

What are the most deficient bridges in Rapides Parish?

[Jeff Matthews](#), Alexandria Town Talk



This overpass on Military Highway is one of more than 50 bridges in Rapides Parish that is structurally deficient.

(Photo: Jeff Matthews/The Town Talk)

More than 10 percent of the bridges in Rapides Parish are in need of repair or replacement, according to a recent report.

TRIP, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit that researches transportation issues, found that 54 out of 532 bridges of 20 feet or longer in the parish are structurally deficient. More than 49,000 vehicles cross those bridges each day.

A bridge is considered structurally deficient if its deck (the riding surface), superstructure (immediately supporting the deck) or substructure (foundation and supporting posts and piers) rates at a 4 or lower on a scale of 0 (in failing condition) through 9 (in excellent condition).

Because a bridge is designated structurally deficient does not mean it is unsafe or about to fail. But it does indicate it has significant issues that could lead to failure in the future, if they are not diligently monitored or fixed.

Although having 10 percent of bridges in the parish designated as structurally deficient may seem high, it's actually not far off the national average. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, more than 9 percent of bridges in the U.S. were considered structurally deficient in 2017.

"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," the TRIP report concluded.

The most heavily traveled bridge on the list of deficient bridges in Rapides Parish is the overpass on Military Highway in Pineville that crosses over a Kansas City Southern rail line. An estimated 8,400 vehicles go over that bridge each day.

The bridge, which was built in 1918, also has the fourth-lowest average rating for its structural components. According to National Bridge Inventory data, it's the oldest bridge in the parish.

The 10 most heavily traveled deficient bridges in the parish are:

1. Military Highway in Pineville, over a Kansas City Southern rail line — 8,400 vehicles per day.
2. Shreveport Highway near Tioga, over a Missouri Pacific rail line — 6,600 vehicles per day.

3. Willow Glen River Road in Alexandria, over Horseshoe Drainage Canal — 5,200 vehicles per day.

4. La. Highway 1204 in Ball, over Flagon Bayou — 2,900 vehicles per day.

- T5. La. Highway 121 near Hineston, over the Calcasieu River — 2,700 vehicles per day.

- T5. La. Highway 121 near Hineston, over a Calcasieu River tributary — 2,700 vehicles per day.

- T5. La. Highway 121 near Hineston, over a creek — 2,700 vehicles per day.

- T5. McKeithern Drive outside Alexandria, over Flat Bayou — 2,700 vehicles per day.

9. Bryn Mawr Street in Alexandria over Hynson Bayou — 2,200 vehicles per day.

10. Paradise Road near Ball, over Flagon Bayou — 1,730 vehicles per day.

The lowest-rated bridge in the parish — in terms of the average rating of its structural components — is on Palmer Chapel Road near Kolin, where it crosses over Wiggins Bayou. It has an estimated traffic count of 330 vehicles daily.

The 10 bridges in the parish (minimum 250 vehicles per day) with the lowest average rating for their structural components are:

1. Palmer Chapel Road near Koline, over Wiggins Bayou. Built in 1970.

2. La. Highway 121 near Hineston, over a creek. Built in 1973.

3. North 16th Street in Alexandria, over Bayou Rapides. Built in 1978 (currently closed).

4. Military Highway in Pineville, over a Kansas City Southern rail line. Built in 1918.

5. Shreveport Highway near Tioga, over a Missouri Pacific rail line. Built in 1931.

6. La. Highway 1199 near Elmer, over a creek. Built in 1965.

7. Paradise Road near Ball, over Flagon Bayou. Built in 1962.

8. La. Highway 121 near Hineston, over a Calcasieu River tributary. Built in 1973.

9. La. Highway 1200 near Boyce, over a creek. Built in 1960.

10. La. Highway 1200 over Bayou Cocodrie. Built in 1960.

The TRIP report was compiled using data from the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, the Federal Highway Administration, the National Bridge Inventory, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau.



This bridge over Bayou Rapides connecting North 16th and Stracener streets in Alexandria is currently closed. It is one of more than 50 bridges in Rapides Parish considered structurally deficient. (Photo: Jeff Matthews/The Town Talk)