiana will be unable to complete numerous projects to improve the condition and expand the capacity of roads, bridges, highways and public transit. This lack of funding will hamper the state's ability to improve mobility and enhance economic development opportunities in the state. Louisiana residents incur a significant cost as a result of driving on roads and highways that are congested, deteriorated and lack some desirable safety features.

- Needed projects in Louisiana that would require a significant boost in funding to proceed include the following: the replacement of the Bayou Barataria Bridge on LA 302 in Jefferson Parish; the replacement of the Chef Menteur Pass Bridge on US 90 in Orleans Parish; the construction of 35 miles of new highway in Terrebonne Parish from US 90 to LA 3127; the widening of 35 miles of I-20 in Caddo, Bossier and Ouachita parishes from four to six lanes; the I-10 Calcasieu River Bridge in Lake Charles; widening on I-10 in Lafayette, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans; widening I-12 in Livingston, Tangipahoa, and St. Tammany parishes; widening I-20 in Caddo, Bossier, and Quachita parishes; constructing I-49 North and South.. A full list of needed projects is included in the report.
- TRIP estimates that Louisiana roadways that lack some desirable safety features, have inadequate capacity to meet travel demands or have poor pavement conditions cost the state's drivers approximately \$3.1 billion annually in the form of traffic crashes, additional vehicle operating costs and congestion-related delays.
- According to TRIP estimates, roadways that lack some desirable safety features, have inadequate capacity to meet travel demands or have poor pavement conditions, cost the average Baton Rouge area motorist \$1,052 annually.
- Roadways that lack some desirable safety features, have inadequate capacity to meet travel demands or have poor pavement conditions, cost the average New Orleans area motorist \$1,254 annually, according to TRIP estimates.

| | Congestion | Crashes | Pavement | TOTAL |
|--------------------|------------|---------|----------|----------------|
| Baton Rouge | \$214 | \$304 | \$534 | \$1,052 |
| New Orleans | \$422 | \$210 | \$622 | \$1,254 |

- To ensure that federal funding for highways and bridges in Louisiana and throughout the nation continues beyond the expiration of SAFETEA-LU, Congress needs to approve a new long-term federal surface transportation program by December 31, 2010.

Improvements to Louisiana's major roads, highways, bridges and public transit systems are funded by federal, state and local governments. Federal and state transportation funding has allowed the state to complete numerous projects to improve the condition and efficiency of Louisiana's surface transportation system.

- Federal spending levels for highways and public transit are based on the current federal surface transportation program, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which was approved by Congress in 2005.
- Congress is currently deliberating over a long-range federal surface transportation program. Although SAFETEA-LU was originally set to expire on September 30, 2009, after a series of short-term extensions, the program will now expire December 31, 2010.
- The level of transportation funding available at the federal, state and local levels will have a significant impact on future highway and bridge conditions and safety as well as the level of transit service in Louisiana. In turn, these deficiencies will affect the state's ability to improve its residents' quality of life and enhance economic development opportunities.
- Since 1998, Louisiana has used a combination of federal and state funds to complete numerous highway, bridge and transit projects that have improved safety and enhanced mobility and economic productivity. This report contains lists of projects completed with significant federal and state funding, including building the Red River Bridge in Rapides Parish, adding bridges and capacity on I-610 at the I-10 and I-610 West Interchange in Orleans Parish, widening I-10 in East Baton Rouge Parish and providing bus transportation service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans.
- From 1998 to 2008, Louisiana received approximately \$6 billion in federal funding for road, highway and bridge improvements, and nearly \$700 million for public transit, a total of approximately \$6.7 billion.
- Federal funds provide 50 percent of revenues used annually by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development to pay for the construction, repair, maintenance and operation of roads, highway and bridges in the state.
- Federal funds provide over 50 percent of the revenue used annually to pay for the operation of and capital improvements to the state's public transit systems, which includes the purchase and repair of vehicles and the construction of transit facilities.
- While construction materials costs have stabilized somewhat during the current recession, a 38 percent construction materials cost increase from December 2004 to December 2009, coupled with declines in federal transportation revenues, will make it more difficult for Congress to authorize new federal surface transportation legislation that adequately funds needed improvements to the nation's roads, highways, bridges and public transit systems.

Despite the current economic slump, Louisiana has experienced modest growth of population, vehicle travel and economic output since 1990. Population and economic growth in the Pelican State have resulted in increased demands on the state's major roads and highways.

- Louisiana's population reached 4.4 million in 2008, an increase of five percent since 1990. The state's population is expected to grow another nine percent by 2030.
- Vehicle travel in Louisiana increased 21 percent from 1990 to 2008. Vehicle miles of travel (VMT) increased from 37.6 billion in 1990 to 45.6 billion VMT in 2008.
- By 2030, vehicle travel in Louisiana is projected to increase by another 25 percent.
- From 1990 to 2008, Louisiana's gross domestic product (GDP), a measure of the state's economic output, increased by 44 percent, when adjusted for inflation.
- Despite the current rate of growth in the state, Louisiana's unemployment rate has nearly doubled from 3.8 percent in February 2008 to 7.3 percent in February 2010.

Traffic congestion levels are rising as a result of population and economic growth. Without additional highway capacity, travel delays are projected to double in the future.

- In 2007, Louisiana faced increasing congestion on its urban Interstates and other highways or freeways. Forty-three percent of the state's urban highways carried a level of traffic that is likely to result in significant delays during peak travel hours in 2007.
- The average rush hour trip in the New Orleans metropolitan area takes approximately 17 percent longer to complete than during non-rush hour. According to a recent report by the Reason Foundation, by 2030, unless additional highway capacity is added, traffic delays in the New Orleans area will nearly double over current levels, with the average rush hour trip taking 31 percent longer to complete than during non-rush hour.
- Travel delays in Louisiana's other urban areas will double by 2030 unless additional capacity is added to those regions' transportation systems.
- The statewide cost of traffic congestion in lost time and wasted fuel is approximately \$414 million annually. The loss per average driver in the New Orleans urban area due to congestion is \$422 annually. In Baton Rouge drivers lose \$214 each year.
- Relieving regional traffic congestion requires a comprehensive approach that includes expanding the capacity of some roadways and transit systems and improving the efficiency of a region's transportation system, including the use of coordinated traffic signal controls, traveler information systems, highway service patrols and traffic-incident management programs.

In 2007, 44 percent of major state and locally maintained roads in Louisiana, which are maintained by municipal, parish and state governments, were in poor or mediocre condition, providing motorists with a rough ride.

- In 2007, 22 percent of Louisiana's major roads were rated in poor condition and 22 percent were rated in mediocre condition. This includes Interstates, highways, connecting urban arterials and key urban streets that are maintained by state, county or municipal governments.
- The condition of state-maintained roads has improved as a result of increased funding from state surplus and ARRA funds. According to DOTD, the percentage of state-maintained roads in poor or very poor condition was reduced from 11.1 percent in 2007 to 9.4 percent, and the percentage of state-maintained roads in good to excellent condition improved from 50.4 percent in 2007 to 55.1 percent.
- Roads rated in poor condition may show signs of deterioration, including ruts, cracks and potholes. In some cases, poor roads can be resurfaced, but often are too deteriorated and must be reconstructed. Roads rated in mediocre condition may show signs of significant wear and may also have some visible pavement distress. Most pavements in mediocre condition can be repaired by resurfacing, but some may need more extensive reconstruction to return them to good condition.
- Roads in need of repair cost Louisiana motorists approximately \$1.2 billion annually in extra vehicle operating costs. Costs include accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.
- In the New Orleans metropolitan area, where 49 percent of major state and locally maintained roads are rated in poor condition and 19 percent of major roads are rated in mediocre condition, driving on roads in need of repair costs motorists \$622 each per year in extra vehicle operating costs.
- In the Baton Rouge metropolitan area, where 37 percent of major roads are rated in poor condition and 23 percent of major roads are rated in mediocre condition, driving on roads in need of repair costs motorists \$534 each per year in extra vehicle operating costs.
- The functional life of Louisiana's roads is greatly affected by the state's ability to perform timely maintenance and upgrades to ensure that structures last as long as possible. It is critical that roads are fixed before they require major repairs because reconstructing roads costs approximately four times more than resurfacing them.

Twenty-nine percent of bridges in Louisiana show significant deterioration or do not meet current design standards. This includes all bridges that are 20 feet or more in length and are maintained by state, local and federal agencies.

- In 2008, 13 percent of Louisiana's bridges were structurally deficient. A bridge is structurally deficient if there is significant deterioration of the bridge deck, supports or other major components. Structurally deficient bridges are often posted for lower weight or closed to traffic, restricting or redirecting large vehicles, including commercial trucks, school buses and emergency services vehicles.
- In 2008, 16 percent of Louisiana's bridges were functionally obsolete. Bridges that are functionally obsolete no longer meet current highway design standards, often because of narrow lanes, inadequate clearances or poor alignment.
- This report contains a list of needed bridge rehabilitation and replacement projects across the state that would require significant federal funding to be completed.

At the third highest in the nation, Louisiana's rural traffic fatality rate is significantly greater than the fatality rate on all other roads in the state. Improving safety features on Louisiana's roads and highways would likely result in a decrease in traffic fatalities in the state.

- Between 2004 and 2008, 4,782 people were killed in traffic accidents in Louisiana, an average of 956 fatalities per year.
- Louisiana's traffic fatality rate was 2.02 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel in 2008, the second highest fatality rate in the country.
- The traffic fatality rate in 2008 on Louisiana's non-Interstate rural roads was 3.13 traffic fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel, which is more than double the rate of 1.53 traffic fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel on all other roads and highways in the state.
- Several factors are associated with vehicle accidents that result in fatalities, including driver behavior, vehicle characteristics and roadway characteristics.
- TRIP estimates that roadway characteristics, such as lane widths, lighting, signage and the presence or absence of guardrails, paved shoulders, traffic lights, rumble strips, obstacle barriers, turn lanes, median barriers and pedestrian or bicycle facilities, are likely a contributing factor in approximately one-third of all fatal and serious traffic accidents.
- Where appropriate, highway improvements can reduce traffic fatalities and accidents while improving traffic flow to help relieve congestion. Such improvements include removing or shielding obstacles; adding or improving medians; adding rumble strips, wider lanes, wider and paved shoulders; upgrading roads from two lanes to four lanes; and better road markings and traffic signals.
- TRIP estimates that the cost of serious traffic crashes in Louisiana in 2008, in which roadway characteristics were likely a contributing factor, was approximately \$1.5 billion and \$210 per driver in the New Orleans urban area and \$304 per driver in the Baton Rouge urban area. The cost of serious crashes includes lost productivity, lost earnings, medical costs and emergency services.

- The Federal Highway Administration has found that every \$100 million spent on needed highway safety improvements will result in 145 fewer traffic fatalities over a 10-year period.

Two congressionally appointed commissions and a national organization representing state transportation departments have recommended a broad overhaul of the Federal Surface Transportation Program to improve mobility, safety and the physical condition of the nation's surface transportation system by significantly boosting funding, consolidating the program into fewer categories, speeding up project delivery and requiring greater accountability in project selection.

- The National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission (NSTPRSC) and the National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission (NSTIFC) were created by Congress to examine the current condition and future funding needs of the nation's surface transportation program, develop a plan to insure the nation's surface transportation system meets America's future mobility needs, and to recommend future funding mechanisms to pay for the preservation and improvement of the nation's roads, highways, bridges and public transit systems.
- The NSTPRSC concluded that it is critical to the future quality of life of Americans that the nation create and sustain the preeminent surface transportation system in the world, one that is well-maintained, safe and reliable.
- The NSTIFC found that the U.S. faces a \$2.3 trillion funding shortfall over the next 25 years in maintaining and making needed improvements to the nation's surface transportation system.
- The NSTIFC found that the use of motor fuel fees is not sustainable as a primary source of funding for the nation's surface transportation system because of the shift to a variety of fuel sources and more fuel efficient vehicles.

Key recommendations of the Commissions and the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) include:

Program format:

- Allocate funding through outcome-based, performance-driven programs supported by cost/benefit evaluations rather than political earmarking (NSTPRSC).
- Consolidate the more than 100 current transportation funding programs into 10 programs focused on key areas of national interest, including congestion relief, preservation of roads and bridges, improved freight transportation, improved roadway safety, improved rural access, improved environmental stewardship, and the development of environmentally-friendly energy sources (NSTPRSC).

Funding:

- Shift the collection of federal surface transportation revenues from fuel taxes to mileage-based fees, which would charge motorists a fee based on the number of miles driven, with full deployment of a comprehensive system in place by 2020 (NSTIFC).
- Failure to address the immediate funding shortfall and provide adequate long-term funding for surface transportation will lead to unimaginable levels of congestion, reduced safety, costlier goods and services, eroded quality of life and diminished economic competitiveness (NSTIFC).

The efficiency of Louisiana's transportation system, particularly its highways, is critical to the health of the state's economy. Businesses are increasingly reliant on an efficient and reliable transportation system to move products and services. Expenditures on highway repairs create a significant number of jobs.

- Annually, \$140 billion in goods are shipped from sites in Louisiana and another \$159 billion in goods are shipped to sites in Louisiana, mostly by trucks.
- While Louisiana is known for its extensive port system and water-based shipping, 40 percent of the goods shipped annually from sites in Louisiana are carried by trucks and another 3.4 percent are carried by courier services, which use trucks for part of the deliveries. Similarly, 50 percent of the goods shipped to sites in Louisiana are carried by trucks and another 6.4 percent are carried by courier services.
- Commercial trucking in Louisiana is projected to increase 17 percent by 2020.
- A 2007 analysis by the Federal Highway Administration found that every \$1 billion invested in highway construction would support approximately 27,800 jobs, including approximately 9,500 in the construction sector, approximately 4,300 jobs in industries supporting the construction sector, and approximately 14,000 other jobs induced in non-construction related sectors of the economy.

All data used in the report is the latest available. Sources of information for this report include the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (La DOTD), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission (NSTPRSC), the National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission (NSTIFC), the U.S. Census, The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the Reason Foundation and the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI). The deficiencies cited in this report are not a reflection of the effectiveness of the state and local transportation agencies, but a lack of adequate funding.