

Preserving Lafayette Bridges

THE CONDITION AND FUNDING NEEDS OF
LAFAYETTE'S AGING BRIDGE SYSTEM



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a national transportation research group

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Louisiana's bridges are a critical element of the state's transportation system, which supports commerce, economic vitality and personal mobility. The state's transportation system is literally the backbone of Louisiana's economy. Louisiana's transportation system enables the state's residents and visitors to travel to work and school, visit family and friends, and frequent tourist and recreation attractions, while providing its businesses with reliable access to customers, materials, suppliers and employees.

To retain businesses, accommodate population and economic growth, maintain economic competitiveness, and achieve further economic growth, Louisiana will need to maintain and modernize its bridges by repairing or replacing deficient bridges and providing needed maintenance on other bridges to ensure that they remain in good condition as long as possible. Making needed improvements to Louisiana's bridges will require increased and reliable funding from local, state and federal governments, which will also provide a significant boost to the state's economy by creating jobs in the short term and stimulating long term economic growth as a result of preserved and enhanced mobility and access.

LAFAYETTE BRIDGE CONDITIONS

Nine percent of locally and state-maintained bridges in the Lafayette area, which includes Lafayette and St. Martin parishes, are structurally deficient, meaning there is significant deterioration to the major components of the bridge.

- There are a total of 435 bridges in the Lafayette area that are 20 feet or longer. These bridges are maintained by local and state agencies.
- Nine percent (38 bridges) of state-and locally maintained bridges in the Lafayette area are structurally deficient.
- Bridges in the Lafayette area that are structurally deficient carry approximately 183,000 vehicles each day.
- Bridges that are structurally deficient may be posted for lower weight limits or closed if their condition warrants such action. Deteriorated bridges can have a significant impact on daily life. Restrictions on vehicle weight may cause many vehicles – especially emergency vehicles, commercial trucks, school buses and farm equipment – to use alternate routes to avoid weight-restricted bridges. Redirected trips also lengthen travel time, waste fuel and reduce the efficiency of the local economy.
- The list below details the 25 most heavily traveled structurally deficient bridges in the Lafayette area.

Rank	Parish	Location	Facility Carried	Feature Intersected	Year Built	Average Daily Traffic	Open, Closed, Posted
1	Lafayette	Lafayette	LA3073	VERMILION RIVER	1986	50300	Open
2	Lafayette	Lafayette	US0167	COULEE MINE	1958	32900	Open
3	Lafayette	Lafayette	Surry St.	VERMILION R @ SURREY ST	1948	16800	Closed
4	Lafayette	Lafayette	LA0098	COULEE	1983	12200	Open
5	Lafayette	Youngsville	E. Milton Ave.	ANSEIM COULEE	1973	8700	Open
6	Lafayette	Youngsville	E. Milton Ave.	CREEK	1973	8700	Open
7	Lafayette	Youngsville	Iberia St	BAYOU PATE PERDU	1973	8700	Open
8	Lafayette	Lafayette	LA0093	DITCH	1956	7700	Open
9	St. Martin		I0010	RAMP B. OFF RAMP	1971	5660	Open
10	Lafayette		LA0343	INDIAN BAYOU	1957	4800	Posted
11	Lafayette		LA1252	BAYOU POINT BRULE	1975	3900	Posted
12	Lafayette		LA0734	CREEK	1940	3400	Open
13	St. Martin		LA0321	CREEK	1966	3100	Posted
14	St. Martin		LA0352	BAYOU AMY	1968	2600	Posted
15	St. Martin		LA0341	COULEE DATIDER	1964	2400	Open
16	St. Martin		LA3083	BAYOU ALEXANDRE	1965	1510	Open
17	Lafayette	Lafayette	High Meadow Blvd	COULEE	1974	1100	Open
18	St. Martin		LA0737	GRAND CANAL 02	1973	970	Open
19	St. Martin		Poche Bridge Rd	TECHE BAYOU	1974	710	Open
20	Lafayette	Lafayette	Galbert Rd.	COULEE	1977	620	Open
21	Lafayette	Lafayette	Failla Rd	COULEE	1978	600	Posted
22	Lafayette	Scott	W. Congress Rd.	ILE DES CANNES COULEE	1973	580	Posted
23	Lafayette		W. Congress St	INDIAN BAYOU (SPOIL BANK)	1974	390	Open
24	Lafayette	Lafayette	La Neuville Rd.	COULEE	1976	330	Open
25	Lafayette	Broussard	Garber Rd.	COULEE	1977	320	Posted

- The following 25 structurally deficient bridges in the Lafayette area have the lowest average rating for deck, substructure and superstructure (carrying a minimum of 300 vehicles per day). Each major component of a bridge is rated on a scale of zero to nine, with a score of four or below indicating poor condition. If a bridge receives a rating of four or below for its deck, substructure or superstructure, it is rated as structurally deficient.

Rank	Parish	Location	Facility Carried	Feature Intersected	Year Built	Average Daily Traffic	Open, Closed, Posted
1	Lafayette	Broussard	Garber Rd.	COULEE	1977	320	Posted
2	Lafayette	Lafayette	Surry St.	VERMILION R @ SURREY ST	1948	16800	Closed
3	St. Martin		I0010	RAMP B. OFF RAMP	1971	5660	Open
4	Lafayette		LA1252	BAYOU POINT BRULE	1975	3900	Posted
5	Lafayette	Lafayette	US0167	COULEE MINE	1958	32900	Open
6	Lafayette		LA0734	CREEK	1940	3400	Open
7	St. Martin		LA0352	BAYOU AMY	1968	2600	Posted
8	St. Martin		LA3083	BAYOU ALEXANDRE	1965	1510	Open
9	Lafayette	Lafayette	LA0098	COULEE	1983	12200	Open
10	St. Martin		LA0341	COULEE DATIDER	1964	2400	Open
11	St. Martin		Johnson Rd	DUMOLIN CANAL	1970	310	Posted
12	Lafayette	Lafayette	LA3073	VERMILION RIVER	1986	50300	Open
13	Lafayette	Youngsville	E. Milton Ave.	ANSEIM COULEE	1973	8700	Open
14	Lafayette	Youngsville	E. Milton Ave.	CREEK	1973	8700	Open
15	Lafayette	Youngsville	Iberia St	BAYOU PATE PERDU	1973	8700	Open
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23	St. Martin		E Stephenville Rd	COULEE	1970	310	Posted
24	Lafayette	Scott	W. Willow St.	COULEE	1975	300	Posted
25	St. Martin		LA0321	CREEK	1966	3100	Posted

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING AND PRESERVING LOUISIANA'S AGING BRIDGES

Maintaining aging bridges becomes more costly as they reach the limits of their design life, challenging state and local transportation agencies to take an asset management approach to bridge preservation that emphasizes enhanced maintenance techniques that keep infrastructure in good condition as long as possible, delaying the need for costly reconstruction or replacement.

- Repairing and replacing bridges in poor condition and preserving bridges in fair and good condition will require increased and reliable funding from local, state and federal governments.
- A recent [survey of states by the U.S. General Accountability Office](#) (GAO) found that more than half of states surveyed (14 out of 24) reported that inadequate funding was a challenge to their ability to maintain bridges in a state of good repair.
- Under pressure from fiscal constraints, aging bridges, and increased wear due to growing travel volume, particularly by large trucks, transportation agencies are adopting cost-effective strategies focused on keeping bridges in good condition as long as possible. While this strategy requires increased initial investment, it saves money over the long run by extending the lifespan of bridges.

- The GAO Report found that the increase in the number and size of bridges that are approaching the limits of their design life will likely place a greater demand on bridge owners in the near future, making it more difficult to mitigate issues in a cost-effective manner.
- A survey included in the GAO report found that more than half of states surveyed (13 out of 24) indicated that the advanced age of many bridges posed a challenge to their ability to maintain their bridges in a state of good repair.
- Bridge preservation may include washing, sealing deck joints, facilitating drainage, sealing concrete, painting steel, removing channel debris, and protecting against stream erosion.
- Rehabilitation involves major work required to restore the structural integrity of a bridge as well as work necessary to correct major safety defects.
- Replacement projects include total replacements, superstructure replacements, and bridge widening.
- The need to repair or replace high priority bridges may create a funding cycle that makes it difficult to keep pace with the needed preservation activities.

TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN LOUISIANA

The efficiency of Louisiana’s transportation system, particularly its roads, highways and bridges, is critical to the health of the state’s economy. Businesses rely on an efficient and dependable transportation system to move products and services. A key component in business efficiency and success is the level and ease of access to customers, markets, materials and workers.

- Annually, \$734 billion in goods are shipped to and from sites in Louisiana.
- Businesses have responded to improved communications and greater competition by moving from a push-style distribution system, which relies on low-cost movement of bulk commodities and large-scale warehousing, to a pull-style distribution system, which relies on smaller, more strategic and time-sensitive movement of goods.
- Increasingly, companies are looking at the quality of a region’s transportation system when deciding where to re-locate or expand. Regions with congested or poorly maintained roads may see businesses relocate to areas with a smoother, more efficient and more modern transportation system.
- Increasingly, companies are looking at the quality of a region’s transportation system when deciding where to re-locate or expand. Regions with congested or poorly maintained roads may see businesses relocate to areas with a smoother, more efficient and more modern transportation system. Highway accessibility was ranked the number one site selection factor in a 2017 survey of corporate executives by [Area Development Magazine](#). Labor costs and the availability of skilled labor, which are both impacted by a site's level of accessibility, were rated second and third, respectively.

- The [Federal Highway Administration](#) estimates that each dollar spent on road, highway and bridge improvements results in an average benefit of \$5.20 in the form of reduced vehicle maintenance costs, reduced delays, reduced fuel consumption, improved safety, reduced road and bridge maintenance costs and reduced emissions as a result of improved traffic flow.

Sources of information for this report include the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the National Bridge Inventory (NBI), the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), and the U.S. Census Bureau.